

*Leave of Absence*

*Tuesday, December 13, 2005*

**SENATE**

*Tuesday, December 13, 2005*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

**PRAYERS**

[MADAM PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Madam President:** Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence to Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill who is out of the country from today's sitting of the Senate and Sen. The Hon. Howard Chin Lee who is ill. I have also granted leave of absence from today's sitting to Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand.

**SENATORS' APPOINTMENT**

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

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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

/s/ G. Richards  
President.

TO: MRS. MAGNA WILLIAMS-SMITH

WHEREAS Senator Conrad Enill is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, MAGNA WILLIAMS-SMITH, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 13th December, 2005 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Conrad Enill.

*Senators' Appointment*  
[MADAM PRESIDENT]

*Tuesday, December 13, 2005*

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 9th day of December, 2005."

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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

/s/ G. Richards  
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, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, 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 effect from 13th December, 2005 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 12th day of December, 2005."

Hon. Senators, Senators are required to take the oath. I want to draw to Senators' attention that three Members are required to take the oath and one instrument has not yet arrived. I crave the indulgence of the Senate to take this later in the proceedings.

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Senators Magna William-Smith and Dr. Tim D. Gopeesingh took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.*

**PAPERS LAID**

1. A Green Paper on Standards for the Operation of all Schools. [*The Minister of Education (Sen. The Hon. Hazel Manning)*]
2. A Draft White Paper entitled “National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Education 2005—Standards for Regulating Early Childhood Services”. [*Sen. The Hon. H. Manning*]
3. Seventy-eighth Report of the Salaries Review Commission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. [*The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith)*]
4. Seventy-ninth Report of the Salaries Review Commission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith*]

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**  
**Unemployment Relief Programme**  
**(Funds spent)**

**10. Sen. Sadiq Baksh** asked the hon. Minister of Local Government:

Could the hon. Minister provide the total amount of funds spent on the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) on a monthly basis for the period January 01, 2002 to September 30, 2005?

**The Minister of Local Government (Sen. The Hon. Rennie Dumas):** Madam President, the Employment Training Programme was transferred from the Ministry of Labour to the Ministry of Local Government in March 2002, where it returned to the format of the Unemployment Relief Programme.

The monthly expenditure for the period January 01, 2002—September 30, 2005 is as follows:

Year	Month	Expenditure (\$)
2002	January	1,491,191
	February	9,485,535
	March	7,785,106
	April	10,172,315
	May	12,845,741

*Oral Answers to Questions*  
[SEN. THE HON. R. DUMAS]

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	June	12,326,490
	July	13,984,891
	August	19,449,324
	September	16,710,379
	October	14,317,238
	November	410,088
	December	9,661,337
2003	January	3,125,991
	February	10,791,844
	March	13,651,270
	April	12,214,394
	May	15,131,257
	June	10,670,254
	July	15,225,444
	August	11,873,181
	September	22,707,835
	October	Nil
	November	21,365
	December	12,674,090
2004	January	11,431,447
	February	19,767,718
	March	13,958,955
	April	19,812,937
	May	14,787,504
	June	17,029,752

	July	24,961,339
	August	19,754,862
	September	62,550,757
	October	16,550,757
	November	27,914,411
	December	39,758,654
2005	January	25,286,864
	February	21,970,771
	March	22,014,749
	April	20,885,917
	May	27,307,335
	June	23,122,120
	July	33,654,702
	August	38,701,671
	September	70,049,625
Total		827,999,407

The variations on the monthly expenditure figures are accounted for by the following three factors:

- (a) The closure of three fortnights in some months instead of two fortnights which require three payments of wages instead of two.
- (b) The efforts made by the Ministry of Local Government to settle accounts with providers of goods and services in the month of September which immediately precede the closure of the financial year on September 30.
- (c) The bringing to book of the contract claims of the projects under the special projects component of the programme.

**Community-based Environmental Protection  
and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP)  
(Funds spent)**

**11. Sen. Sadiq Baksh** asked the hon. Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment:

Could the Minister provide this Senate with the total amount of funds spent on the Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP) on a monthly basis from its inception to September 30, 2005?

**The Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment (Hon. Penelope Beckles):** Madam President, the answer is long and I have taken the liberty to prepare the documentation for circulation, even though it is not for written response. I have to get the approval to circulate because it was not for written answer.

**Madam President:** You can circulate it. Senator, do you want it to be read?

**Sen. Baksh:** Yes.

**Hon. P. Beckles:** The Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme commenced operations in September 2002. Information on the total amount of funds spent on the programme on a monthly basis from its inception to September 30, 2005, is now being presented.

Year	Month	Expenditure(\$)
2002	September	6,406,590.97
	October	10,881,003.77
	November	14,178,084.30
	December	13,330,643.70
2003	January	870,226.28
	February	13,256,620.69
	March	13,104,291.20
	April	14,478,214.76
	May	15,186,371.53

	June	14,797,030.85
	July	15,642,150.10
	August	21,551,392.49
	September	7,073,014.13
	October	289,588.10
	November	10,876,051.41
	December	12,726,463.76
2004	January	14,926,546.30
	February	17,938,760.22
	March	17,913,070.99
	April	18,590,481.22
	May	20,953,965.75
	June	14,935,843.28
	July	22,994,069.67
	August	23,030,906.53
	September	19,903,903.32
	October	20,133,361.15
	November	20,786,243.59
	December	26,851,033.14
2005	January	17,362,165.54
	February	19,408,829.83
	March	18,129,297.89
	April	19,849,825.28
	May	17,902,560.11
	June	24,984,792.63

July	17,793,658.74
August	14,924,785.11
September (Estimated)	36,874,324.04

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** In what was stated there is an estimate for September 2005. This is December, 2005.

**Hon. P. Beckles:** There were some outstanding contractor fees and at the close of the fiscal year I applied for additional funds from Cabinet to pay that outstanding money.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** This is not the total figure.

**Hon. P. Beckles:** I cannot give the exact figure but it would not be much more.

**Jamaat al Muslimeen Abu Bakr  
(Re-prosecution of)**

**14. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Attorney General:

Could the hon. Attorney General provide to the Senate the reasons, if there are any, as to why no steps have been taken to commence the re-prosecution of the Leader of the Jamaat al Muslimeen, Abu Bakr, in compliance with the order of the High Court?

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):** Madam President, the hon. Attorney General is at a meeting on crime with the Members of the Opposition. I have the answer but I will not be able to take any supplemental. Should I read the answer or will you wait?

**Sen. Mark:** Madam President, he can proceed to read the answer.

**Sen. The Hon Dr. L. Saith:** Madam President, on March 16, 2005, the jury failed to agree on a verdict and the hon. Justice Mark Mohammed ordered a retrial at the next Assizes.

In re-listing the matter the Registrar would have no doubt taken into account the extensive media coverage that the trial attracted and the need for there to be a cooling-down period. The re-listing of a matter is the function of the Registrar through the Criminal Registry to have the matter re-listed.



In the case of Yasin Abu Bakr, prior to the commencement of the trial there was a motion to state the indictment on the grounds inter alia of adverse pretrial publicity. There were extensive written and oral submissions on the above mentioned grounds. The court ruled in favour of the prosecution and the trial proceeded with the result of a hung jury. This trial attracted extensive media coverage. Notwithstanding the above, on November 14, 2005, the Director of Public Prosecutions wrote to the Registrar requesting that the matter be re-listed. To date, no response has been received.

