

*Leave of Absence**Tuesday, April 26, 2005***SENATE***Tuesday, April 26, 2005*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

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

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence to the following Senators from today's sitting of the Senate: Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams, who is out of the country; Sen. The Hon. John Jeremie, who is also out of the country; Sen. The Hon. Howard Chin Lee; Sen. Roy Augustus, who is out of the country for the period April 23, 2005—May 06, 2005; Sen. Dr. Eastlyn McKenzie; and Sen. Parvatie Anmolsingh-Mahabir, who is also out of the country for the period April 25, 2005—April 29, 2005.

**SENATORS' APPOINTMENT**

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from Her Excellency Acting President, Dr. Linda Savitri Baboolal:

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By Her Excellency DR. LINDA SAVITRI BABOOLAL,  
Acting President and Commander-in-Chief of the  
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ Linda Baboolal  
Acting President.

TO: MS. ROSE JANNEIRE

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

NOW, THEREFORE, I, LINDA SAVITRI BABOOLAL, Acting 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, ROSE JANNEIRE, to

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

*Tuesday, April 26, 2005*

be temporarily a Member of the Senate, with effect from April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2005 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago 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 22<sup>nd</sup> day of April,  
2005."

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By Her Excellency DR. LINDA SAVITRI BABOOLAL,  
Acting President and Commander-in-Chief of the  
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ Linda Baboolal  
Acting President.

TO: MR. FRANCIS PAU

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

NOW, THEREFORE, I, LINDA SAVITRI BABOOLAL, Acting 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, FRANCIS PAU, to be temporarily a Member of the Senate, with effect from April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2005 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Joan Yuille-Williams.

Given under my Hand and the Seal  
of the President of the Republic  
of Trinidad and Tobago at the  
Office of the President, St.  
Ann's, this 25<sup>th</sup> day of April,  
2005."

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“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By Her Excellency DR. LINDA SAVITRI BABOOLAL,  
Acting President and Commander-in-Chief of the  
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ Linda Baboolal  
Acting President.

TO: DR. TIM D. GOPEESINGH

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

NOW, THEREFORE, I, LINDA SAVITRI BABOOLAL, Acting President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Leader of the Opposition, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, TIM D. GOPEESINGH, to be temporarily a Member of the Senate, with immediate effect and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Roy Augustus.

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 25<sup>th</sup> day of April,  
2005.”

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

Rose Janneire, Francis Pau, Dr. Tim D. Gopeesingh.

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the Penal/Debe Regional Corporation for the financial year ended September 30, 2000. [*The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill)*]

2. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the Penal/Debe Regional Corporation for the financial year ended September 30, 2001. [*Sen. The Hon. C. Enill*]

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**Government Employed Advertising Agencies  
(Details of)**

- 55. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Minister of Finance:
- A. Could the hon. Minister provide this Senate with 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 May 01, 2002 to December 31, 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 monies 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):** Mr. Vice-President, the Minister of Finance 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 Ministry of Finance.

With respect to parts A and B of the question, the advertising agencies employed and the expenditure incurred over the period May 01, 2002—December 31, 2004 are as follows:

Ministry of Finance: Advantage Advertising Services Limited was the advertising agency employed by the Ministry of Finance. The cost incurred was \$276,960.09.

Because of the length of the question I have also asked that it be circulated. It is 10 pages of information.

Statutory Boards: For the period under review, total expenditure for the two statutory authorities under the purview of the Ministry of Finance amounted to \$12,745,099.35. Details are as follows:

- The National Lotteries Control Board employed two advertising agencies over the period; Diversified Communications Consultancy and Advantage Advertising Services Limited. The expenditure incurred in respect of each agency over the period is as follows:

Diversified Communications Consultancy	\$395,759.64
Advantage Advertising Services Limited	\$11,807,769.07
Total	\$12,203,528.71

- The National Insurance Board employed two advertising agencies over the period: Lonsdale Saatchi and Saatchi and Willow Works. The expenditure incurred in respect of each agency over the period May 01, 2002 to December 31, 2004 is as follows:

Lonsdale Saatchi & Saatchi	\$347,096.45
Willow Works	\$194,474.19
Total	\$541,570.64

State Enterprises: Over the period May 01, 2002—December 31, 2004 the state enterprises under the Ministry of Finance employed advertising agencies at a cost of \$18,209,371.70 as follows:

	<b>State Enterprise</b>	<b>Advertising Agency</b>	<b>Cost</b>
1	Business Development Company Limited	Lonsdale, Saatchi & Saatchi	384,461.47
2	First Citizens Bank Limited	CMB Limited	12,719,501.59
		Valdez & Torry Limited	2,692,543.80
		Diversified Communication	489,314.39
		Inglefield Ogilvy	743,387.05
		Total	16,644,746.83

3	National Enterprises Limited	Advantage Advertising Service Limited	240,370.40
4	Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Limited	Corbin Communications Limited	747,456.00
		AMPLE	189,485.00
		HGIL	2,852.00
		Total	939,793.00

With respect to part C, the amount of moneys utilized in both the print and electronic media and the various events hosted, promoted and advertised are as follows:

Ministry of Finance: Print media advertising expenditure amounted to \$576,850.08 broken down as follows:

Trinidad Express Newspapers	\$148,533.33
Trinidad Publishing Company Limited	\$347,927.89
Daily News Limited	\$80,388.86

Statutory Boards: Print and electronic media advertising expenditure amounted to \$14,814,965.40 as follows:

National Lotteries Control Board: Print Media

	\$
Express	1,252,708.46
Guardian	834,556.48
Newsday	1,174,088.56
Tobago News	240,161.60
Magazines/Brochures	5,356,685.49
Mirror	70,976.25
Blast	50,019.25
Bomb	1,150.00

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Punch	1,408.74
The Wire	3,817.43
Total	\$8,985,572.26

## Electronic Media

Radio	\$
91.1	10,442.00
92.1	82,513.42
i92.5	72,613.86
i95.5	545,847.69
100	82,035.28
101	20,125.00
102	113,458.86
610	4,554.00
97.1	77,099.97
104	69,642.37
90.5	116,457.12
95.1	98,667.56
103	395,499.50
98.9	60,789.00
96.1	74,614.88
106	128,546.21
105	74,137.33
93.5	39,560.00
95/105/106	6,392.50
Masala	4,600.00

*Oral Answers to Questions*  
[SEN. THE HON. C. ENILL]

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92.5	5,290.00
TTT	398,304.63
TV6	657,372.50
Tobago Channel 5	9,320.75
Total	\$3,147,884.43

National Insurance Board: Print Media

Express	\$894,300.64
Guardian	419,438.53
Newsday	363,516.45
Tobago News	28,626.28
Magazines/Brochures	127,036.80
Mirror	63,415.83
Blast	23,080.58
Total	\$1,919,415.11

Electronic Media:

National Broadcasting Network	96,548.25
Trinidad Broadcasting Company	61,404.25
TTT	8,510.00
CCN TV6	165,933.27
Radio Vision Limited	17,112.00
Radio 103	109,853.75
Kaisoca Production Limited	69,824.53
Radio News Network	2,980.80
Citidel Limited	99,061.00
T&T Radio Network Limited	108,997.00



Tobago Channel 5	20,143.75
HCU Communications	1,725.00
Total	\$762,093.60

State Enterprises: Print and electronic media advertising expenditure for the State Enterprises over the period May 01, 2002—December 31, 2004 amounted to \$16,248,409.70 as follows:

#### Electronic Media Advertising Expenditure

STATE ENTERPRISE	TTT \$	TV6 \$	RADIO \$	OTHER \$	TOTAL \$
Business Development Company Limited	1,811.25	1,035.00	73,285.41	586.50	76,718.16
First Citizens Bank Limited	938,500.00	2,794,052.00	2,085,183.00	465,785.00	6,283,520.00
National Enterprises Limited	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited	7,437.00	183,050.00	11,778.20	25,500.00	227,765.20

#### Print Media Advertising Expenditure

STATE ENTERPRISE	EXPRESS \$	GUARDIAN \$	NEWSDAY \$	OTHER \$	TOTAL \$
Business Development Company Limited	142,173.24	117,168.99	75,803.68	42,936.15	378,082.06
First Citizens Bank Limited	2,794,045.00	2,579,160.00	1,616,058.00	1,542,317.00	8,531,580.00

National Enterprises Limited	63,615.16	59,629.62	65,353.47	2,244.03	190,842.28
Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited	233,515.00	213,322.00	103,878.00	9,187.00	559,902.00

Statutory Boards: Events hosted promoted and advertised amounted to \$1,553,349.22 as follows:

National Lotteries Control Board: \$975,732.91

Event	2002	2003	2004
Staff Appreciation and Award Function	\$112,951.00	\$139,350.00	\$140,787.00
Agent/Customer Appreciation Day	-	\$45,462.91	-
Classic Agent Conference	\$59,147.00	-	-
1000th Classic Draw Conference	\$82,006.00	-	-
NLCB's 10th Anniversary Function	-	-	\$396,029.00
Total:	\$254,104.00	\$184,812.91	\$536,816.00

Total from May 2002 to December 2004

\$975,732.91

National Insurance Board: \$577,616.31

Event	Cost \$
30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Awards Function	409,918.00
Pensions in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Training Programme	27,849.41
Advanced Pensions in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Training Programme	25,797.50
15 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CARICOM Heads of Social Security	<u>114,051.40</u>
Total	<u>577,616.31</u>

State Enterprises: Expenditure on events hosted over the period May 01, 2002 to December 31, 2004 and advertised amounted to \$3,402,518.66 as follows:

State Enterprises	Event	Cost \$
Business Development Company Limited	BitzTech	15,073.89
	Selling Techniques Training	5,209.25
	PQSL/QMS Training	7,448.40
	CEHI Training	150.00
	CEPEP Graduation	200.00
	Launch of BDC	690.00
	Opening of the South Office	5,947.00
	Venture Strategy Seminar	3,346.50
	CEO's Speak Seminar	92,181.25
	TIC 2003	8,998.28
	TIC 2004	15,573.78
	Importer's Workshop	10,964.11
	Excellence in Business 2003	9,901.50
	Excellence in Business 2004	64,182.84
	Customer Service Workshop	263.53
	ECCL Signing Ceremony	830.00
	Computerized Accounting & Investment Management Workshop	273.65

	Launch of Services Industry Awareness Programme	2,440.30
	BDC/BHP Billiton Workshop	8,335.00
	Stakeholders Against Destruction (SAD)	80.00
	Website Launch	8,934.30
	SWMCOL Training	14,336.12
	TOTAL	275,359.70
First Citizens Bank Limited	North Cocktails	373,000.00
	South Cocktails	259,000.00
	Corporate Breakfast	85,000.00
	Horse Racing	857,000.00
	Divali Celebration	476,000.00
	Emancipation Celebrations	453,000.00
	Scrabble Tournament	115,000.00
	Tobago Cocktails	357,000.00
	Total	2,975,000.00
National Enterprises Limited	Annual Shareholders Meeting 2002	16,905.00
	Annual Shareholders Meeting 2003	25,422.48
	Annual Shareholders Meeting 2004	25,422.48
	Total	67,749.96

Trinidad & Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited	Launch of Logo	84,409.00
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**Sen. Mark:** Could the hon. Minister indicate to this Parliament whether Corporation Sole or other state enterprises fall under his immediate direction and control, such as Petrotrin, Caroni (1975) Limited, the Sugar Manufacturing Company and the Estate Management Business Development Company? In those circumstances, if as Corporation Sole, these state enterprises fall under his direct control, could he explain to this honourable Senate why he has failed to provide the relevant information pertinent to these enterprises, as requested by this Senate and approved by the President, through myself?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** That is a very good question. The authority for state enterprises is in fact done by the Prime Minister and allocated on the schedule. The Corporation Sole has responsibilities for two issues, one is the question of electing boards and looking at corporate governance issues and the other is the question of management operations. As they relate to the way this question was posed, it rests with the various ministries as assigned by the Prime Minister.

Petrotrin, for example, is under the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries and Caroni (1975) Limited, I think is under the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

**Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh:** We have 50 state enterprises.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** There are two functionalities; one has to do with Corporation Sole that has responsibilities for certain functions. The way it is set up is that the Prime Minister, in assigning responsibilities, based on his schedule, assigns these entities to specific ministries. These are the Ministries that will have this kind of jurisdictional issues.

**Sen. Mark:** Could the Minister indicate whether—on page 4 of his response, when we look at the amount of moneys allocated to i95.5 and its earlier incarnation i92.5 and 92.1—he would agree with me that we have approximately \$700,000 being allocated to i95.5. Would he not agree with me, or could he explain why the disproportionate amounts being allocated to that radio station in relation to other radio stations?

Secondly, could he indicate to this Senate with respect to the NLCB's chairman, who is the chairman of i95.5, whether a declaration of interest was entered? Could he also provide this Senate with the relevant evidential information to substantiate that declaration?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** I thank Sen. Mark for asking that question. I also had cause to look at this matter. This is the information I have. The chairman of the board and the board of directors approves a general budget, one line item of which would be advertising. The management in the organization makes the determination as to where and how these funds are to be allocated.

I have been told that the individual with responsibility for this particular issue is the Advertising and Public Relations Officer, I think his name is Devant Maharaj. I have difficulty when I see results like these. I did investigate the matter and the information that was provided to me is that the management is responsible for the allocation of these issues. These allocations were in fact recommended, approved and determined by the marketing officers in the company headed by—  
[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Mark:** You believe that Enill? "Yuh saying it, but yuh eh believe what yuh saying!"

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** Mr. Vice-President, I am here to answer the question that was asked. If the Senator is telling me that he has a different view, that is not my concern. A question was asked. I sought an answer and that is the answer that was provided to me by the management of the organization.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Mr. Vice-President, could the Minister please explain, because I did not quite understand his answer? Was he saying that Mr. Devant Maharaj is the person in the NLCB who gave Citadel Limited, i95.5 and its previous incarnation these contracts? Is that what the Minister is saying or insinuating?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** No, no, the Minister is saying that the board approves the policy.

**Sen. R. Montano:** A low-level individual?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** No, it is not a low-level individual. The management makes the determination as to media, amount, and those kinds of things. I was told that the officer in the NLCB who has responsibility for advertising, promotions and public relations, who works within a policy—  
[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Mark:** On whose direction?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:**—who works within the industry, makes the determination.

Mr. Vice-President, I find it difficult to come here and provide the Senator with what he has asked me and because it does not sound happy to him, he has a problem. Let me assure him what I have said can be checked.

**Sen. R. Montano:** And it would be.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** Precisely. Thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Just to get this particular comedy in absolute perspective. Is the Minister asking this Senate to believe that the Chairman of the NLCB—the answer is a simple yes or no—had absolutely nothing to do with \$700,000 or \$800,000 of advertising going to his company and that he closed his eyes and let Devant Maharaj do it? Is that what he is asking us to believe? The answer is either yes or no.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** I am not asking him to believe anything. I am simply providing him with the information that I have, full stop. If he wants that question answered, he is free to pose it and I will go.

**Sen. R. Montano:** You do not want us to believe the information you gave us.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** Mr. Vice-President, I have answered the question to the best of my ability.

**Sen. Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, it is now 2.12 p.m. and I know that we normally end at 2.15 p.m. I would not like the Minister to begin his comment and we would not have a chance to respond. Unless we agree to suspend the Standing Orders, so that we can pursue the various questions that we have, I would like to suggest that we continue with these questions at the next sitting.

**Sen. R. Montano:** I have some more supplemental questions. We have not moved on to the other question as yet.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. R. Montano, we have moved to the next question. It was on the next question that Sen. Mark made his suggestion.

Senators, the suggestion by Sen. Mark is that we defer Question No. 58 to the next sitting.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Expenses Incurred by G Tech  
on behalf of the National Lotteries Control Board  
(Details of)**

- 58.** A. Could the hon. Minister of Finance provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the various costs/donations incurred or made by G Tech on behalf of the National Lotteries Control Board for the period January 01, 2002 to January 25, 2005?
- B. Could the Minister further provide the Senate with the names and addresses of all beneficiaries from this arrangement with G Tech and the National Lotteries Control Board? [*Sen. W. Mark*]

***MV Sonia*  
(Details of Contract and Payments of Acquisition)**

- 60.** A. Could the hon. Minister of Works and Transport provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the terms and conditions of the contract entered into between the owners of the *MV Sonia* and the brokers International Shipping Partners?
- B. Could the Minister further provide the Senate with all the details concerning the actual payments made to date towards the actual acquisition of the *MV Sonia*? [*Sen. W. Mark*]

**Mr. Michael Quamina  
(Details of Services Rendered)**

- 67.** A. Could the hon. Attorney General provide the Senate with a list of all the cases involving state enterprises, statutory authorities and any other state institution/agency in which Mr. Michael Quamina, attorney at law has been retained as counsel?
- B. Could the Attorney General also indicate the amount of moneys paid to him for services rendered to the State during the period June 01, 2004 to January 31, 2005? [*Sen. W. Mark*]

**National Housing Authority Housing Project  
(Green Street, Tunapuna)**

- 69.** A. With respect to the National Housing Authority (NHA) Housing Project located at Green Street, Tunapuna, could the hon. Minister of Housing provide this Senate with:



- (i) a detailed status report on the project;
  - (ii) a list of the firms that tendered for the project and the details of their tender price;
  - (iii) the name of the contractor to whom the contract was awarded and the tender price; and
  - (iv) a detailed breakdown of expenditure incurred as at March 23, 2005?
- B. Could the Minister also inform the Senate of:
- (i) the number of houses and/or apartments to be constructed; and
  - (ii) the number of houses and/or apartments that have been completed as at March 23, 2005? [*Sen. S. Baksh*]

**National Housing Authority Housing Project  
(Ramgoolie Trace, Curepe)**

- 70.** With respect to the National Housing Authority (NHA) Housing Project located at Ramgoolie Trace, Curepe, could the hon. Minister of Housing provide the Senate with:
- (i) the names of all the firms that submitted bids and their bid prices for the original project; and
  - (ii) the projected completion date of the original project? [*Sen. S. Baksh*]

*Question time having expired, questions 58, 60, 67, 69 and 70 were not dealt with.*

**ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURE REPAYMENT**

[Third Day]

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [January 25, 2005]:*

*Be it hereby resolved* that this House condemns the use of State funds for party political purposes by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago;

*And be it further resolved* that this House recommends to the Government that steps be taken to have all those persons responsible for ordering and/or allowing the use of State funds for the said advertisements repay same to the

Treasury forthwith failing which this debt shall attach to their persons and property jointly and severally and be enforceable in the same way as if it were a judgment enforceable by the High Court of Justice. [*Sen. R. Montano*]

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr. Vice-President:** The following Senators have already spoken on the Motion: Sen. Robin Montano, the mover of the Motion; Sen. the Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith; Sen. Dr. Eastlyn McKenzie; Sen. Roy Augustus and Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand. Those were on Tuesday, January 25, 2005.

On Tuesday, March 22, 2005: Sen. Rennie Dumas and Sen. Carolyn-Seepersad-Bachan spoke.

**Sen. Wade Mark:** Thank you, Mr. Vice-President. I rise to lend support and to provide some perspectives on this particular Motion, as it relates to condemning the Government on the particular issue of expenditure involving State funds for party political purposes as well as to recommend to the Government that steps be taken to have those persons responsible for ordering and/or allowing the use of state funds for the said advertisements repay same to the Treasury.

Before I deal with this particular matter, I would like to record our collective concern over what I read in today's *Newsday*. I hope that the Acting Prime Minister who is here with us, Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith, would be able to provide this honourable Senate with some definitive and emphatic statement on the health condition of the Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago, who, we understand is near death.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** I want to save the hon. Senator a lot of time from reading what I also read in the newspaper. I think it suggested that he was at home dying. The Attorney General is out of the country. I spoke to him about 11.00 a.m. today and he sounded in good health. That is all I can say on the matter. Everything in that story is wrong and I do not think that you need to repeat what is in the newspapers. He is out of the country, I spoke to him at 11.00 a.m. He sounded, to me, in very good health. He is not at home dying. He has not had a heart attack.

**Sen. W. Mark:** I am happy that the hon. Acting Prime Minister has provided us with some clarification. Could the hon. Acting Prime Minister indicate to us who is the person acting in the absence of the hon. Attorney General at this time?

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** I believe it is hon. Camille Robinson-Regis, but I have not checked. I know that there is someone acting.

**Sen. W. Mark:** The hon. Prime Minister, in his capacity as Minister of Public Administration and Information, would direct the Ministry of Public Administration and Information to place immediately in the public domain, a statement disabusing the minds of the population from this misleading headline that the Attorney General, who is supposed to appear in the court on Friday, is well and is able to do so in the Chief Justice's matter.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** I am sure when the Senator was Minister of Information he would direct a number of things. I do not think that the Ministry of Public Administration and Information has to respond to every erroneous report in the newspaper. I have made a statement here and I suspect and hope it will be given the same prominence as the erroneous story.

**Sen. W. Mark:** I am very happy to hear that our friend is well.

**Sen. R. Montano:** I hope it was not like when it was said that he was not going after the Chief Justice and he went after the Chief Justice.

**Sen. W. Mark:** There are various viruses infecting the environment today. I was hoping that one did not infect my dear friend. I understand that there is one called "Chief Justice Sharma Virus". I was hoping that it did not infect the hon. Attorney General. I am glad to know that he is in—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** I want to assure the Senator that he is not infected with the "Chief Justice Virus" nor is he infected with the "Gillian Lucky Virus".

**Sen. W. Mark:** Thank you very much. I am glad that my friend is well.

On this particular matter, I want to refer to an article in the *Trinidad Guardian* dated June 27, 2004. It reads:

"Government plans more \$m blitz ad campaigns"

In this particular article which is written by Sasha Mohammed, it is stated:

"Government plans to make multi-million dollar advertising campaigns like the current 'Anti-Crime Bills' one a regular part of their strategy, top PNM sources have confirmed.

A special team headed by Manning and comprising various special advisers to the Government was the brains behind the controversial campaign, which was later financially and strategically okayed by Cabinet,...

The team then hired three advertising agencies—CMB, AMPLE and Resource Factory—to do the creative production, public relations coordination and media management for the job.”

The Government, according to the hon. Prime Minister, stated that \$2 million was spent on their so-called media blitz in order to persuade, cajole, almost intimidate and blackmail the Opposition UNC and, at the same time, to raise hysteria in the society about the Police Service Reform Bills. When this entire episode is examined and disaggregated, the winners—because there are always winners and losers in any struggle—in this struggle I am sure turned out to be these three advertising agencies.

With respect to CMB, I would like the Minister in the Ministry of Finance to tell us what this agency is about. What is the name of this agency? Who owns this agency? We know in terms of AMPLE, it is owned by a chap called Alfred Aguiton. We know that he is the Communications Advisor to the Prime Minister and is located at White Hall. This is what we are aware of. Here is a conflict of interest; a gentleman who is being paid over \$20,000 per month with all the relevant perks and allowances to advise the Prime Minister on communication matters. He sits with the Prime Minister and a group of high-level ranking PNM officials and devises a strategy to fool the population. I am reading from a newspaper where it is said that three advertising agencies were responsible for the creative production—[*Interruption*] my brother, “Sen. Stretch”, not “Stretch”, my friend from Tobago—public relations coordination and media management for the job. Who were the real winners of this campaign? Who went home with over \$1 million in clear profits, as a result of this campaign? Who are the people? It was not the population. It was not the Opposition. Who is Resource Factory? We understand Jerry Narace and Louis Lee Sing are behind this company. Is that a fact? The Minister in the Ministry of Finance should tell us. We are not too clear. Who are the owners of Resource Factory? Is it a PNM organized advertising agency? I would like the Minister to tell us. We have information and we need clarification.