**Darul-Islam**  
**(Amount of Money Paid)**

**15. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries:

Could the Minister state the amount of money paid by the Government or any state enterprise or state agency to the body known as Darul-Islam or any other entity associated with the Jamaat al Muslimeen?

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):** Madam President, I have been advised by the Minister that the answer to this question is still not ready.

Let me say that this question asks for the money paid by the Government or any state enterprise or agency to the Jamaat al Muslimeen. It requires the Minister to seek information from other ministries. More appropriately, the Minister to ask this should have been the Minister of Finance where the payments are being made. It is taking some time to get information from other ministries.

I ask for a deferral of one week.

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**Enforcement of Order**  
**(Jamaat al Muslimeen)**

**17. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Attorney General:

- (a) Could the Attorney General state whether the Government intends to enforce the order for the payment of compensation of interest and costs made by Justice Joseph Tam to members of the Jamaat al Muslimeen during the insurrection of 1990?
- (b) If the Government has such intention, could the hon. Attorney General state what steps have been taken to enforce the judgment of hon. Joseph Tam that the members of the Jamaat al Muslimeen pay compensation which today stands at over \$40 million?

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):** Madam President, this one I do not have and I am asking on behalf of the Attorney General for a week's deferral.

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

### **Avian Bird Flu**

**28. Sen. Robin Montano** asked the hon. Minister of Health:

Would the Minister please state in detail:

- (a) What steps have already been taken at the date of this question in Trinidad and Tobago to protect the country from an outbreak of avian bird flu?
- (b) What steps are currently being taken at the date that this question is answered?
- (c) What plans are in place to protect this country's human beings and poultry industry in the event that an outbreak of bird flu does in fact take place?

**The Minister of Health (Hon. John Rahael):** Madam President, as early as May 2005, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), World Health Organization (WHO) and the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC) initiated preliminary discussions with a view to formulate the H5NP pandemic response and preparedness plan. Since then all the relevant stakeholders have been in continuous discussions to achieve a state of preparedness in the event of a pandemic.

A task force was established comprising the Animal Health Department and Production Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources; the Veterinary Health Public Unit, Ministry of Health and the Wildlife Division of the Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment.

The Wildlife Division has ceased the issuance of convention international trade in endangered species permits for the import of exotic birds from European countries of origin.

Under the Animal Disease and Importation Act, the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources has also ceased the issuance of import permits for birds and other animal products from South America, post the outbreak of H9N2 in Colombia; that is Czars.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources has implemented a total ban on pet bird imports from all countries.

No imports of animal products or live birds will be allowed from countries where the outbreaks are noted.

Farmers are being apprised of risk reduction methodologies to reduce the risk of wild and migrant birds transmitting the disease to our national flock.

Surveillance activities are ongoing with all cases of increased mortality being investigated among commercial as well as wild dead bird sightings.

A public awareness campaign to reach out to hunters, forest rangers, game wardens and naturalists is currently on the way.

Laboratory testing facilities have been upgraded with the help from the private sector donating ELISA test kits to be used in diagnosis of this disease.

All pet shops are being informed about the risk of purchasing illegally imported birds and the fact that they may face closure if caught with such animals.

**2.00 p.m.**

A meeting is scheduled with the Customs and Excise Division as well as members of the protective service in an attempt to increase the surveillance of illegal imports on the southern mainland.

Legal advice is being sought to determine the fate of seized birds, as currently these animals are lugged or transported back and forth to the courts as part of the evidence and can therefore pose a major threat to our country.

Training of all personnel in sample collection and surveillance techniques is being conducted for the staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and the Ministry of Health.

The Ministry of Health has ordered protective equipment and prophylactic drugs in the event of an outbreak.

With respect to 28(c), the Ministry of Health has set up a multi-disciplinary task force with the aim of drafting and implementing an emergency preparedness plan for impending outbreaks of a global influenza pandemic. This is consistent with the stipulation and guidelines recommended by the World Health Organization and the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. The draft plan has been prepared and with the help of the office of Disaster Preparedness and Management a tabletop simulation of the plan is carded for the near future.

Also, with respect to 28(c):

- Sensitization workshops are being carried out with all the stakeholders: the Regional Health Authorities, professional bodies, et cetera, to inform them of their responsibilities under the said plan.
- Public awareness activities have been initiated.
- A draft proclamation for the quarantine isolation, containment of infected persons has been prepared.
- The pharmaceutical suppliers have been contracted to supply the anti-retroviral medication, including suspension—which is powder form—for children.
- The current flu vaccine being used in North America has been ordered as it is envisioned that this may offer some level of cross-protection.
- Personal protection equipment N95 masks, protective gowns, surgical masks, et cetera, have been procured.
- The Veterinarian Public Health Unit of the ministry is collaborating with the Veterinarian Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources to implement surveillance activities for early detection of the disease.
- An active surveillance system—

Surveillance at all ports of entry has been stepped up, especially for cargo emanating from diseased epidemic countries. The Task Force Committee and other stakeholders are continually monitoring and evaluating the situation worldwide and whatever necessary changes that need to be made will be done accordingly.

Thank you, Madam President.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Madam President, could the Minister please clarify something for me? I did not quite understand. Am I to understand his answer to Part (c) of my question is that the plan is not yet in place? Do I understand that the plan is still being formulated? If that is what I understood, then would the Minister please say when the plan will be in place?

**Hon. J. Rahael:** The plan is in place, it is the simulation that is not yet in place.

**Sen. R. Montano:** The other thing that I did not quite understand—I am delighted to hear that the plan is in place—that I am asking: Did I understand from the Minister that the various drugs, like the powder drug to which he referred, have been ordered but have not arrived? If I have understood and if I am articulating him correctly when are the drugs likely to be here?

**Hon. J. Rahael:** Some of the pharmaceuticals are, in fact, in the country and some are expected within the next two or three weeks. This order was placed about two months ago.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Again, I am simply seeking clarification because the issue is serious and I thank the Minister for letting the country know what his plans are in details. Did I understand him to say—again, forgive me because I listened closely—that the current surveillance is only on endangered species and exotic birds? Is there no surveillance, for example, on turkeys or chickens? If there are plans to look also at things like chickens and turkeys, are you doing the same thing as you are doing with exotic species?

**Hon. J. Rahael:** Yes, the exotic species have been banned. With respect to turkeys and other poultry products, surveillance is continuing all the time with respect to those imports. [*Interruption*]

Yes, there are turkeys as well. Whenever something is coming into the country a lot depends on which country it is coming from—[*Interruption*—No, turkeys are not banned; the exotic birds are banned and live birds are also being inspected whenever they come into the country.

#### WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

*The following question was asked by Sen. Wade Mark:*

#### **Change of Residence (Hon. Prime Minister)**

22. With respect to the change of residence of the Honourable Prime Minister, could the Minister of Public Administration and Information provide to the Senate the following detailed informationa:
- i) The names of the owners of the residence which the Prime Minister is currently occupying at Federation Park, St. Clair?
  - ii) The monthly rental of the residence?
  - iii) The duration of the lease?

*Written Answer to Question*

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- iv) The actual cost of the lease to taxpayers?
- v) A complete list of the repairs, if any, undertaken?
- vi) A detailed breakdown of the cost of such repairs?
- vii) The details of the terms and conditions of the agreement governing the entire repair and refurbishing process undertaken prior to occupation?