This whole campaign that was constructed by the Prime Minister, according to this article, which was written since June 27, 2004. No one has since denied that the Prime Minister, the hon. Patrick Manning, who is now on a sojourn, a jaunt to Peru, Chile and Venezuela without his Foreign Affairs Minister, to promote something called the FTAA, which is a dead organization for all intents and purposes. We would like to ask the Minister in the Ministry of Finance to tell us the real beneficiaries of this exercise.

While the Prime Minister told the country and the population that it cost us roughly \$1.9 million or thereabouts, we have a document which was tabled in the Senate a couple of months ago. It does not have a date. I cannot quote a date for you and the honourable Senate. It is headlined "Senate". It is a document that deals with the variation of appropriation for fiscal 2004 and the transfer of funds between subheads of the same head of expenditure. When we turn to the Office of the Prime Minister on page 6 of the report which was tabled in the Parliament, we see moneys being transferred from subhead 4 to subhead 2. Under that subhead, sub item 62 is headed "promotions, publicity and printing" at \$2.5 million. But the Prime Minister is on parliamentary record as telling this country that the so-called anti-crime campaign cost this country \$1.9 million.

To further consolidate my view on this matter, I went to page 21 of the report under the heading "Office of the Prime Minister" which states:

"To facilitate expenditure incurred for the cost of print and electronic advertisements for the Government's Anti-crime Legislation."

**2.30 p.m.**

So we are being told that it was \$1.9 million. This was before this document was tabled in this honourable Senate. When we perused this document we came up with a figure of \$2.5 million, which is \$600,000 more than we were told initially. I find that incredible; I find it unbelievable. How can we be told as a nation that the cost of this so-called advertising campaign was \$1.9 million and it turned out to be \$2.5 million?

**Sen. Dumas:** It is an allocation different to spending.

**Sen. W. Mark:** We go further and this is where the hon. Minister of National Security would need to advise this honourable Senate, because during this same period of this so-called anti-crime campaign, we note that there was another transfer under Head 22, subhead 01 – subhead 02: "goods and services". Under sub-item 62: "promotions, publicity and printing" there is a sum of \$3 million. We ask the question—because I want to tell you when I looked at the particular section in terms of details, the only information that we were provided with, on this matter, is that this \$3 million was to meet payments for press releases and advertisements regarding anti-crime initiatives, and to facilitate the continued provision of an intensified public relations media campaign on said initiative to the end of the fiscal year, 2004. We have no other information from the hon. Minister of National Security or the Minister of Finance.

One is left to conclude, one can surmise, we can come to a tentative conclusion, that apart from the \$2.5 million that was spent on this so-called media blitz, this \$3 million where we do not have any accountability for and on, maybe a part of that \$3 million could have gone to this so-called anti-crime campaign as well. At the end of the assessment we may find that it was not \$1.9 million, maybe it was close to about \$3 million to \$4 million that could have been expended on this so-called plan that the Government executed in order to fool the population. What is even more amazing, the Government during that period classified/dubbed this campaign as an anti-crime campaign. The legislation which I refer to, which deals with the Police Service Reforms Bills was referred to as the anti-crime legislation by their spin doctors and it went on to tell you in an advertisement in the *Trinidad Guardian* dated June 29, 2004 on page 45:

"The Anti-crime Legislation New Hope

In August 1999, the THEN Leader of the Opposition approached the THEN Prime Minister, offering a bipartisan approach to a national duty - the task of defeating Crime.

The THEN Prime Minister described this as 'a singular act of enlightened leadership'.

We can only hope that the present Leader of the Opposition will show the same leadership today.

We agree that implementation of the legislation will take time.

Let us begin today..."

And they talk about "Let it create a new police service, let it bring new hope" and they say "For the sake of our country, our children, our future...let the Bills pass."

Mr. Vice-President, as you go on from advertisement to advertisement it is the anti-crime legislation, that is how we dubbed it, anti-crime. If there was ever deception, deceit, tomfoolery, trickeries, it was then. The Government fooled the population then and I noticed today, they have gone to various business houses and the tomfoolery has once again started.

**Hon. Senator:** It is a conversation.

**Sen. W. Mark:** Well, you want to call it a conversation; you having a dialogue with them? The consultation is to try to blackmail the Opposition.

**Sen. Dumas:** That is what they using—blackmail.

**Hon. Senator:** Blackmail.

**Sen. W. Mark:** They are trying to threaten the Opposition into supporting the same bills that were defeated a couple of months ago, but I would deal with that as I proceed. *[Interruption]* No, we are dealing with public statements in the newspapers, dealing with these Police Service Bills, that you as acting Prime Minister indicated last week—at a post Cabinet press briefing—will be tabled in the Parliament. *[Interruption]* Well all right, if it has been tabled and it is in the public domain, I can speak on it. It is not before this Parliament, it is not before this Senate, it is before another House which is independent of this Senate.

Mr. Vice-President, Sir Ellis Clarke, one of founding members or fathers of the new Constitution in 1962, one of the architects—I should say—of the 1962 Constitution and one of the persons responsible for the drafting of the various Police Service Reform Bills had this to say in the *Guardian* newspaper dated Friday, June 25, 2004 in an article on page 3 and I quote:

“The bills do not deal with the crime situation at all.”

**Sen. Dumas:** Complete the statement.

**Sen. W. Mark:** This was in 2004 and Sir Ellis Clarke is telling the nation that the Bills do not deal with the crime situation at all.

“What the bills do is try to strengthen the effectiveness of the Police Service because the crime situation is a matter for the police.’...

Clarke said he did not know how the bills...”

**Hon. Senator:** Read it over. Read it again.

**Sen. W. Mark:** No, I am going on, you can get a copy later.

“Clarke said he did not know how the bills got the anti-crime legislation label.”

He did not know that. Because he said:

“When we baptized it, that is not the name that we gave it.”

Here it is, the so-called spin doctors from the Resource Factory, from AMPLE, from CMB along with the Prime Minister, they decided to change and to give these bills a new meaning. They went to the public trying to force the public to prevail upon the Opposition to support these bills—

**Sen. Dumas:** We learn from Cavelle. We learn from Cavelle.

**Sen. W. Mark:** —and dubbed those bills the anti-crime bills. Because of the incompetence, the ineptitude, the intellectual bankruptcy of the PNM regime to deal with crime in this country they have begun a second campaign to fool the population. I heard, to my astonishment, a chap called Mr. Victor George on some station yesterday, telling the Opposition that “if you do not support the Police Service Reform Bills, we, the red band maxi-taxis of the East-West Corridor, will shut down the country. We will shut down the country, we will not drive our maxi-taxis until the UNC supports those bills.” We want to appeal to Mr. George to shut down the country; we will love that. Go ahead and shut down the country, because we want to tell Mr. George and all those business organizations: the American Chamber of Commerce, the South Chamber of Commerce, the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce—

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** Barataria, San Juan, Chaguanas.

**Sen. W. Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, we want to give them the assurance that the UNC will never get votes from them. It is the ordinary people; it is the working man and woman in this society; it is the working class—[*Desk thumping*]*—the ordinary grassroots people who vote for the United National Congress, not the South Chamber of Commerce and not the American Chamber of Commerce and not the Manufacturers' Association and not Victor George; not those people. So to come and try to hoodwink us and try to fool the country—you see, these people are playing a dangerous game, because the PNM operatives have gone to these people. Mr. Vice-President, you “ain't” see nothing yet, there is more to come—and to convince us why we must support legislation.*

**Sen. Dumas:** It is all right for you to go to the Chamber of Commerce?

**Sen. W. Mark:** The dishonesty of this whole exercise is that the Government is aware that these bills are not going to solve crime; they are aware of that. But because of their utter bankruptcy and incompetency in dealing with the crime situation, anytime the PNM is in power in this republic, crime increases; [*Desk thumping*] 1991-1995 crime increased in this country as it never did before.

When the UNC was in power in the year 1999 there were only 92 murders for the whole of 1999. We are now in the year 2005—the first four months of the year and we have over 105 murders and 18 kidnappings for ransom and because of the incompetence of this regime, they are now seeking to get these businessmen who really I am surprised—



You know, Mr. Vice-President, when the population was under pressure in 2002, when men in long muslim garbs were in San Fernando East, Tunapuna, St. Joseph, Barataria/San Juan and Ortioire/Mayaro terrorizing the population, the UNC population, preventing them from casting their ballots in those marginal constituencies, we did not hear from the American Chamber of Commerce; we did not hear from the South Chamber of Commerce; we did not hear from the Manufacturers' Association; we did not hear from Mr. Victor George, that citizens of this country exercising their democratic freedom were being tortured, threatened and terrorized by men in muslim garments. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Vice-President, the court recently revealed—if you had any doubts in your mind about the role that these "fellas" played in the 2002 election, it came out in the courts recently. I want to establish the link. The reason we would never be able to solve crime under the PNM and the reason we will have more murders this year than we ever had last year is simple. If you mount the back of a tiger you have to feed it, because the day you try to dismount from that tiger it will eat you raw.

**Sen. Dumas:** That is what happened to the UNC.

**Sen. W. Mark:** And that is what is happening to the PNM, and that is why the Prime Minister in his own admission on Friday in Tunapuna indicated that there is a political dimension to crime. He did not explain what he meant by that, but we understand what he meant. He did not have the guts to tell the country the political dimension of it, but we understand it. So here it is, the PNM—the hon. Acting Prime Minister in his contribution made mention whilst we, in the UNC were in office we embarked on campaigns and so on; because we embarked, it is no problem now that he has embarked. I recalled at least two pieces of legislation, there may be more, one is called the Occupational Safety and Health (No. 2) Bill, which was brought on three occasions to the Parliament between 1995 and 2001, and on three occasions the PNM defeated that Bill in the Parliament. Mr. Vice-President, this was a bill that was addressing the health, the safety and the welfare of working people, and the PNM defeated that Bill.

**Sen. Dumas:** Are you seeking revenge?

**Sen. W. Mark:** There was the Constitution (Amdt.) Bill which dealt with the issue of hanging in this country. We went on the campaign trail trying to persuade the PNM to support this bill, because the Privy Council at that time, based on judgments, made it very difficult to execute criminals on death row. We went on a campaign and when we came to the Parliament to get the support of the PNM to

amend the Constitution to make the Appeal Court in Trinidad and Tobago the final Court of Appeal for death penalty purposes, the PNM voted against that measure. *[Interruption]* No, I am saying that you voted against that measure and you now come mamaguying the population as if you are the most responsible Government, because when you were in Opposition you were responsible.

Mr. Vice-President, today, because of how they want power, they want power through intimidation, through violence. I was in the corridor during that campaign; I saw what was taking place. We appealed to the police on many occasions to intervene. We saw men with guns in their long garments in Tunapuna, threatening ordinary citizens. These people were allowed to roam and the Prime Minister courted them. I remember during the campaign in Laventille—you always see it in the newspapers—where the Prime Minister, Mr. Patrick Manning was campaigning in Laventille and in the background was a "fella" called Mark Guerra, a renowned criminal who is now dead and he made a statement to the effect that if the UNC were to win the next election in this country there would be a racial blood bath in this land. He said Indians would be wiped out. You know, Mr. Vice-President, the Prime Minister who was in the company of Mr. Mark Guerra remained silent up to this day. He never condemned this criminal for making such remarks. That was the tone in 2001 and 2002, in particular. The PNM came to power on the basis of violence.

**Sen. Dumas:** "Doh" forget you hired him.

**Sen. W. Mark:** They went into an alliance with criminal forces and because of the fact that they went into an alliance with criminal forces, they cannot come now and tell the country to pass bills to give them more power without any accountability, without any responsibility. They want the Opposition, who got close to 300,000 votes in the last general election in this country—what separated us from the PNM was a mere 1,200 votes, with all the violence, with all the intimidation, with all the harassment, 1,200 votes separated the UNC from Government in the last election—1,200 votes.

**Hon. Senator:** Five seats! Five seats!

**Sen. W. Mark:** So, Mr. Vice-President, you cannot now come to the Opposition and tell us you want our support to give the Prime Minister of this country direct power in law over the police service. This is what those Bills were about. You were seeking to abolish the Police Service Commission and to put in its place, Dr. Saith, a police management authority, with the Prime Minister having the ultimate authority to appoint and to disappoint. That is what this Bill

was about. You went on a campaign to try to intimidate the Opposition to get the Opposition to support you and we did not. I want to tell Dr. Lenny Saith as Acting Prime Minister not to bring it again. The same defeat you got in 2004 is the same defeat you would get in 2005. [*Desk thumping*] Do not bring those Bills. We would never, ever support giving power to a Prime Minister who has demonstrated, in the last three years, a capacity to abuse power in this country. We will not do that, Mr. Vice-President! [*Crosstalk*] [*Interruption*]

So go to Victor George and the Chamber of Commerce and the American Chamber of Commerce. The American Chamber of Commerce does not run the UNC; they do not run this party! This party belongs to ordinary grassroots people. [*Interruption*] So they cannot tell us in the UNC we must support. They are telling us to support oppression. Ten thousand workers from Caroni (1975) Limited were exterminated by this regime. I did not hear from the American Chamber of Commerce. I did not hear from the South Chamber of Commerce. Where were they? Where were they, Mr. Vice-President? Discrimination, racism in this society, they do not talk about these things.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Sexual harassment.

**Sen. W. Mark:** You are coming now to tell us we must support a vicious, dangerous, dictatorial regime that is abusing power on a daily basis in this society. When we see the abuse of public funds in the way that we have seen, we have to condemn it. The PNM is spending money as if it is going out of style. They are having a great time. As we speak about anti-crime legislation, I would like the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance to let us know—as the person who looks after Corporation Sole affairs while Corporation Sole is having a good time in Peru, Venezuela and Chile—in this Parliament whether a vote of no confidence was passed on Thursday last on a chap called Mr. Uthara Rao, the Executive Chairman of the EMBD.

We are talking about crime here because this "fella" is being charged with a crime now at the level of the Industrial Court. Mr. Vice-President, would you believe the information that has reached us is that even the board of directors of the EMBD passed a no confidence motion on this particular immigrant, this alien. They sent it to the Minister in the Ministry of Finance, the hon. Christine Sahadeo and we understand that a meeting was called by the hon. Conrad Enill last Friday.

**Sen. R. Montano:** No, yesterday.

**Sen. W. Mark:** Yesterday, I understand the meeting was called. Do you know what I understand the hon. Minister told the board? He said: “We are not going to fire no chairman, we are not taking on your motion of no confidence in no chairman. We prefer to fire you and keep the chairman.” [*Interruption*] Yes, that is what I understand the Minister told them. The Minister told them that the board must go and Rao must stay, and he told them that that is their form of political morality. They have their own type and their own form of political morality.

**Hon. Senator:** You have no shame.

**Sen. W. Mark:** On the one hand, we are talking about crime and on the other hand you have a chap, where we have produced evidence indicating the level and the extent of the aggressive behaviour of this individual, the board of directors has taken a motion of no confidence to remove the chairman of that board and Mr. Conrad Enill, the Minister in the Ministry of Finance has told the board “To hell with you, we keeping Rao”. If I am wrong, let Minister Conrad Enill deny that statement here and now in the Parliament. Let him tell the Parliament that he did not have a meeting yesterday with the Board of Directors of the EMBD and that he told them: “Mr. Rao will stay and you all can go.” He was acting on the instructions of the Prime Minister of this country. We want you to deny that now.

**3.00 p.m.**

**Sen. Enill:** Irrelevance, Mr. Vice-President.

**Sen. W. Mark:** Irrelevance! You cannot deny it. [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Vice-President, you see, I got my information correct.

**Sen. Kangaloo:** He just cannot prove it.

**Sen. W. Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, let me go on. I wanted to confirm and my colleague by silence—

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the 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:** Yes, Mr. Vice-President. So you see there is a partnership—partners in crime.

**Hon. Senator:** Incorporated.

**Sen. W. Mark:** Partners incorporated. Mr. Vice-President, here we are dealing with anti-crime legislation and the Government has a golden opportunity to rid itself of individuals who are involved in a different form of crime against ordinary women of this land; ordinary women who are citizens of this land. Instead of the Minister in the Ministry of Finance taking a stand and telling this chairman where to get off, he is keeping the chairman in the chair on the instructions of the Prime Minister of this country.

Mr. Vice-President, when these Bills were introduced then by the Government, they were never designed to solve crime. The PNM knew that those Bills were never designed to solve crime. Every Monday morning we are being told of a new crime plan; the latest one is to licks them. The Prime Minister who is oblivious of his own condition and reality is not aware that corporal punishment is on the statutes of this country and it is to be implemented by the judges. We are now told by the hon. Prime Minister that he intends to reintroduce corporal punishment. That is the most backward step. That is a clear confession to the entire nation, the entire region and the entire world that the Prime Minister of this country does not have a clue on how to solve crime in this country. He cannot deal with crime.

He feels that if they are getting three square meals in the prison they are happy and if he reduces it to two, they might be less than happy. That is how the Prime Minister is interpreting resolution to crime or to solving crime. How can you solve crime? They bring Bills to the Parliament saying that they are anti-crime legislation and the Prime Minister has admitted that the drug trade is at the root of the crime industry in the country. The only problem is that the financiers of the PNM are involved in the drug trade. [*Desk thumping*] Why do you not get at the root of your problem? When we were there, we were hard on the drug lords. We never bought a car or sold a car to a drug lord. We never did that! We dealt with the drug lords in the country and crime began to fall.

Since the PNM came into power, crime and that drug trade have flourished. So how can the PNM solve crime? Up to now the Minister of Foreign Affairs, my hon. friend—we have not had a proper explanation about the cocaine that was found in the diplomatic pouch; no high ranking personnel, so far, has been arrested; we saw some ordinary underlings.

**Hon. Senator:** People on the streets.

**Sen. W. Mark:** Some ordinary people but no big man. Where is the big man involved in this exercise? We have not heard that. If you want to deal with crime you have to go to the source of crime, and if the drug trade is the source of crime then get at the people who are involved in importing the drugs. How come the big people who are involved in the importation of drugs are not being arrested by the PNM? The PNM has been in power for four years now! We arrested big drug lords in this country during our reign.

We know of boats that are actually used between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela. They come up at a particular pier down in Chaguaramas, and we understand from police report drugs are on those vessels. Recently, a captain of one of those vessels, traversing the waters of Venezuela and Chaguaramas, was arrested by the Organized Crime and Narcotics Unit (OCNU) and \$5 million worth of cocaine was discovered on that particular vessel. How can they tell the country—*[Interruption]* You cannot solve the problems! You cannot get to the root of crime! The reason they cannot get to the root of crime, Dr. Saith, is because your Government is in league with the criminals. *[Desk thumping]* Once you get out of that league with the criminals, you are on your way to solving crime but the moment you remain in league with them, Mr. Vice-President, no way we are going to solve crime.

Mr. Vice-President, people are becoming desperate—a murder is committed almost every 24 hours in this country. You have, for instance, shootouts in broad daylight in the city centre. The Government is hopeless; the Government is helpless; the Government is almost visionless and directionless. They cannot solve the problem, Mr. Vice-President. The PNM cannot solve the problem and if they cannot solve the problem, they should pack up their bags and go home. *[Desk thumping]* We were there; we can handle crime; we addressed those issues. Trinidad and Tobago was on the road to prosperity. Eighty thousand jobs were created in less than five years—not CEPEP—decent, well-paying jobs. *[Interruption]* You stole the election! You got Mr. Robinson to install you! A big deal was made and I do not want to go into the details of that, “So doh tell me about we loss; we eh loss no election!” We were 18:18! We got more votes than the PNM in the 2001 election!

**Hon. Senator:** *[Inaudible]*

**Sen. W. Mark:** You struck a deal, Lenny, and that is why you paying for your deeds today. You are paying for your deeds, because you are an evil person—*[Interruption]*—not him per se, the PNM is evil. Mr. Vice-President, I do not think

Lenny is evil, fully, he might be half evil but he is not fully evil. [*Laughter*] So Mr. Vice-President, I want to support my colleague's Motion. My colleague has put forward a very powerful position on this matter. We believe that this Motion is one that requires our support. We believe that the Government owes an explanation to the population of this country. We believe, Mr. Vice-President, that this Senate should condemn the use of State funds for party political purposes by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. We believe that the Government should take steps to have all those persons responsible for ordering or allowing the use of State funds for this very vulgar campaign repay same to the Treasury.

Mr. Vice-President, the Government has already indicated this is not the first and it will not be the last. I can put on record today that with the reintroduction of the so-called anti-crime Bills, recently, by the Government, the country is going to be exposed to an avalanche of vulgar advertising in the various media houses, both print and electronic. They are going to spend moneys once again—not because they are aware; they are not aware that they will not get the support of the UNC. As they begin their campaign for the next general election, whether it is this year; whether it is next year; or whether it is 2007, these advertising agencies: Ample Production; Resource Factory—[*Interruption*] I am talking about two; Aguiton, and Jerry Narace. Jerry Narace and Louis Lee Sing, I understand, are the owners of Resource Factory.

Mr. Vice-President, if they embark on another \$3 million to \$4 million worth of public campaigning we expect about \$1.5 million to go into the PNM coffers for the next general election. That is what it is about. They know that spending this money is not going to convince us, but they are using public funds for private political purposes. That is a crime, Mr. Vice-President! Today we want to call on this regime to desist from this kind of abuse of public funds as we have seen in the last campaign. There will come a time when public accountability will stare them nakedly in the face. They will have to account.

On Friday night there were about 200 people in a public meeting attended by the Prime Minister; 95 per cent were over 60. That is an indication that that is a decaying institution. That institution is in a state of rigor mortis and it is only a matter of time—they can fool some of the people some of the time, but they cannot fool all of the people all of the time—when they would have to ring the bell for a new general election in Trinidad and Tobago and they would have to face the mighty machinery of the United National Congress, and that is the party that they fear the most, Mr. Vice-President. [*Desk thumping*]

I thank you very much, Mr. Vice-President.

**Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran:** Mr. Vice-President, when Sen. Robin Montano first introduced the Motion to this Senate, if you remember correctly, he said that the debate should be non-partisan and he did not want to attack the Government, except to alert the public and to have some corrective measures taken, as he indicated in the Resolution itself. So I was looking forward to a lighter debate, but I guess the temptations were too much—

**Sen. R. Montano:** Rennie Dumas started it.

**Sen. Prof. R. Deosaran:** I was coming to that. I guess the temptations were too much and possibly the provocation got in the way, so I believe Sen. Robin Montano's earlier statement was—given what happened subsequently and has happened this afternoon—just to flatter; to deceive as it were. I do not think he is responsible for it. I think when you hear repeated, not announcements but warnings, that an election is in the air, not only is the company going to be heated up but the politics will certainly get overheated.

We are into a tempo where the consensus required to run certain essential things in this country will not be forthcoming and more sadly than that since this Government came into office, I do not think it has properly settled enough to provide the services that this country needs. I do not think it has taken proper stock of the public administration which falls under its jurisdiction and the kind of services that the Ministries have to provide. They have not settled to these things because, naturally, these things take time—policy formation and development—and near the end we are hearing about another election. This might be one country in the world where election solves nothing! It seems to solve nothing! It is almost like Russian roulette, and the people who suffer—not only with respect to this Motion, but perhaps to the whole system of Government in this country—are not the advertisers or the Westmoorings business people, but it is the poor taxpayers in this country who expect services, who expect value for their hard earned dollars paid through taxes and that worries some of us—if not all of us. It worries us. It is a sad commentary on public affairs in this country.