*Vide end of sitting for written answer.*

#### **SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT**

**Madam President:** Hon. Senators, can I crave your indulgence, please? I have received the instrument of appointment for the temporary Senator. I have received the following correspondence from His Excellency the President, Prof. George Maxwell Richards:

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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

/s/ G. Richards  
President.

TO: MRS. JOAN HACKSHAW-MARSLIN

WHEREAS Senator Howard Chin Lee is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of illness:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, JOAN HACKSHAW-MARSLIN, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with immediate effect and continuing during the period of illness of the said Senator Howard Chin Lee.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 13th day of December, 2005.”

*Oath of Allegiance*

*Tuesday, December 13, 2005*

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Sen. Joan Hackshaw-Marslin took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.*

**NATIONAL LOTTERIES (AMDT.) BILL**

*Order for second reading read.*

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

That a Bill to amend the National Lotteries Act, Chap. 21:04 be now read a second time.

The National Lotteries Control Board was established by an Act of Parliament in 1968. It is also a statutory body that is by declaration under section 3(2), Chap. 24:01 for staffing purposes. The Board was established as a direct policy initiative of the then Government. Its operations were expected to increase Government's revenue as well as impact on employment levels through the provision of employment to agents, vendors and staff.

The National Lotteries Control Board has been successful in this regard having commenced operations in 1969 in rented premises at No. 41—43 Sackville Street, Port of Spain with a staff of 14, with 77 agents. At the end 1969 the National Lotteries Control Board's contribution to Government's revenue from its traditional lottery, as it was then called, was \$1,618,931.

Madam President, in 1987 Trinidad and Tobago faced a downturn in the economy and the early impact created by this type of lottery had begun to wane. The Board responded to its change in fortunes and in the following year, 1988, introduced the Instant Lottery. The impact was instant with contributions to the Government coffers increasing to approximately \$26 million in 1991.

In 1993, the internal staffing of NLCB increased to 55 and the pool of agents increased from 77 to 400. The cost of rental accommodation increased and the cramped conditions at Sackville Street could no longer adequately accommodate the NLCB's staff, nor support the Board's broad plan. It was in that year that they acquired the premises at No. 119—121 Duke Street and they have since been housed at that location.

In 1994, they introduced the Classic and Instant Lotteries. In addition to that, in that year, they introduced Play Whe, which was really a replacement of the traditional Whe Whe, which was a traditional grassroots game for which there was wide acceptance, even though in a strict sense it was illegal. This illegal game

has been operating in Trinidad and Tobago for almost 70 years. The numbers game, as it is readily known, has been played on turfs where bankers “buss” the mark. Madam President, you would appreciate that in this game the banker kept the spoils and no moneys came to the Treasury. Out of the game's national appeal and widespread popularity a dilemma arose out of having to stop an illegal game, while at the same time, satisfying the desire for gaming by the public—I understand this was the rationale for the introduction of Play Whe.

Madam President, in that year the contribution of the National Lotteries Control Board to the Consolidated Fund was \$87.7 million. As a matter of fact, over the 10-year period 1994—2004 the contribution to the Consolidated Fund was \$1.7 billion and from its inception to 2004 they have contributed just over \$2,056,260,612. The internal staffing now stands at 92 with over 900 agents.

The National Lotteries Control Board has approached another threshold owing to its success. The NLCB recognizes that it needs to constantly review its operation plans and constantly analyze its competition and reposition itself. It is with this in mind that the Board has developed new plans for the NLCB. These plans include the housing of the specific operations under one roof, including studio and storage facilities, which are currently outsourced. These facilities are currently rented from one television station.

Madam President, the present location of the NLCB just cannot meet the demands based on its growth and vision. Notwithstanding this, the current legislation does not empower NLCB to acquire and hold real and personal property. In particular, section 21 of the National Lotteries Act stipulates the purposes to which the revenue of the Board is to be applied to the following:

- “(a) the payment of prize money;
- (b) the remuneration, fees and allowances of the members or of any committee of the Board;
- (c) the salaries, fees, remuneration and gratuities of employees, servants and agents of the Board;
- (d) the working operation.”

Section 23 of the Act requires the balance of the revenue of the Board at the end of each financial year to be paid into the Consolidated Fund after allowing all expenses and the amount reserved for prizes.



It is clear that the existing legislation governing the NLCB does not allow the organization to pursue the acquisition of real or personal property in order to implement decisions that could enhance its overall performance. In order to allow NLCB to further its development plans as well as to provide appropriate legitimacy to its current property ownership, the Government has proposed that the National Lotteries Act be amended to include the following:

to acquire and hold real property;

to dispose of property no longer required;

to do all such things that are incidental or conducive to the attainment of its objects.

In view of the success of NLCB and its contribution to the Consolidated Fund, as well as the existing shortcomings of the Act which constrain its work programme, I ask you, hon. Senators, for your support in this amendment.

Madam President, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**Sen. Wade Mark:** Madam President, I rise to make a contribution on the National Lotteries (Amdt.) Bill, 2005, and to indicate to you that it has been said that the business of Government is to suppress evil and not to supervise it.

There are a few matters in life with a greater sleaze factor than the unholy alliance between the gaming industry and Government. In fact, state-operated lotteries corrupt governments. We are dealing with an amendment to an Act—according to clause 2 of the Bill—that seeks to give to the Board of Directors additional power than they already possess. If you go to section 9 of the Act you will ask yourself why this additional power. Under section 9(f) in terms of duties and functions, this particular institution or organization can “incur such other expenses as may be necessary for organizing and conducting the lottery.” Now, they are into the business of lotteries, which is National Lotteries Control Board.

We have not gotten any justification from the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance as to why the Government has seen it necessary or appropriate at this time to provide this particular statutory authority with this additional power. The particular amendment that is being suggested is that the Government is seeking to get parliamentary approval to give to this particular Board the power to do all such things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of its objects. It is very loose; it is very vague and it could be misinterpreted because this particular additional responsibility could be utilized by a board for other objectives; for other purposes that are not intended.

We have not received any proper justification from the hon. Minister as to why the Government wanted to change and to add, in this instance, this particular provision to the existing Act. We have to be very mindful of providing additional powers to boards, be they state enterprises, special purposes vehicles or in this instance a statutory authority. In the absence of proper transparency and accountability we believe that the Government is treading on dangerous grounds by proposing this amendment among others.

Madam President, are you aware that since 2000, the National Lotteries Control Board has not submitted financial audited accounts for its operations to the Parliament? I have sought, before this debate, to get the financial audited accounts from the library. The last audited financial statement, I was told, was sent some time in 1999. So here it is we are seeking to give additional power to an institution; to an organization; to a statutory agency to do all such things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of its objects and this Parliament in 2005 is yet to receive any financial audited statements of accounts from this particular organization.

This alone should constitute a basis for rejecting this amendment this afternoon. Why must we give to the National Lotteries Control Board additional power, when given the existing law—and I want to refer you, Madam President, to the National Lotteries Act, Chap. 21:04 if I could ask you to refer to clause 25(2) which says and I quote:

“The accounts of the Board shall be audited by the Auditor General.”

It goes on to say, Madam President:

“After the end of each financial year of the Board, the Board shall as soon as the accounts of the Board have been audited, cause a copy of the statement of accounts to be transmitted to the Minister of Finance, together with a copy of any report made by the Auditor General on that statement or on the accounts of the Board.”