So much so, that we take the adversarial system to its unbearable limits and if you ask me; is that related to crime? Is that related to the alienation that so many people feel? Is that related to the widespread despair that so many citizens of this country may feel? My answer is yes, Mr. Vice-President. It seems as if changing Governments in this country make no significant difference to the welfare of the population. Check the records! I think it is a very sad commentary, so much so, that all of us who are involved in one way or another—big ways and little ways,



especially those in big ways—should really take stock and revisit what is their mission in public office, and the extent to which the oath they have taken to serve the interest and provide for the welfare of citizens of this country, is taken very seriously. I am speaking, but I am very saddened. I am quite sure that many of our citizens who observed what we take for public affairs in this country—it is not a win or lose or win-win situation; but it is a lose-lose situation that we are in. Since the Bill focuses on crime it is a good example to show you that no party really wins or loses, when crime is on the high—no party wins; no race wins; no gender wins; no class really wins.

The Motion, in essence, makes several serious charges. I think Sen. Robin Montano, in his own way, has produced a Motion for our deliberation. It accuses the Executive of an abuse of power; it accuses the Government of the unlawful use of public funds; and it calls for certain penalties in the Resolution. Implied in this Motion is the Government's attempt to subvert the legitimate rule of the Opposition party.

Mr. Vice-President, this is an old story about information control. Every government in the world struggles to control information to its citizens. Briefly, there was a big debate about 20 years ago on something called the "New World Information Order" where many countries in the United Nations were trying to formulate a system of information in which Governments would have to play a greater role in the interest of national development, so as to neutralize the one-way flow from what they called the metropolitan centres. A good example in the Caribbean was the late Forbes Burnham, in Guyana, with his ideology of party paramountcy, and that failed. It failed because, in essence, it was anti-democratic.

Today, there are struggles all over the world, as to the extent to which a government could and should control information from state bureaucracy, particularly to its citizens and, in essence, this is largely what this Motion is about. How do you get that process of information to your citizens?

The preamble has four parts. The first part is very powerfully stated, as my colleague, Sen. Mark, indicated, because it lay the challenge squarely. It says that the Government was using \$1.9 million on an advertising campaign to persuade the public to put pressure on Members of Parliament—in particular the UNC Members of Parliament—to support these three Bills and that the Government was using public funds to further its political agenda.

Now, these are very serious charges, as far as what a Government is supposed to do, and the role of financial accountability. Apart from this, Mr. Vice-President, there were very serious charges laid against the Government this afternoon, and I will be astounded if no response comes from the Government Benches, in particular, the repeated charge in this Senate that the Government is in league with criminals; the Government is in partnership with those who commit crimes. I believe that is a very serious charge that should be answered, if they could. The reason is not for my professional satisfaction but the reason is that these speeches in Parliament, in summary form, get transmitted to governments around the world. The Minister of Foreign Affairs would be quite aware of this.

But more in terms of concern, last year, when I travelled to England and parts of the United States many things that were said in this Parliament—when I met with appropriate officials, wherever I went, they presented me with certain statements made in the press and in the Parliament. They asked me to comment on such statements, which alerted me to say, what I am now saying with respect to the allegations, very serious allegations, and not only in this Parliament. I submit, Mr. Vice-President, that these charges are being made; they are made in commonplace all over the country, and as an independent person in this Parliament, I am not going to fight any election. I am not preparing for any election whether it is next year or next month. I am telling you, on balance, what the concern of citizens is. This allegation, this connection must be dealt with. It has to be dealt with. Is the Government in league with the criminals or their groups and to what extent—directly or indirectly? For our national reputation and for the Government's own integrity, I look forward to a response; if at all anybody cares to do so.

But, do you know why we have debates over this particular Motion in the way that it goes; why we also have a debate so unruly over the broadcasting code recently put out by the Telecommunications Authority, and, even previous to that, the Green Paper put out by the UNC government at the time, also dealing with the media? It is because missing—not so much in this Motion, but in the Telecommunications Authority code and in the UNC document—is any kind of analysis about what is hate, how do you find hate; what needs to be censored; what elements of the broadcasting or the print content are against the Constitution, section 4; how many times has a particular radio station broken the licence arrangements—at what time of the day and in what respect. You have no such data, so all you come up with in the case of the broadcasting code are some blanket statements and some threats about converting the country to Rwanda and Burundi—very unenlightening and, in my view, at that level, very ignorant pronouncements from people who should know much better.

So, the lack of analysis and data—that lack has contributed and it is contributing to a lot of controversy to which there will be no end, except by some edict, or the use of executive power. In other words, there is no rational discourse on such important matters as I have just referred, mainly because people are either lazy; they are either incompetent; or they see the world more simply than I do. To me, public policy must be based on some analysis and some appropriate amount of data. Perhaps I am old fashioned, but I have been a witness to so many public policies that lack these moorings to the point where there is endless controversy and everybody is right. There is no proper frame of reference on which to judge an opinion.

**3.30 p.m.**

If you look at the first element in the Preamble, the word “persuade” is a very persuasive one in this context, but there is some consolation, because for all the advertising done, in my respectful view, there has been little conversion in the larger population, from one point of belief to another. People do not understand, I believe, the psychology of communication, that is, it is not everything somebody tells you that you believe. It is not everything you hear that causes you to change your belief; the human mind does not work so. In issues that are as politically charged as the three police Bills—there are many people who saw those ads, especially on television, who, instead of being converted to the expected point of view, they got angry. I wanted to use a stronger word, but they got angry and resentful, as if the privacy of their minds was being invaded in a rather vulgarized manner. This is not the first time this has happened, and that is why I am using this opportunity to put some thought into this issue, because other governments have not been so innocent.

Since we are speaking about advertisements, images and television advertisements at public cost, as well as costs supported by financiers, one of the lead elements in the campaign by the National Alliance For Reconstruction—for those of you who could remember those days—was the use of a baby three or four months old. That baby was plastered on all political advertisements. It was a subliminal devastating attack on the PNM in the campaign, because it said many things about the uncaring attitude of the PNM, the neglect of the economy and a number of other things, symbolized by the imagery and implications arising from the picture of that baby.

It is not appropriate now for me to recount what the UNC itself did in its own advertising campaign towards this last election, because both sides engaged in similar kinds of advertisements. I am saying, therefore, that information alone is

not enough to persuade. The person giving the information—be it a politician on a platform, a political party, a journalist or a newspaper, because people would tell you in this country, which newspaper they believe more and they have comparison between this or that weekly and the dailies—the issue, in terms of being persuaded, is also the question of the credibility of the messenger. From whom is that message coming? From whom is that information coming? In a lot of these advertisements, expensive as they were, Sen. R. Montano and Sen. Mark may be consoled in knowing that they did little to convert the population to the expected point of view. On the contrary, they aroused the population so much that the polarization was, indeed, accentuated and it continues up to today.

My respectful submission—and I know they will not take it, but I owe an obligation to the Senate and what I believe is my responsibility here—is for political parties to rethink their advertising strategies. There are many alternative ways to do it without resorting to such expensive ventures. I am not saying to deny the newspapers their income, but there are different ways to design the advertisements, not only to invoke credibility, but a fuller amount of sincerity. Let them appear to be sincere about what they wish to do, rather than having these vulgarized forms of badgering the population and causing reactions of resentment against this or that party.

Mr. Vice-President, I took the time to look at the definition of “propaganda”, because it has played a central role in this discussion and it has been raised by several speakers previous to this afternoon, by my colleagues on the Independent and Opposition Benches. I looked at what is propaganda to see whether these advertisements, the ones in question—this is an example. [*Sen. Prof. Deosaran shows picture*] Of course, it was more colourful than this, which is another form of subtlety, and I am quite sure contributed to the expense, but this one is in black and white. It is not only the provision of information that was involved here, it was the way the information was delivered that seemed provocative. It applies not only to this instance, but I hope it would be instructive to all other parties on all other occasions that we do not need to go to this extent, one against the other, in such a way.

I looked at the definition of propaganda to see whether what is here fits. The definition in the *Oxford Concise Dictionary* says that propaganda is an organized programme of publicity; selected information used to propagate a doctrine or a practice or a project. I am making these references so that I will not be termed guilty of spreading propaganda; the sources are relatively authoritative.

There is a book called *Propaganda and Persuasion* which deals extensively with the role of propaganda in war, selling ideas to a public, to motivate farmers and to mobilize non-governmental organizations, but this is where the difference arises in our context. This text is very reputable; I used it when I taught mass communications many years ago; in fact, that is a different story. On page 4 it states:

“Propaganda is deliberate and systematic attempt...”

See the words “deliberate and systematic attempt”, Mr. Vice-President:

“to shape perceptions, manipulation cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.”

Is the UNC then saying that the PNM Government is just a bunch of propagandists in the way that they manipulated the information and sent out the message?

**Sen. R. Montano:** Yes!

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** Yes!

**Sen. Prof. R. Deosaran:** It is, of course, for the Government side to respond, but the question does arise. As they say, there is a prima facie case to answer. But all is not lost; we are all not sitting ducks. We have a mind and a judgment to use when faced with such information. That enlightened disposition or that mental resistance can come from education. That is why education is so important, for you to separate the wheat from the chaff; to know what is sheer, unadulterated propaganda and what is useful information for your own edification, so there is a way out. We have to rely on our intellect—and I made this point before—to resist emotional appeals from one source or another and even within our own selves, through our passions and desires framed through emotions. That is why the intellect seems to be the master of the human mind; otherwise our emotions would drift us away into troubling waters.

If we are subjected to propaganda, unthinkingly, that is the direction to which we would sail. So education and the question of choice, which is so fundamental to our democracy, should be used when we are faced with such advertisements. I do not know which advertising company did the advertisements, but apart from the graphics— Propaganda is not only about content, but it is also about technique, it is how you use the information, the imagery you build into it. Let me say, with respect, that my statements are not necessarily confined to what the PNM has done or not done. I am taking this opportunity, because this is going to come up again; we are going to have an election just now. You will see how many of

these you will see, not only on television, but in pamphlets, manifestos—which is really the hot bed, the cradle of propaganda. It is about the way it is said; the way it is disguised; the promises and, really, there is scarcely a government that can think itself innocent in using the manifesto as a vehicle.

Even the music they used—maybe all propaganda is not bad, because it helps to mobilize—in this case the Government felt that it was a useful device to help mobilize the national community into supporting the Bills; you could say that for them, but sometimes a good thing can get out of hand. Salt is good, but too much of it causes it to lose its savour. The last line of the advertisement is asking the public to demand that Members of Parliament support the anticrime legislation when it comes to the vote. This word “demand” puts pressure and it is a matter of debate whether this fits the bill of propaganda or not, by a government using public funds to ask the population to demand that MPs support the anticrime legislation.

In all fairness, there is a saving grace here: the advertisement did not say “Contact your UNC MP”. The advertisement said, “Contact your MP.”

**Sen. R. Montano:** Who do you think they were talking about?

**Sen. Prof. R. Deosaran:** It is for the Opposition to say who they think they were talking about.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Come on; everybody knows who they were talking about.

**Sen. Prof. R. Deosaran:** I do not know if there were any MPs on the Government side who were not prepared to support the anticrime legislation.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** Under Patrick!

**Sen. Prof. R. Deosaran:** Of course, from where I stand, there are many things I do not know about what is going on with the Government side and I also do not know what is going on with the UNC side; so I am speaking as a concerned observer on the last Bench over here; I am looking for information more than propaganda.

Sen. Seepersad-Bachan made two good points; that was one: the use of the word “demand”, which lifted the ante a bit; it became less than information and more about pressure. But is it, in the context of the Motion, legitimate pressure or not? I have said my piece as to when information becomes propaganda and I have raised some questions, especially with the serious charges laid against the

Government, for which, I believe, some answers ought to be coming, not only to clarify what is happening in Parliament, but for the rest of the country and our international reputation. *[Interruption]*

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** Mr. Vice-President, the Senator has, again, made reference to the fact that charges have been made on the other side about the Government being in league with criminals and that it is financed by drug lords. There is no shred of proof of those statements, but just to put the Senator's mind at rest, as far as I am aware, I know of no link between the Government and criminals.

**Sen. Mark:** What about the Jamaat?

**Sen. R. Montano:** What about Mark Guerra? The Jamaat has said it; there is evidence in a court that says it. *[Crosstalk]*

**Sen. Mark:** Then you cannot deny it!

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** Mr. Vice-President, I am not aware of the PNM being financed by any drug lord.

**Sen. Mark:** They are in league with criminals!

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** I think that Sen. Prof. Deosaran is quite right; we are prone in this Senate to make wild allegations.

**Sen. Mark:** Is it not true or are you not aware?

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** I am making a statement, Sir. I am not aware that this Government is in league with any criminal.

**Sen. Dr. Kernahan:** You are not aware!

**Sen. Mark:** But it is true.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** I am not aware that this Government is financed by any drug lord and I want to place that on record.

**Sen. Mark:** You are not aware Lenny, but it is true.

**Sen. R. Montano:** And there is evidence even in a court of law about your connections.

**Sen. Prof. R. Deosaran:** Mr. Vice-President, if I can appeal to your sense of judiciousness; you will notice three minutes of my time has been taken up in the exchange. *[Laughter]* I thank the hon. Minister for his clarification. To what extent it is accepted by the other side is the open issue.

**Sen. R. Montano:** It is not accepted at all.

**Sen. Prof. R. Deosaran:** Mr. Vice-President, we can examine the advertisements one by one—there is something called a Rorschach test, which is a stimulus; it resembles a butterfly; some people say that it resembles a tree; some people say that it resembles a vagina; so different perceptions are imposed or projected upon that test. It is used for accessing company personality differentials and many people with different psychological dispositions, desires and hidden feelings interpret the same stimulus in many different ways. There is some of that in the interpretation of these advertisements. I have no doubt that depending on which side of the political fence you are on, you would certainly give a different interpretation.

The question I am now posing, which I had posed earlier on, is the basis for making a judgment on one or the other side: Where is the data? Where is the analysis? For example, with respect to the first side of the Preamble where it states:

“to persuade the general public...”

I wish we had a measure to see how many people were actually persuaded from one point to the other. From my speaking to people and from what I know, I am not sure. At least, I will not go further than that to say that it was a waste of time or whether it was just politicking or whether it achieved the objective of stimulating debate, letters to the editor, columnists and everybody else. I can say that propaganda is a very effective tool used widely commercially by public relations artists in advertisements; whether it is for rum, where you attach a beautiful woman with a very seductive pair of legs next to the bottle. That is propaganda, because the technique used has little or nothing to do with the contents of the bottle. It tries to explore hidden desires, in the case of the male of our species, and get them to buy rum, hoping that, perhaps, the connection will be made by design or accident, either drunk or sober. It does stimulate some imagery.

If you pursue the discussion, there are several books written on seduction, on the role of lies in advertisement and public relations. We have plenty of lies floating through the public relations realm in this country as well as advertisements. If you really want to be serious about what is in these advertisements, in terms of misleading and putting pressure on the public, there is tremendous psychological pressure through several kinds of advertisements, some of which I know, but it is not appropriate to mention them here. They put heavy



pressure on children, men and children, be it from cosmetics, to being overweight, to running in the gym; whether you are thin like a matchstick you still want to go to the gym, because the pressure to lose weight is so heavy. There are a number of things which put undue pressure on people to do things that they would not otherwise do, if reason had prevailed and they were resistant to the emotional appeals contained in these advertisements and in the political realm, the public relations or what Sen. Mark called the “spin doctors”.

There is an old Chinese saying: He who knows not and knows not that he knows not is a fool; shun him. He who knows and knows not that he knows, is asleep; wake him. He who knows not and knows that he knows not, is simple; teach him. But he who knows and knows that he knows, is a wise man; follow him. That saying brings us to the question of leadership and the role leadership can play in different political parties, in the educational system and in this Parliament, to remove ignorance and propaganda from what should otherwise be helpful information.

Mr. Vice-President, it is very disappointing to know that while we admit the talk shows are horrendous, allegedly so, and while some sections of the media are not fulfilling their responsibility or obligation to serve the public interest, this Parliament, in my view, has not yet taken seriously the implementation of a broadcasting unit to transmit what is said here to the wider public, so that the public can get the information in an authentic way, without any interference by propagandists or advertisements. We are insisting to remain vulnerable to the vagaries of advertisements, not only of this type, but other forms.

We had an opportunity to hear, for example, what the Minister of Finance had to say in wrapping up the Caroni Bill or the clarification the hon. Senator and acting Prime Minister gave just now with respect to the allegations of the Government being in league with criminals. The public has a right to hear this or get it recorded until they come home in the night to hear it. The press cannot carry all this information; it is time that we have a practical understanding of these things. The press can only do so much. We cannot expect the press to do our work for us all the time and with the fullness that we are supposed and entitled. We now have the opportunity to do so by implementing the broadcasting unit, which arose from the Motion proudly passed by all sides of the Senate. The Minister of Public Administration and Information did give a promise to see how fast he could implement it.

It is not so much an appeal for a unit, as much as if there was a unit of this kind to hear what Members of this Senate are saying, it would serve the public interest good and then we can be proud to say that information properly delivered

is the oxygen of democracy. We cannot say so, because the information that gets out to the public domain is not really what the public ought to hear in the fullness of things. When will we take such steps to make our Parliament progressive and modernized, in terms of the role of information for a healthy democracy?

With respect to pressuring the Opposition, I, myself, am a bit concerned at the manner in which some business organizations have so shockingly—I am shocked to know that the President of the Maxi Taxi Association has jumped into the fray too, when you have all this crazy driving and indiscipline on the roads by maxi-taxi drivers. He should have seen about that first, because that is a crime. The behaviour of maxi taxi drivers on the road has become a serious crime and a reflection of gross indiscipline in this country, so if the President of that association wants to have things straightened out, he is starting on the wrong end. He should start from the bottom up, from where he works and what he is doing. But that is not the main point.

The main point is this: Is this the way to put pressure on a political party, be it the Government or not, because the people could put pressure on the Government some time?

**Hon. Senator:** All the time.

**Sen. Prof. R. Deosaran:** I know that. I am making a general principle, but I have to relate it to the Motion at hand. When the business community puts out its big headlines—and you know that the private sector media must have some obligation to publish what the business people want for different reasons that we will not go into, but this big splash—Some of these organizations have problems to get a quorum too, Minister—it is not only our joint select committees that have this problem—but they sound as if there are one million people talking. If you have to put pressure on a political party, be it the Government or, in this case, the Opposition, to support these Bills, present some analysis. Let us hear what your thinking is on whether you want the Police Service Commission moved. If you want a Police Complaints Authority or a new management structure with equal number of Opposition and Government Members, say so or say that you object to it. I think that is the route to go for a sensible discussion. Then, perhaps, the Opposition, itself, might be moved to respond one way or the other; it will have to respond, because that will not just be pressure; it will be a civic guide from the rest of the country.

I think some of these business organizations and the Maxi-Taxi Association President are rather presumptuous and they have gone into this thing like innocent babes into the wild woods. They have to become a little more politically astute, a bit more sensitive and a bit more serious in making representation in matters of such serious importance. That has not been coming, but there is repeated badgering which amounts to bullying the Opposition. Sometimes they bully the Government too; that is their right. I am not taking away the rights of citizens to protest, whether it is in Bamboo No. 1, Bamboo No. 2 or whether it is the Chamber of Commerce, a walk around the Queen's Park Savannah with candles or to go down to Caroni to block the Minister of Finance when she is going to spread the word of betterment and so on. I have no objections to that. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Vice-President, do not forget my three minutes. *[Laughter]*

The bullying must stop or if it has to be done, it should be accompanied by a proper framework of thinking and analysis and presented, as how Senators have usually presented ideas here on this side of the Senate, with respect to the Caroni Bill.

As I conclude, we still have to rely—in spite of all these advertisements—on the role of our free press. I call them free loosely; when I think about it, they are the last bastion of our freedom in this country, not the Parliament. I wish I could have said that the Parliament was the bastion of freedom in this country, but under its present configuration I hesitate. Instead I would say that a free press is the last bastion of freedom and democracy in this country and I say so with careful thinking. *[Desk thumping]* I know what the alternatives are; I know what their faults are; we all know what their faults are; I could enumerate, but in the final analysis, they are the lesser of all evils, in terms of propaganda, advertisement, Opposition politics, governments' abuse of executive authority or whatever, it is on the free press that the ordinary citizen must depend. I hope that the free press, as they are in this country, recognizes that sacred responsibility, because the voices from the Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations are voices of desperation. They are not voices of enlightenment, but we should not have allowed the situation to become so desperate.

In my final point, let me give you a classic case of subtle propaganda: In the *Sunday Guardian* of April 24, 2005, on page 4, there was a headline which stated:

“Cops under microscope”

We all know the story, but I do not want to go into it at length now, except to show you the subtlety of how things operate under the guise of information. An American consultant was brought down here and the newspaper said that he was paid \$5.7 million to conduct a study for 12 months and that he was going to do some work on police integrity. But the story said:

“Sources said the survey was the first of its kind in T & T...”

Lower down, another quote from the story said that:

“...a member of the police executive said last week.”

Lower down, another source, no name yet, but this, to me, is a legitimate exercise. Why the anonymity? Why do you not say what you have to, if a proper exercise is being done?

The article continues:

“For a long time, the Police Service had been plagued with allegations against its members that include drug dealings, murders, kidnapping, robbery, rape, fraud and other offences.”

But no identifiable source. The story went on to say, however, that the work this American consultant would do with the police, the information would not be used against any policeman or source. I cannot understand that; if you are telling me that all those allegations are made, I thought some use would have been put to this thing in a more direct way.

I am not about that; I am looking at the sly manner in which this thing comes out. In addition, I want to say, while I am on my feet, with due respect to the Minister of National Security, I know he must have nothing to do with this, this was not the first time that a survey like this was done in this country. One was done in 2001 and submitted to the Prime Minister’s Office, the Commissioner of Police and to the Minister of National Security on similar, if not identical, lines.

I would like to see in the second to last line of this Motion where it says, “political purposes by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago”, I will be happy if the mover of the Motion would reconsider the words “the Government”; take out the word “the” and put “any” government. I also have my reservations about the penalties to charge those who gave the order, because many of these could be public servants who operate under certain jurisdictions and instructions.

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President, I thought I would take the opportunity to clarify some of these matters, not only for the present occasion, but for future occasions of a similar nature.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Mr. Vice-President, I do not know if the procedure is that as somebody moves an amendment it should be seconded. I would like to second the both amendments that Sen. Prof. Deosaran has made to my Motion.

**The Minister of Social Development (Sen. The Hon. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid):** Mr. Vice-President, unfortunately it seems that too often when we come to the Senate we are faced with the task of having to define democracy for those on the opposite side. Any proper understanding seems to have escaped them. I do not know if it is something biological or intellectual. I have a very difficult time trying to understand what is responsible for this mental block, their incapacity to come to terms with, to understand, articulate or practise anything democratic. They just seem unable to grasp the concept. Time and time again, all that they say suggests to me that they are unfamiliar with the term, unfamiliar with the concept and unfamiliar with the willingness to engage in the development of a democratic system or nation.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** Do you understand what is a democratic nation? I hope you understand.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** I say so, really, as a result of this particular Motion, because at the heart of it is a challenge to the process of the evolution of democracy. As you well know, there are various models of democracy. The system of democracy and all these models articulate, in some cases, different formulae, formula or formulas, according to Sen. Prof. Ramchand, as to how you will arrive as to who will govern the country. We are familiar with the Westminster system, which is the one that we practise, but there exist in the world other systems of proportional representation, convocational democracy and others. There are presidential types and parliamentary systems. Each system would have its inherent advantages and disadvantages, strengths and weaknesses, merits and demerits and we must analyze every system to determine exactly how it would impact on conditions that may exist in our own country.

We have been practising the Westminster system, not in its exact form as is practised in the United Kingdom, but largely we have been consistent with the United Kingdom Westminster system. For example, there are a few differences, perhaps the most significant being that we have a written Constitution as opposed to what obtains in Westminster itself. The objective of any country, any people, must be to use the system to maximize the participation of the people and, as a result, we can say that democracies grow and evolve.