Clause 25(4) states:

“The Minister of Finance shall cause a copy of every such statement and report to be laid before Parliament.”

It is either the Minister of Finance or the Minister in the Ministry of Finance or the Ministers in the Ministry of Finance are guilty of dereliction of duty and responsibility to this honourable Senate. It could be that the National Lotteries Control Board submitted their accounts and for some reason the Minister of Finance or the Ministers in the Ministry of Finance have refused to bring those reports to Parliament.

Madam President, the other area of concern is that you have a board that has no respect for the laws governing its operations. We do not know what the truth is. We would like the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance to give us an account as to why the National Lotteries Control Board has failed to submit to this honourable Senate since 1999, audited financial accounts.

**2.30 p.m.**

Madam President, I have asked on many occasions many questions concerning the donation policy of this particular institution. We have gotten sometimes limited responses to our concerns. Madam President, may I also refer you to clause 23 of the National Lotteries Control Act. The Hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance has indicated that at the end of each financial year, all excess moneys earned at the National Lotteries Control Board after allowing for all expenses should be sent to the Consolidated Fund.

Madam President, I refer to section 23 of the Act and it reads:

“At the end of each financial year there shall be paid into the Consolidated Fund after allowing for all expenses and the amount reserved for prizes, the balance standing to the credit of the National Lotteries account.

That is what the law says.

Madam President, a report was conducted by the firm of Jeremie, Alexander and Company on the operations of the National Lotteries Control Board between 1998 and 2001. We are yet to get a copy of that report. We have read that the Government wanted to take action on what they considered to be allegations involving activities of that National Lotteries Control Board when the United National Congress (UNC) was in office. That was about a year or two ago, but to date, we have seen no action taken by the Government against any member of the UNC concerning when we were in charge of the National Lotteries Control Board.

We have not seen a copy of that report tabled in this Parliament for public consumption but we do know from the reports coming out from what I read in the newspaper that one of the things that was mentioned in this report was the illegal use of section 23 to give donations—the moneys are supposed, according to the firm of Jeremie, Alexander and Company, the excess revenue income earned by the National Lotteries Control Board after expenses are accounted for to be sent to the Consolidated Fund. That is what we saw, that is what the Act says so they were correct on this point. And the governing board of the NLCB is aware of this report because they commissioned the report and they paid close to \$400,000 for that particular enquiry. In fact, they employed a group called Intelisys which

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they had no authority to do under this Act, and have given to that company, Minister Saith, some US \$75 million to date. Intelisys was paid by the National Lotteries Control Board some US \$75 million and to date not a single member of the UNC has been charged under that particular arrangement that they entered into.

We want to know from the Minister in the Ministry of Finance who gave the board of directors headed by Mr. Louis Lee Sing the authority to employ a group called Intelisys for some US \$75 million to go after the UNC personnel, and that was two years ago. They are still employed and I want the Minister of Finance to tell us that. Some fellow called Boucher, calling people on the phone and asking them about their business. Is he a police? He is from a group called Intelisys and he is calling you to ask you or calling me and asking me, "Did I get a donation from the NLCB, how much money was it? Was it legal? Imagine he has asked people that. A fellow called Boucher from Canada and we understand they received US \$75 million.

I want to know what is going on when this particular board has no power under this Act to hire any firm to investigate anyone. It is only the Attorney General or in this instance, the Minister of Finance, who could grant that kind of authority. This Act does not give to the board of Mr. Louis Lee Sing the authority to employ a company called Intelisys. Madam President, I call on the Minister in the Ministry of Finance to tell this honourable Parliament where did Mr. Louis Lee Sing get that authority from and who authorized him to pay US \$75 million of taxpayers' money to this group and they have not been able to convict a single person or bring charges against one UNC person.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** Madam President, the Senator keeps repeating US \$75 million. Is there some basis for this or is it a figure he has plucked out of the air?

**Sen. W. Mark:** Madam President I have been informed and I am trying to get some clarification from the Government. Could the Government indicate when they are winding up whether it is US \$100 million? My information is it is US \$75 million.

**Madam President:** Would you give way to the Senator?

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** So you are asking a question?

**Sen. W. Mark:** Madam President, I am asking a question and based on the information received, I have been told it was valued at US \$75 million. All I am asking the Minister in the Ministry of Finance: Is that wrong or right? Is it overestimated? Is it underestimated? Am I on target? That is all I am asking, in the public's interest.

**Madam President:** Having said so, you are repeating yourself.

**Sen. W. Mark:** I understand, Madam President. I know you are anxious for me to go on. I am going on.

Madam President, how can we give to a board that kind of power? I would like the Minister in the Ministry of Finance to tell us where does the National Lotteries Control Board derive its power to utilize public funds to give to their friends via what they call “donations” and “sponsorship”? I have asked questions on donations on many occasions in this Parliament and you will see in the responses I have received, how the NLCB has been dishing out moneys—\$2.3 million of \$3.5 million and may I quote from the *Daily Express*—in fact, I downloaded this from the Internet because this was sometime as you would recall in 2004, when I raised this issue and I have the *Hansard*. Ria Taitt in the *Newsday* had this headline: NLCB spent \$2.3 million on Carnival events and that was out of \$3.5 million spent by the Board on sponsorship between January 2002 and March of 2004.

Madam President, this is money that you and I, we, the population engage in parting with their hard-earned income and they bet. I do not gamble. I never play. I do not separate my hard-earned income to take chances that I do not know—it is almost like zero. The probability of winning is almost zero for me, impossible. So here, ordinary people are taking their moneys out of their pockets to gamble and whatever excess revenues are earned instead of putting it into a fund to help poor people, they are giving people who are their friends \$100,000, \$225,000 and this is going on year in, year out, taking from the poor to give to the rich. That is what has been happening under the National Lotteries Control Board. We have asked the question: “When will this end?”

Madam President, I want to bring to your attention and to inform the Minister in the Ministry of Finance, when the National Organization for Reconstruction (NAR) was in power GTECH had approached them to come and take over our online game, but when they looked at the history of GTECH, the NAR in their wisdom decided not to go with GTECH. I have been on the Internet and GTECH’s founder has been indicted in the United States of America and put in jail for bribery. Charges were brought by a grand jury in the United States. I am saying in 1994, our born-again Christian, “father of the nation” wholeheartedly accepted GTECH. GTECH came to Trinidad and Tobago in 1994 and introduced into this country online gambling and

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charges have been brought against GTECH in Brazil for trying to corrupt and for corrupting politicians in order to get their contract renewed. Every state in the United States, GTECH is involved in some kind of back peddling, influencing; they are trying to see if they could bribe you, corrupt you, to see if they could get their contract renewed.

I am asking the hon. Minister of Public Administration and Information to view very seriously the renewal of the contract for GTECH. GTECH's contract ends in 2006 and because of the influence peddling and activities of this particular agency external to our shores, I think the time has come to cut our umbilical links with this particular agency and send them packing. Let us look for local resources, let us look for local talent, and let us see to what extent we could generate our own human skill resource-base to engage in the same activity that GTECH is getting so much money for on a yearly basis. And I am sure we have the talents here and if we cannot get it here we could always have an alliance with outside forces. But to give GTECH, this corrupt agency or corporation that is involved in all kinds of scandals all over the world, a renewal of this particular contract is to cast aspersions and to possibly impute and impugn possible motives to this particular agency and whoever they are associated with—because GTECH, serves 80 lotteries in over 44 countries. So they are very, very big.