We know that each system would have its flaws and we must be constantly, as a people, examining our system with a view to having it evolve to better meet our needs. That is why I said that democracies grow. I suppose, in our case, that the minimal democratic practice would be to satisfy ourselves that our citizens vote once every five years. If we were to content ourselves with that, perhaps any purist democrat would think, that would be inadequate in furtherance of the development of a process of democracy. I am essentially saying that when citizens vote once every five years, that ought not to be the end of the democratic process.

We have a Parliament and Members of Parliament are free to come here and speak. They can consult with whomsoever they wish before they come to Parliament. Very often we hear MPs saying that “The people say”, “On the ground the word is this”, or that a “letter was written to them” and they bring letters, opinions and positions which would have come to them from various sectors in the society and, sometimes various individuals in society. That is all part of the democratic process; that is part of citizens participating through their parliamentarians in the activity that takes place in the Parliament and that is healthy.

We have not complained. We have not said that a person has written you a letter asking that you take a particular view or that people have been protesting in a particular space and you have been influenced by that; that is a healthy development in our system. In fact, it is something that we might look toward and we should expect will take place as we grow as a democracy. Even within Government ministries you have a situation which has more than taken root; it is, perhaps, well established and that is a system of consultations on various matters.

In our own ministry, in the development of our various policies, we have been engaged in a very thorough and comprehensive exercise of consultation. In fact, we do not only have a single national consultation on various issues, but what we find ourselves having to do in order to get intense, close, comprehensive, sensible comments, is having focus group meetings; we have been having mini-consultations, regional consultations and developing a document, as we proceed, and at the end of that we produce a draft document for national discussion. That is all very good; it is a healthy exchange between Government and citizens. It is a movement forward; a development in the democratic process.

When we were developing our policy on aging, we did focus group meetings. We met with various sections of the communities, stakeholders, non-governmental organizations, older persons, persons working with older persons

and so on. We discussed with them, at length, what they thought should go into a national policy on aging. We developed the document and then we had regional consultations. We went to south, the western part of Trinidad, east and central and we did consultations at that level; we also went to Tobago for a regional consultation. At the end of it, we developed the document further and then had a national consultation, Part I in Trinidad and two months later a national consultation in Tobago, Part II.

The point I am making is that governments must be close to the people at all times; we are attempting to do that. We are attempting to hear what the people have to say to ensure that the views of our citizens are reflected in the documents we produce and in the way we govern the society, so it is a healthy interaction; hundreds of people participate in these exercises. As has been done for many, many years, when budgets are prepared, there is extensive consultation on important national issues as well. I am laying this to provide the background that on important national issues the population must be engaged. A population must be engaged on issues that are of national and critical importance. It is really an exercise and a healthy engagement of the minds of our citizens.

We must understand too that communication costs money. Sen. Prof. Deosaran spoke about activating the broadcast unit to facilitate the broadcast of Parliament; that will cost money. The results would be intangible, but it is a strengthening of the understanding of our people of the system that we operate. It will be a strengthening of the understanding of the people of the contents of the debates we have here, all of which we hope will lead to our citizens being able to make educated and better decisions on a number of issues, including the positions they may take and what they would like to support against what they would like to uphold.

It is our intention, and we accepted that, that it is a positive step in moving to have the public broadcast of debates in the Parliament. I clearly remember Sen. Prof. Deosaran saying that there are good contributions made here to which the national community is not exposed. I agreed with that. I have felt that sometimes good contributions have been made here and the media did not properly reflect them, but in order for us to achieve that process of engaging the minds of our citizens and, as a consequence of that, upgrade their understanding and educate them, we have to spend money; it is going to cost something. We ought not to feel that development and progress can occur without some kind of financial expenditure. Expenditure is not something that should traumatize our country or Members of Parliament.

In that context, really, I was horrified to read the Motion, which read that the general public should put pressure on Members of Parliament. It was interpreted by those on the opposite side that the public was, in fact, being called upon to put pressure on Members of Parliament. It is my humble view that is the work of the people in a democracy. It is their business to put pressure on the Members of Parliament, because as MPs you do not own the seats on which you sit, nor do we own these seats. These seats belong to the people and we represent the people. It is not satisfactory that the people must give you a seat and expect that you could do with this seat as you please in whatever way you think is in your own best interest.

**Sen. Mark:** You must tell them what to do?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** The people must say to you what they would like you to do.

**Sen. Mark:** But the PNM directed the people! [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** We are engaging the minds of the people.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** You cannot demand!

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** In engaging the minds of the people, you are afraid of an intelligent educated people; that is what you are afraid of. [*Desk thumping*] You are afraid of a people who are equipped with an understanding, because it is your view that you own those seats and you can use them to command, dominate and dictate to the people exactly what you would have them do. We were simply providing information. [*Crosstalk*] In providing information, the people are in a better position to make a decision. [*Crosstalk*] It seems to me that some MPs are of the view that the people are sheep and, as a result of that, you alone must have access to their minds. There are 300,000 people who voted for you and they are going to support you on every single issue. I am here to remind you, Senators opposite, that you are sadly mistaken.

To answer Sen. Prof. Deosaran, in my own view too, he was unsure as to what were the effects of the period of the advertisements put out. He was not sure what kind of impact they had. Some of the people he spoke to said nay, some said yea; but I interacted with people too and I have a sense of what they feel too. The people understand the value of the Bills. There are some who understand better the value of the Bills; they understand what the Bills hope to do and what they could do and, very critically, they understand what your behaviour intends to interfere. They understand very well what your behaviour promises to do and they will hold you accountable when the time comes.



**Sen. Mark:** PNM people!

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** Citizens who have traditionally or specifically supported your position, from among those few hundred thousand, have expressed to me that they too experience the frustration. They too experience the difficulties of a society with criminal activity and they understand the value of the Bills. They too were looking forward to some relief and they understand who is responsible for ensuring that relief is not at hand. But the time will come Senators when you will, no doubt, have to come face to face with those people once again.

In fact, I would have thought that any democratically minded politician would have celebrated the fact that we attempted to engage the minds of the people in the way we had. I would have thought that you would have come on board and celebrated a positive step in the evolution of a democratic system. Instead, you have opposed an effort to advance democracy; perhaps, it might be fair to say that entire exercise was a victory for democracy. Judging from your own traditions that you have established for yourselves, a victory for democracy is a defeat for the UNC.

People always complain about non-participation by members of the public in the affairs of Parliament; we have heard that time and again. This activity had the effect of not only explaining the merits of the Bills, as they stood, but explaining the process of Parliament. One would have thought, again, that you would have been more willing to ensure that our citizens participated in such a process.

It seems to me that some of them in the Opposition do not seem to like people. Every time we try to engage the people, they have a difficulty or discomfort with people, but people are what politics is about. [*Crosstalk*] If you do not like people, then get a different job. A good job for people who do not like people might be to dig graves or something like that. [*Crosstalk*] If you dig graves, you are disposing of people; you might enjoy that a little. [*Crosstalk*] It does not seem to me that you are comfortable with any process that seeks to advance the cause of people. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Vice-President, I want to say a little about the role of the Opposition in a democracy. In the United Kingdom, the Opposition is known as “Her Majesty’s Loyal Opposition” and there is a reason for that. The reason is that the Opposition is, indeed, an integral part of the functioning of the system of the democracy. In fact, when Sen. Seepersad-Bachan spoke she said that we depend on traditions, ethics, principles and conventions developed over years and years. A lot of those

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ethics, traditions and principles that she spoke about would have originated in the United Kingdom where the Opposition is understood to be Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. That is not a title that was granted easily; that is a title that exists because the Opposition is expected to behave in a particular way.

The Opposition in the Westminster system carries with it a certain kind of philosophy; it is, indeed, a whole philosophy with guidelines and expectations. It is a philosophy based on an Opposition acting in the national interest. It is a philosophy that is based on a notion that any Opposition would support that which is good for the country and would oppose that which is unhealthy or ill-advised. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** Support on merit, not demerit. You never supported that notion. [*Crosstalk*] They are ready to take over.

**Sen. Dumas:** Not by force.

**Hon. Senator:** That is what you did by force. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** It is also to act as an alternative to the Government. What does that mean? It means bringing intelligent arguments to the table; it means bringing counter proposals; it means engaging the minds of the people too; it means strengthening the understanding of the people. It is not about coming to Parliament and accusing the Government of crimes against humanity; [*Crosstalk*] about people dying on the streets every day, every corner.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** Do you listen? They do not ever listen! [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** It is not about taking a position that says, "We will make this country impossible to govern." No reasonable Opposition in any part of the world with the traditions of ethics that you spoke about, would take a position that, "We will support nothing and we will make this country impossible to govern." [*Desk thumping*]

[*Sen. Seepersad-Bachan rises*]

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** Mr. Vice-President, just as a matter of clarification, if the Minister would give way—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Dumas:** You talked already!

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** "Nah, nah, nah; I ent giving way."

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** But I always give way.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** I “doh” give way. You spoke already. I do not give way. You can get as vex as you want. [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Vice-President, I will not give way.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** What you are saying is untrue; you know that you are lying there. You cannot stand up to scrutiny. You are misleading the Parliament.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** Well, stand on a point of order. Do you have a point of order?

**Sen. Mark:** “Dat is a proxy of Bilaal. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** I know the Senator spoke already. I know he is a different fellow from what he was many years ago. [*Desk thumping*] In fact, when I was growing up, even though he is a few years older than I am, I knew him to be a trade union leader. I was surprised to hear in recent years that he has become an entrepreneur. [*Laughter*] I was also very surprised to hear about his little enterprise in Petit Valley, which has been named “Snoop Marky Mark”. I want to congratulate him. The Senator has become an entrepreneur. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Mark:** I do not understand what you are saying. “Is me you are talking to?” [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** Having become an entrepreneur, I wanted to extend—

**Sen. Mark:** Boy, you are spreading propaganda. That is propaganda! [*Laughter*] That is what Bilaal teaching you?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** He has become known—[*Interruption*] I am telling you what I am hearing on the ground—as “Snoop Marky Mark”.

**Sen. Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, on a point of order; the gentleman, this Senator is imputing improper motives. [*Laughter*] Mr. Vice-President, the hon. Martin Joseph, I thought he was joking—Sen. Abdul-Hamid has now taken it a step further. Unless he has evidence to produce in this Parliament, I am calling on him to withdraw that statement, until he is able to produce evidence; because Martin Joseph has started this thing and Sen. Abdul-Hamid has continued it. He has no evidence; he is spreading misinformation and he is sullyng my character. I want him to immediately withdraw that statement, because he has no evidence to that effect.

**Sen. Joseph:** He said you are a businessman.

**Sen. Mark:** That is not true!

**Sen. Dr. Kernahan:** Black propaganda!

**Sen. Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, I want you to rule on this matter so we can close it off once and for all. [*Laughter*] You are on propaganda; “doh try that”.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Members, though it is a touchy way to get down to 4.30; we are down to 4.30 and we are going to take the tea break. We shall give the Senator the time to find proof, if he has to find proof, and you will get the necessary response, Sen. Mark.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):** Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move that this Senate be now adjourned to Tuesday, May 03, 2005 at 1.30 p.m. at which time we would like to do the Motion under “Committee Business”, that is the special report on the Venture Capital (Amdt) (No. 2) Bill, followed by Motion No. 1 on privileges and immunities for the Caribbean Court of Justice and then to go on to Bill No. 1 on Caricom standards.

**Sen. Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, on a point of order. Sir, I believe that this matter requires—[*Interruption*] the one that my good friend alluded to—I do not believe, Sir, that this gentleman, our senatorial colleague, should be given any time; he must have the evidence. You cannot make a statement unless you have the evidence. Sir, I would like you to rule on this matter before the tea break; if it is anything he can come back later and present to you evidence. If he does not have the evidence, Sir, let him withdraw the statement immediately. [*Crosstalk*] He is misleading this Senate and he is trying to impute improper motives.