We do not support the amendment that is being proposed today. The National Lotteries Control Board is riddled—in fact, I was inclined to call it a rogue statutory authority. That particular board appointed by the PNM in 2002 has presided over what I call rampant bias. They have engaged in skewness of distribution of sponsorship, donations and promotions. There has been an abuse of authority and power by that board; they have misused the public resources and revenues. There is rampant conflict of interest in that agency, and from what I have told you, there is a lack of transparency, accountability and openness in the operations of this organization.

I think that particular National Lotteries Control Board represents a huge national scandal and the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance would do well to look into this institution with a view to taking some action in this particular regard.

I would like the hon. Minister to investigate for us because I know when the UNC was in office it allocated during its period of six years approximately \$3 million to \$4 million for marketing and public relations per year. Under this present administration they have allocated \$12 million. I understand, and the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance could tell me if I am wrong, that some \$4

million is allocated towards marketing and the remaining \$8 million is under the direct control of the Chairman of the National Lotteries Control Board to do whatever he wishes. If that is so, we need to investigate this matter and I call on the Minister in the Ministry of Finance to explain to this Parliament whether there is a \$12 million marketing allocation that has been provided to the National Lotteries Control Board, \$4 million of which is for marketing purposes and the remaining \$8 million is under the direct control of the Chairman of the National Lotteries Control Board to do whatever he wishes and to do whatever he wants. So I would like to have some clarification on this matter from the hon. Minister. Today, I cast no aspersions. I ask questions and I seek to get clarifications and answers from the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance.

Madam President, in accounting terms, in a particular accounting language there is a term called “impaired objectivity” meaning essentially you cannot sit and examine accounts of an organization and then come back and review those same accounts. I would like the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance to tell this Parliament whether she is aware that one Michael Toney, of the firm, Pannell Kerr Forster and who is a director of Citadel, the owners of 195.5, that this gentleman is invited to every board meeting of the National Lotteries Control Board, he is paid \$5,000 for spending five minutes at each board meeting even though the National Lotteries Control Board has its own chief accountant and chief financial comptroller.

I would like the hon. Minister to tell us whether that same person who sits at every meeting to review the accounts of that agency, whether the person’s firm is responsible for auditing the financial accounts of the National Lotteries Control Board? We understand that the same person who attends these board meetings and is a director of Citadel Limited, owners of 195.5 of which Louis Lee Sing is chairman, that same particular gentleman’s firm is responsible for auditing of the National Lotteries Control Board. I want to get clarification. I make no accusations. I seek answers in the public’s interest because, if that is so, it is wrong.

You cannot have a man doing that kind of thing and he has been doing that for the last four years. Why is the Government allowing this thing to take place—and the Government must be aware of this activity. If I am aware, if information has reached me on that matter, the Government must be aware of what is taking place at the National Lotteries Control Board and that is wrong. How can we do this? How can we allow Pannell Kerr Forster of which Toney is a member to sit and

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review accounts at every board meeting and then they are given the contract to do the auditing finance of the company? That cannot be fair and I am sure that the hon. Danny Montano who is an accountant by profession would agree with me that that is impaired objectivity. It cannot be fair, it cannot be right.

Madam President, I seek clarification on this matter. I indict no one. I just seek answers in the public's interest. I would like the hon. Minister to indicate as well if donation is a policy of the NLCB? Do they engage in donations, sponsorship or promotions or are these words used interchangeably? I understand because, when we were there the marketing manager could approve up to \$5,000; if you go or I go and I say I am going to do something, they could give me up to \$5,000. The person had that authority. But any time you go \$25,000 and above, you need to get the approval of the Minister of Finance. I want to know if the Minister of Finance is presiding over this particular scandal because the law says that you ought not to give excess moneys in donations. It is supposed to go to the national Treasury.

Why is that taking place still? Why is the Government breaking the law? That is the point. That is the question. A very important and outstanding firm such as Jeremie, Alexander and Company of which the Attorney General was a member before he became the Attorney General, recommended in a report that that is unlawful, that is illegal, they must stop it, yet the Government has continued in the face of this particular advice. It is wrong!

I would like the Minister of Finance to tell us why it is they have failed to fill the position of chief accountant after four years? Is it deliberate to give their partner \$5,000 every month? Would you believe that in three years three financial comptrollers came and left because they have been frustrated? George Assam came and went within one year. Louis Hernandez came and left too. And the last person who I understand came and left was a lady called Nicole Breedy. She came; she saw and ran out fast. She could not deal with what was taking place there. So something is wrong at the National Lotteries Control Board for all those people to come and as they come they just smell it and leave because they do not want to get into trouble. All I am asking are questions. Is it a fact? Have three financial comptrollers left within a period of three years, hon. Minister, through you Madam President? That is all I seek.

**Sen. D. Montano:** What does this have to do with the Bill?



**Sen. W. Mark:** We are dealing with the National Lotteries Control Bill. [Interruption] What we are talking about Minister Montano, through you Madam President, we are seeking to deal with giving additional power to an institution that is virtually lawless, and I am asking questions in this regard.

I would like the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance to tell this honourable Parliament whether it is a fact or is she aware that one of the board member's vehicle was damaged by the chairman of the board and that vehicle was repaired on the National Lotteries Control Board resources and it was a personal accident that took place? I would like you to investigate this one for us. I would also like her to investigate the matter of Intelisys for us. [Interruption]

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** What else?

**Sen. W. Mark:** Do not hustle me, I am taking my time.

Madam President, it is amazing but we do not know, but we do not live in a fascist state. We do not have Gestapo police as yet but we may have, for instance, agents of the State who behave like Gestapos. I would like the hon. Minister to tell this Parliament if she is aware of a company called Daniel and Associates, a private security firm hired by Mr. Louis Lee Sing, Chairman of the National Lotteries Control Board to investigate employees?

**3.00 p.m.**

Is this legal? Can a private firm be employed by a board of directors to investigate workers? I understand they have been engaged for two years investigating 99 workers: their backgrounds; if they are UNC; if they go to talk with Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith in the night; or if they send things in the post box for somebody else. This company has received, to date, approximately \$400,000, we are told. I would like the Minister in the Ministry of Finance to investigate this matter. Tell us if that is so and whether the board of directors has the power to appoint a private security firm to investigate its employees. All I ask are questions. I cast no aspersions. All we ask, over and over is whether there is a skewed distribution of the resources. I have raised this question and have not gotten any proper responses so far.

I have nothing against any human being. What I have a problem with is any human being using his office or position to promote his private interest. I do not believe that people should use public office to promote their private interest. I think that is wrong and corrupt! Therefore, we have to ask the question whether

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the Government is satisfied with putting somebody in charge of the National Lotteries Control Board who advertises on all the media. There is a disproportionate amount of advertisement going towards that person's station. Is that not a conflict of interest?

People come to me and complain that whenever they—this agency would sponsor carnival events to the tune of million of dollars. If I go to the National Lotteries Control Board and I say that I want to have a carnival fete and it is costing me \$100,000 or \$200,000, the person would say: “Yes, I am sponsoring you, but there must be a quid pro quo. If I sponsor you, you have to advertise on my radio station. If you do not advertise on my station, I will not sponsor you.” These things have been brought to my attention.

**Madam President:** Hon. Senators, 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:** Thank you very much. Recently, a Sesame Street Broadway-type arrangement was brought to Trinidad and Tobago under the courtesies and auspices of the hon. Minister of Education. I have no problem with that. The National Lotteries Control Board sponsored that event to the tune of \$200,000. If we are seeking to educate our children and we sponsor an event to the tune of \$200,000 and if I am Mr. Louis Lee Sing and am as intelligent as he is, I would want to get some marketing out of this so I would have to promote this thing to show that the National Lotteries Control Board is sponsoring this thing. What message are we sending to our young children who are going to a show to deal with Sesame Street, Broadway-type? Are we not promoting gambling? Are we not encouraging our children to get involved in gambling? When the Minister of Education receives \$200,000, not directly, but for Sesame Street and it is sponsored by the NLCB, that is a gambling den or institution, what are we doing? I ask question after question, because on the one hand the Prime Minister wants to close down casinos. He taxes them every year because he says that he is against gambling.

The agents of the National Lotteries Control Board are under severe pressure. I want to ask the Minister in the Ministry of Finance, what are we doing about this? The agents have been set a weekly target of \$26,000 across the board, whether you live in Charlotteville, Barrackpore or Port of Spain. The Government has closed down Caroni (1975) Limited, sent home all the workers and tricked them,

but I will deal with that trickery at the appropriate time with the Minister in the Ministry of Finance; taking back land and telling people that they must pay \$80,000 for a lot. I will have more to say on that.

Call the election because we are ready for “all yuh”. We would eat you all raw. [*Interruption*] Do not worry with side, once you call it, everybody here will be one army and we are coming at “all yuh”. Do not worry.

The National Lotteries Control Board must have some consideration for the small agents. To tell them that they have to realize \$26,000 on a weekly basis, after all that has taken place in this country, is not fair. Therefore, people are being forced into a situation that they cannot deal with. There are more than 700 agents in the country. [*Interruption*] I am told that there are 900 agents. Sorry about that. Minister in the Ministry of Finance, I am a bit stale dated. We need to deal with that.

Another area that I would like the Minister to look at is the system of allocation and distribution of Lotto machines. We believe it is too subjective and arbitrary. Some people have plenty because they have a party card and some have none because they are UNC. That is unfair. That is where the discrimination is talked about. Many of them have approached me and asked me to intervene. I said: “Me, intervene with who, Louis Lee Sing?” When Louis Lee Sing saw me he said: “Nah! nothing for you.” I said: “Doh worry, time longer than twine. It is a matter of time. Do not worry.” We would have a fair, open and transparent system where you in the PNM would come and ask. It is a fair system and you will enjoy it. The UNC will come. That is why we are in Opposition today. Our supporters said to us that we were unkind to them. We gave the PNM too much support, that our supporters almost crushed us. They are vexed with us because we tried to maintain the principle of fairness in the country.

**Sen. Abdul-Hamid:** You concede that you lost the election?

**Sen. W. Mark:** No, you stole it!

**Madam President:** Let us get back to the Bill.

**Sen. W. Mark:** Let me get back to the Bill. I ask of you, Madam President, that the question of the mal-distribution of the resources of the National Lotteries Control Board be looked at, seeing that the Minister said that they generate over \$1 billion on a yearly basis and earn approximately \$1 billion annually in sales; whether it is Lotto or Lottery Classic.

Some people have approached me as well and they believe that they are being ripped off. They believe that the National Lotteries Control Board sets the machine and that they will never win. That is how some of them feel. It does not have to be true. I am not saying that it is true, but persons have approached me saying: "Ah cyah win! I have been buying lottery for the last 15 years and cyah win!" They want to know if the machine is organized and if the whole process is rigged. I am just saying so. I am not saying that is it. I cannot say that. I do not gamble.

**Sen. Abdul-Hamid:** I took you for an obeah man.

**Sen. W. Mark:** I believe that every citizen should be entitled to an equal chance and be given a fair opportunity when they apply for a Lotto machine. We need equal opportunity. What we have is members who are supporters of the PNM and their concubines receiving Lotto machines and ordinary people cannot get. That is unfair. I call on the Minister to deal with that matter.

I would also like the hon. Minister to investigate a company called CORE Style. It was recently formed. I have the name of the very nice lady but I would not call it now. I understand that she has very close relations with the board. I would not go further. She got lucrative contracts. "Stretch", the company was just formed and the woman got lucrative contracts. The business is located on Maraval Road. She got contracts from GTECH. She is an advertising agent so she advertises for the National Lotteries Control Board. I understand she was a former employee of Resource Factory. Resource Factory is owned by an ambassador, who is located in Port of Spain. The "fella" is now in charge of the National Lotteries Control Board. We would like the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance to investigate this particular company because she is getting unfair advantages over ordinary persons in the country.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** We will.

**Sen. W. Mark:** I would say more about that on the campaign trail, when you call the election in June. I understand before you call the election you would be bringing down Benny Hinn in May. Benny Hinn told my dear Prime Minister in 2001, that he would be the next Prime Minister and he believed that. It was 18/18 and the former President put him there. He said: "If Benny Hinn tell meh dat in 2001, Benny Hinn go tell meh that in 2006." The Prime Minister is bringing Benny Hinn in May and want to call the election in June because he feels that Trinidad and Tobago will do wonders in Germany. We want him to call it now. We do not want him to call it in June!

**Sen. R. Montano:** Benny Hinn is a fraud!

**Sen. W. Mark:** Madam President, the final area I would like the hon. Minister to investigate for us—the Minister of Public Administration and Information needs to listen to this one. I never knew that in the public service of Trinidad and Tobago workers used to get bonus at the end of the year. I worked in the public service for almost 16 years of my life. I worked very hard and I never got a bonus. Would you believe that in the National Lotteries Control Board, Mr. Louis Lee Sing has given bonuses to the employees for 2004/2005 and they received the 2004 bonus in February of this year? Who gave to Mr. Louis Lee Sing the authority to give bonuses to workers? I have no problem. If you want to give bonuses to the workers, I am happy for the workers. Give it to all the workers in the statutory boards and the public service. Why only confine it to the workers of the NLCB? Employees were given \$2,000 each; managers, \$4,000 and an Executive Director called Phyllis Borde was given \$11,000. I want the Minister in the Ministry of Finance to investigate this matter. It is illegal, unlawful and he does not have the authority.

In light of all that I said this afternoon, and in light of all the questions I have raised and the concerns expressed, we believe that the time has come for the Prime Minister to inform the President of the need to establish a commission of enquiry into the operations of the National Lotteries Control Board, under the chairmanship of Louis Lee Sing from 2002 to the present time. We believe that the time has come for there to be a forensic audit into the accounts of the National Lotteries Control Board and we also believe that the time has come for both the Anti-Corruption Bureau, as well as the Fraud Squad to intervene in that place, which is riddled with a lot of improprieties and irregularities and we need to get to the bottom of this particular institution called the National Lotteries Control Board.

We cannot continue how we are going with this agency. This agency has gone mad. This agency does whatever it wants. I am trying to get information on it—Sen. Yuille-Williams I would like you to investigate this one—I understand that the workers of NCC Channel 4 receive money from Pannell Kerr Forster. They receive cheques signed by Pannell Kerr Foster, operating out of the offices of the National Lotteries Control Board. We want to know who is in charge of NCC Channel 4. We want to know if it is Louis Lee Sing, the man in charge of the National Lotteries Control Board or the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs. We are getting some disturbing news. I will say more on NCC Channel 4 very shortly. We are gathering enough information. The man said: “jail eh nice.” I want to repeat what the Prime Minister said: “Jail eh nice.” Plenty people on the PNM Benches will face that. I say no more.