**Sen. Dr. Kernahan:** “He taking chain up”.

**Sen. Mark:** I will like to go into business, but I am not yet into business, Sir. [*Laughter*]

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. Mark, in fairness to all concerned, since you would like a ruling on whether the Senator did impute improper motives, we are going to take the tea break and I am going to request the *Hansard* report for that section of the statement and I will decide on it. There is a motion on the Adjournment, which we shall take when we come back. We shall now be suspended for the tea break.

**4.33 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

*Adjournment*

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**5.05 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, just before we took the tea break, I promised Sen. Mark that I would look at the *Hansard* report of what was said that was described by him as imputing improper motives. I read:

**“Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** I know the Senator spoke already. I know he is a different fellow from what he was many years ago. [*Desk thumping*] In fact, when I was growing up, even though he is a few years older than I am, I knew him to be a trade union leader. I was surprised to hear in recent years that he has become an entrepreneur. I was also very surprised to hear about his little enterprise in Petit Valley, which has been named “Snoop Marky Mark”. I want to congratulate him, the Senator has become an entrepreneur. [*Laughter*]”

Sen. Mark, I fail to see someone imputing an improper motive in commending you on an enterprise—[*Interruption*] [*Desk thumping*] If there is no such enterprise, and you deny it, then I shall ask the Senator to withdraw the statement and let it rest.

Sen. Mark claims he knows nothing about any enterprise named “Snoop—[*Laughter*] I am now seeing what might have upset the Senator—“Snoop Marky Mark”—Senator, he claims that he knows nothing about this enterprise, so I suggest that you withdraw it.

**Sen. Abdul-Hamid:** Mr. Vice-President, I did not say there was an enterprise by the name of “Snoop Marky Mark”. I said, as a result of the nature of the enterprise, he had attracted the name “Snoop Marky Mark” for himself, and that is what a few people have said to me. And he always comes to this Parliament and says what people would have said to him. I am just saying that people have referred to him as the new “Snoop Marky Mark”.

I did not say that there was any specific enterprise. If he has denied the existence of the enterprise, then so be it, let his denial stand. But that is the information I have.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. Abdul-Hamid, I am asking you to withdraw the statement and let this rest.

**Sen. Abdul-Hamid:** Could you just tell me exactly which word you would like withdrawn? [*Interruption*] What is the offensive word?

*Adjournment*

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**Mr. Vice-President:** That he has an enterprise that is called “Snoop Marky Mark”.

**Sen. Abdul-Hamid:** “I didn’t say that.” I said—*[Interruption]* Well, I would like to rephrase—

**Sen. Mark:** No, no, you cannot rephrase.

**Sen. Abdul-Hamid:** Mr. Vice-President, fine, so be it. I will accept your ruling. There is no enterprise as “Snoop Marky Mark”; I withdraw that part of it. I am aware that he, himself, is the “Snoop Marky Mark”. *[Laughter]*

**Mr. Vice-President:** Please, could we do this with some maturity? He has withdrawn this “Snoop Marky Mark” thing, and I would like it struck off the record please. There is no such enterprise.

Sen. Mark, would you please proceed with your Motion?

**Occupational Safety and Health Act, 2004  
(Proclamation)**

**Sen. Wade Mark:** Thank you very much, Sir. Mr. Vice-President. The Motion before this honourable Senate deals with the failure of the hon. Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development to have the Occupational Safety and Health Act, 2004 proclaimed.

Mr. Vice-President, it is a travesty of justice that the PNM has failed to proclaim to date the Occupational Safety and Health 2004 legislation. My dear friend, the Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, Anthony Roberts, has stated that the legislation—and that was sometime ago—is before a tripartite team to develop structures for the Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA). I believe this is really contemptuous of workers and their families whose breadwinners have died on the job.

So far, in 2005, it has been recorded that some five workers have lost their lives due to industrial accidents and the Minister appears to be unsure as to what exactly is causing the delay in implementing that law. He talks about further consultation with Tobago, he also speaks about officers now being trained in safety and health issues, he also referred to the appointment of an authority to administer the law, and now he alludes to a Cabinet team appointed to examine and develop structures and guidelines for the implementation of the legislation.

Mr. Vice-President, I have no doubt that the hon. Minister is sincere, but I want to believe that he is somewhat confused. I want to let him know that when the United National Congress demitted office, or was removed from office in December 2001, we left a completed OSH Bill which was eventually brought to Parliament by his predecessor and was unanimously passed by this House. The Regulations for operating the Act were also ready, and a draft structure and operational plan of the authority which dealt with policy foundation and advisory headed by a chairman, and the executing arm headed by a director were also completed.

Mr. Vice-President, we have done the groundwork for putting the legislation in operation. We do not have to wait until all industries in this country are OSHA ready, we would like to have the Minister proclaim parts of the legislation as soon as possible, but before he does so, we call on the Minister to lay the Regulations which we had prepared and left in draft form.

**Sen. Dumas:** It was not good.

**Sen. W. Mark:** Government is serious business and we would like the hon. Minister to move swiftly and introduce the relevant Regulations and necessary promulgation of the legislation. It seems that the PNM Government continues to show its lack of interest in matters of workers' safety. This regime has always been anti-worker and the fact that the OSH legislation has been in formation under the PNM since 1975, and it was only during the UNC administration that it developed to the stage where it reached Parliament and was eventually passed.

Mr. Vice-President, even then the PNM shot down that particular piece of legislation on three occasions. It was the UNC that forced the PNM to bring it back to Parliament, and in 2003 as you recall, it was passed with our support. The Occupational Safety and Health Act is too important for workers and employers' safety to be left languishing in a Cabinet-appointed committee. We therefore call on the hon. Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development to get his act together and stop pussyfooting on this very important piece of legislation. We would like him to move swiftly to have the OSH legislation proclaimed.

Mr. Vice-President, we have been receiving complaints, and we have taken the time to really bring to the attention of the hon. Minister the need to have this legislation proclaimed, and the need for us to have the Regulations tabled in the Parliament. Trinidad and Tobago is a highly industrialized country in this part of the region relatively speaking, and it is really sad and disappointing that we still

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operate under the old Factories Ordinance of 1948, and even though it has taken us so many decades to put our house in order, I think that the PNM and my dear colleague and friend, the hon. Anthony Roberts should move with haste to have the necessary resources put in place. We just had a big party to inaugurate the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) costing this country \$2.5 million. [*Interruption*] When I say so, I mean the region, with us contributing about 30 per cent of that \$2.5 million.

Mr. Vice-President, it cannot be a lack of resources that is causing this Government to detain the promulgation of this legislation. Is it big business pressure? What is causing the Government the delay in the implementation of this very important piece of legislation? I want to remind you that the former Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, indicated to us that once we had passed the legislation, it would have been a Christmas gift to the workers of this country, and that was in December 2003. We are now in April 2005, almost a year and four months later and we are no closer to the promulgation of this very important piece of workers legislation.

So I appeal to the hon. Minister to give us a definitive time schedule for the proclamation of this legislation and the possibility of saving the lives of scores of workers who may otherwise perish in the months ahead if that law is not proclaimed. My appeal to the hon. Minister is that in giving a definitive plan, he must also let us know whether it is going to be done in parts or in whole. The important matter before us is to get that Act going so that workers and employers—it is not only workers, Sir—would benefit from the implementation of such a measure.

Thank you.

**The Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development (Hon. Anthony Roberts):** Mr. Vice-President, I want to express gratitude to you for the opportunity, and to Sen. Mark for bringing this Motion to this honourable Senate so that once again I would have the opportunity to bring the Parliament up-to-date as to where we are with respect to this important piece of legislation to which he alluded.

I have had the opportunity to read the contribution of Members, including my good friend, Sen. Mark, when the debate was taking place in the Senate on that Bill, and notwithstanding some of the political rhetoric of my friend, he did make some salient points in his contribution. Permit me to quote from *Hansard* on Tuesday, January 13, 2004. It reads:



“But, in today's environment where Trinidad and Tobago is seen as a highly industrialized country within the family of the region, this piece of legislation is long overdue. Trinidad and Tobago should seek, as we are seeking to do, to promote a positive culture of safety and health at the workplace, and we should encourage all the stakeholders, all the social partners, as the Minister alluded to in his presentation, the Government, the labour movement, the employers/managers or management, the non-governmental organizations, should all be involved in seeking to promote a culture of safety in the workplace.”

Sen. Mark went on to say:

“...I think as we continue to educate and build awareness and sensitivity, as we seek to establish a legal framework...”

Mr. Vice-President, what I gathered from Sen. Mark's contribution was that he was telling us that the question of proclamation was not something that could be done overnight, because he talked about education, building awareness and sensitivity as we seek to establish the legal framework.

It was Sen. Mark, in his contribution, who enquired from the then Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, Minister Achong, as to the time frame for the implementation, and Minister Achong at that time advised the Senate that it would take about one year. He was saying that the question of proclamation would take sometime to put the necessary institutional and administrative framework in place before the proclamation.

So I think my good friend, Sen. Mark, could have called me because we get along fairly well. He could have called me and enquired as to how far we had gotten and I would have taken the time to inform the goodly Senator as to what is taking place. But I understand my friend has found himself in the political wilderness so it is necessary to try to score some political points.

Mr. Vice-President, I take the opportunity again to remind Sen. Mark of the steps that we have taken to date, and I heard him mention some of them because he is aware of what is taking place. Section 64(1) of the Act stipulates the establishment of the Occupational Safety and Health Authority, to which Sen. Mark made reference a while ago and that has the responsibility for the implementation of the provisions of the Act.

Section 69(1) establishes the Occupational Safety and Health Agency, and in pursuance of the establishment of these two bodies, the Cabinet of this Government appointed the Occupational Safety and Health Council to which Sen. Mark made reference a while ago. One of the terms of reference of this council was to draft the Occupational Safety and Health Authority's policy. Sen. Mark would appreciate that this Government will have to look at the entire thing and develop policy guidelines as it sees necessary to develop codes of practice that would provide the framework for the Occupational Safety and Health Authority to carry out its functions and submit recommendations for the organizational structure of the said authority.

Mr. Vice-President, the council did submit its report, but in its anxiety, it omitted to take into consideration the views of Tobago and Sen. Mark will agree with me that Tobago is an integral part of the unitary State of Trinidad and Tobago. So the report was referred to the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) and we are following up the matter. I was in Tobago on Monday holding discussions with the THA as it relates to the report. [*Interruption*] Are you saying that Tobago is not important?

**Hon. Senator:** It is very important but—

**Hon. A. Roberts:** Thank you. As I was saying, I was in Tobago holding discussions with the Chief Secretary and other Members of the Tobago House of Assembly on Monday with respect to the Occupational Safety and Health Act and to urge them to get the report to us as quickly as possible because we, too, agree that this piece of legislation is very important.

When the report is completed and we get the response from the THA, the next step would be to seek Cabinet's approval, but while all this is happening, the Government is not sitting idly by and it is necessary for us to prepare the personnel that Sen. Wade Mark made reference to. So while the report is being looked at, it is necessary for us to prepare the personnel who would assist in the implementation of the Act through the authority to which he referred.

We pursued the level of training to which I referred on the last occasion and I indicated to you that one officer, Mr. Devnath Roopnarine pursued and completed studies which led to him attaining the postgraduate diploma in Occupational Safety and Health at the University of Salford, Manchester, London. At present, we have five Safety Officers I and they are pursuing training facilitated by the Caribbean Health and Environment and Safety Service towards obtaining a National General Certificate in Occupational Safety and Health, and only on the 19<sup>th</sup> of this month, one officer left for China to participate in activities of occupational safety and health.

Mr. Vice-President, as we go along we will continue to educate and build the same awareness and sensitivity to which Sen. Mark made reference, and I want to assure this Senate that is the way to go as we seek to get Trinidad and Tobago OSHA ready. I want to give you the assurance that the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development is not lying idly as it relates to this particular piece of legislation, but we are taking every appropriate step in pursuit of the implementation of this important piece of legislation.

Thank you.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Senate adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 5.30 p.m.*