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We cannot support the amendments as proposed. May I inform you that the building on Duke Street that was purchased in 1993, was purchased by Willard Gopaul without any approval from the Minister of Finance, inflated at \$25 million and he wants to give power to this man called Louis Lee Sing to buy properties. We already have an example of a man called Willard Gopaul who bought a building for \$25 million without the approval of the Minister of Finance, when it was not worth \$25 million. Investigate these things and do not accuse us. Look at the mirror and see the complexion of your face. See how dirty you are. At the appropriate time, we shall expose you and the people shall eat you raw.

Thank you very much, Madam President.

**Sen. Basharat Ali:** Thank you, Madam President. I am pleased to be able to make a contribution to the debate before us, the National Lotteries (Amdt.) Bill.

Those of us who attended the book launch last night of the Deosaran files will remember a word that cropped up a number of times; that was “preface.” Preface was used as a noun. With your indulgence and permission, I would like to use it as a verb, because I would like to preface my contribution by two quotes from two sources. The first source is from an article in the *Daily Express* of Thursday, June 16, 2005:

“NLCB places a lid on lottery centres”

The article was written by Kim Boodram. Let me read into the records, two or three of the paragraphs. They are quite short.

“The game stops here.

“The National Lotteries Control Board (NLCB) has been directed by Government not to pursue plans to introduce new Lottery Terminal Centres in Port of Spain and San Fernando.

The directive came from a Cabinet recommendation and after concerns were raised by Education Minister Hazel Manning, that gambling is endangering the nation's school children.

This was disclosed by Minister in the Ministry of Finance, Conrad Enill, on Tuesday night, when the NLCB launched its new logo at the Trinidad Hilton.”

I am very sorry that neither the Minister in the Ministry of Finance, Sen. The hon. Enill nor Sen. Manning is here because both names are mentioned in this quote.

The second quote comes from our budget. There was mention of it by Sen. Wade Mark but I would like to quote what was said by our hon. Prime Minister in the Budget Speech of 2006. It is on page 84, for those who would like to know:

“One final word on taxation, Mr. Speaker, and it has to do with gambling. As you know, gambling is against the laws of Trinidad and Tobago and this Government is determined to uphold the law. There has unfortunately been a proliferation of gambling activity under the guise of private members clubs. Over the years we have sought to use financial mechanisms to contain the number of such clubs without much success.

The new approach we intend to take is to bring all private members clubs under a strict licensing arrangement to be administered by the Ministry of Finance. Under the proposed licensing regime, only genuine private Members Clubs will be permitted to operate and there will be restrictions on the types of activity in which they can legitimately engage.”

If I may go back to the first quote from this article—Here there is an actual quotation attributed to Sen. Conrad Enill which states:

“The revenue that the NLCB remits to the Government is substantial, however, the social health of our citizens must be of concern to a Government.”

In this article there is a sentence in parenthesis. I do not know where it came from or whether it is the research of Kim Boodram, who wrote the article, which says:

“(The NLCB’s on-line Lotto creates an average of seven millionaires every year.)”

Maybe this is research. I do not know whether it was said by any of the parties at this launch.

How many paupers does the National Lotteries Control Board create each year? I am saying these two things because there appears to be a lot of ambivalence on the part of the Government. The hon. Minister who presented the Bill spoke of all the success of the National Lotteries Control Board. It has been a success story but there are all these negative things about it.

The Prime Minister said that gambling is against the law, but we are quite happy to have institutionalized or legalized gambling as done by the National Lotteries Control Board.

Let me say from the outset that I do not subscribe to lottery, gambling or gaming activities. I have never played Lotto or any of the on-line games. I buy raffle tickets to support a cause. Nonetheless, I am very familiar with the history and background of the National Lotteries Control Board, since I had a relative, my brother-in-law, who worked with the National Lotteries Control Board and who literally died in the same office on Sackville Street, which we have been hearing of, in November 1986. I know many of the people who worked there, because they always visited the family. I know the late Mr. Ossie Warner who I think was the first Executive Director and then Mr. Trevor Hamilton followed. I am familiar with many of the people. I meet some of the people who have retired. I saw one across the table at a PAC meeting, Mr. Maloney, who has been there all these years. I think he is now the Acting Corporate Secretary or the Corporate Secretary.

I have had concerns about the direction of institutionalized gambling in our country for some time now. Now that I am a Member of this House, I find myself in the position of being able to express my concerns about the specific organization which has been established by statute.

I have taken time to read and study the parent Act, its amendments and the regulations with their amendments and I am yet to see any objective other than that stated at the head of the Act, under Chap. 21:04 of the National Lotteries Act. It is an Act to provide for the establishment of a National Lotteries Control Board, for the promotion and conduct of national lotteries. That is the only statement of objective in the whole of this Act. I have gone through all the amendments. There are only one or two amendments to the Act since 1968 to 2005. The most significant one I will refer to in a little while, which is the one which gave definition to Instant Lottery. I will come back to that in a minute.

When we look at the amendment that is before us in clause 2, which is the amendment to section 9—section 9 of the Act covers general powers and duties of the board—the amendment is to add under section 9 “(g)”. That is the statement we have as a proposed amendment which states:

“do all such things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of its objects.”

I find it unacceptable and, in my view, this addition does not give legitimacy to the other proposal under clause 3, which is the insertion of section 20A, which states:

“Subject to the approval of the Minister, the Board may—



- (a) acquire, hold and enjoy any property, real or personal by purchase, devise, bequest, gift or in any other way; and
  - (b) lease, accept surrenders of leases, mortgage, grant or accept licences, rights of way or easements.
- (2) The Board shall, in accordance with this section and with the approval of the Minister, dispose of property which is no longer required for the purposes of the Board.”

Madam President, this Bill was laid in this Senate in November 2004. We almost got there in July. I am sure Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith will remember the omnibus bill. My learned friend, Sen. Rawle Titus, was the acting President of the Senate. The National Lotteries Bill was part of a Finance Bill, which was called the omnibus bill. There was a suspension of the Senate to decide whether they still wanted to keep that within this Bill and it was agreed that they would not mix lotteries with petroleum taxation and that was stood down, as a result of which this Bill lapsed.

I have had my notes for such a long time, I am glad to get it out of my system at this time. Strange enough, in the explanation of the previous Bill, there was one word which does not appear here and that is in justification of that first clause; the amendment to section 9. They said that was to correct a lacuna. I do not know whether it was a medical term. I noticed it has been dropped from this one. They do not speak about lacuna again. A lacuna is a void or gap. Suddenly it has been discovered, since 1968 to now, that we were going to fill this gap with the objective so that we can give the National Lotteries Control Board the power to do all these things related to property development. I find it strange that we can because as far as I am concerned all these matters are not incidental, but I do not know if they are conducive to the operations of lottery on the whole. From what you may guess, I do not propose to support this amendment Bill because I do not think there is any justification for doing so at this stage.

While we are on that, it seems that the National Lotteries Control Board engages in other activities. Because they have electronic systems, they are now in the business of accepting bill payments. I think it is called Via. I think Via is a rail system in Canada. They are in the business of accepting bill payments by electronic systems. TTPost was in that business long before them. I think TTPost has a legitimate right to be in that position. They are in the communications business. TTPost is an organization which is in deficit. We all know that. In June, in the Variation of Appropriation Bill, we voted a supplementary appropriation

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of \$18.5 million to be increased to \$33.5 million. I noticed in the budget for 2006, it is still \$33 million that they are being provided as a transfer from the Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment. Why do we have Bill pay from TTPost being poached on by the National Lotteries Control Board? It may not be a big amount of money from the National Lotteries Control Board. From what I can gather, looking at their numbers, probably the revenue from that, which is the miscellaneous revenue, may only be one-half of \$1 million, but one-half of \$1 million to TTPost means a lot. I do not see that as part of their terms of reference.

Similarly, I see now that the National Lotteries Control Board is the one that approves raffles. I do not understand that. I know previously if someone had a raffle, the Commissioner of Police gave the permission to do it. Now, when there are all these very big raffles, such as a five-car raffle, et cetera, I usually see a little thing at the bottom of it saying: “under the authority of the National Lotteries Control Board.” I think that is a conflict of interest. There is one person who is in the business of games of chance, that is the National Lotteries Control Board and they are the ones who have to give approval to those people who want to do it for charitable purposes in most cases. Sometimes it is on the basis of promotion; a five-car raffle might be a promotion.

Once again, the Act up till now is short on objectives other than one. While I am at it, it is only today I discovered that there was one other amendment. That was in 1998 when they brought the Instant Lottery. There was an amendment to the Act that year.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** 1998?

**Sen. B. Ali:** It was 1988. It was the Instant Lottery. I presume that is what was called “Scratch.” There are definitions of “Instant Lottery” and “Instant Lottery surpluses” in Act No. 32 of 1988. What is interesting there is that in accordance with that Act, the surpluses are supposed to go into a sport and culture fund. I do not know because the surplus is revenue minus expenses, minus prize money. As far as I know, and nobody has said otherwise, all the surplus of the National Lotteries Control Board goes to the Consolidated Fund, when the Sport and Culture Fund is separate. I am subject to correction, but I do not think that was what was intended then; it is not much, it probably adds up to \$25 million or \$30 million which goes there rather than into the Consolidated Fund where it disappears.

I wanted to bring that up because it is only this afternoon when I came here I realized that there was one amendment that I had not seen and I was very glad I did see it. I thank the library research assistants for helping me to dig it out as quickly as they did.

Madam President, I have done a brief analysis of the sales revenue, prize money, significant expenditure and surplus to the Treasury for fiscal 2002/2003 and revised 2004 and budget 2005, and it was extracted from the draft estimates for 2004 and 2005. With the delay in laying there is, of course, fresh information which comes from the draft estimates from our present budget. If anybody wants to refer to the numbers for 2004—2006 they are free to do so. It is in the revised draft estimates of recurrent expenditure for the statutory bodies for 2006. It can be found on pages 98—103.

In the interest of time I will not go back to 2002/2003 but I will look at some of the figures. We have heard that the National Lotteries Control Board's gross revenue is of the order of \$1 billion per year. It is a substantial amount of money. If we were to look at accounting for the Lotto money I have divided it into the revenue. The major revenue will be the on-line games, which is the latest one such as the Lotto. That represents approximately 90 per cent of the total sales revenue; whereas the Instant Lottery is 6.9 per cent and the ordinary draws called the Classic Lottery is approximately 3.1 per cent.

Those are the figures for 2004, which is \$970 million. That is the number that was quoted at the launch. I think I am on the right line. If we look at that figure and go down the road on it, how is it distributed? Prize money takes the biggest chunk of it and prize money, on average, is approximately 65 per cent of the gross sales revenue. I think that is fair enough. It is related to an amount of sales of the various things: traditional, instant and the on-line games.

The commissions are pretty steady also. They are approximately 6.7 per cent throughout the period and even into the budget 2006. Commissions are quite consistent.

What are the other significant expenditures? The other significant expenditure is personnel, from one point of view that you must have people to run the thing. Very steady, it is approximately \$3 million per year. In the new budget it was \$3.9 million. Presumably, they plan to give the staff and the personnel administration an increase, because it has gone up to \$3.9 million.

There are two high-ticket items. Sen. Mark referred to one of them already. They are promotions, publicity and printing, which has gone up consistently from approximately \$8.2 million in 2004. The budget of 2005 said \$12 million. We have revised the 2005 to \$12.8 million. The 2006 budget is saying \$13.1 million. That is a fair amount because it represents approximately 1.3 per cent of the gross revenue. That is a very contentious kind of expenditure that the National Lotteries Control Board is involved in. I know in the Public Accounts Committee it has been questioned. Sen. Mark has questioned their sponsorship. Those of us in the PAC have heard of their policy for sponsorship and for donations. I would not question Sen. Mark who said that there is no authority for giving donations by the National Lotteries Control Board.

The big cost is the administrative cost of the on-line games. Let me read through the numbers for that. The actual figure for 2004 is \$114 million. The revised figure for 2005 would be \$108.5 million. The budget of 2005 was \$111 million and the budget for 2006 is \$119 million. That is a big percentage, in terms of overall revenue. It is approximately 12 per cent in 2004. The budget of 2006 is 12 per cent and what is interesting is that the surplus has dropped, or is projected to drop. We are spending more money in lottery but we are not necessarily getting it as surplus. For example, in 2004 the surplus was \$121.3 million, which represents 12.5 per cent of the \$1 billion that we were talking about. The revised figure for 2005 was given as \$131 million, which represents 13.2 per cent. The budget for 2005 was \$136.2 million, which was a little less than the revised figure in terms of the surpluses. The interesting one is that in 2006 it has dropped. The surplus is now \$89.6 million, which is 9 per cent. What has happened is that we are spending more money and it is certainly not in the expenses other than these large expenses, which we incur in the on-line games.

Sen. Mark asked the question about GTECH. We know that one could never see the GTECH contract between the National Lotteries Control Board and GTECH. I think we have been told so already. We have been told that they have a substantial amount of money, which they spend as publicity. This is apart from what the National Lotteries Control Board has. For example, in the budget of 2000, the NLCB has \$13 million. Part of the \$119 million allocated to administrative cost for 2006, from what we have heard in questions, has a fair element of promotional costs. One does not know what the global figure is, but it is turning out that that is a huge amount. If we are questioning how the National Lotteries Control Board spends its money I think we are doing it quite legitimately. I certainly would like to know how much of it is GTECH's expenses and how much is fees, when we look at that large figure at the bottom.

My colleague, Sen. Anmolsingh-Mahabir had one question which I want to raise while I remember. She wanted to know how transparent the draws are; whether there is still a live audience for the Lotto draw. I would not know because I have never seen one, except when they interrupt things such as sports. When the Lottery Classic draw was done—I do not know whether it is still done on TV6, I really do not know. Perhaps the Minister in the Ministry of Finance would be able to satisfy Sen. Anmolsingh-Mahabir's question as to visibility or transparency in terms of the draws. She asked me to do that so that she would not have to speak. We are saving some time on this Bench.

Having looked at the accounts, at the end of the day one has to ask what are the pluses and the minuses of the National Lotteries Control Board operation. What effect does it have on our citizens?

**Madam President:** Senator, would you please give way?

**Sen. Yuille-Williams:** I see that you are winding up now.

**Sen. B. Ali:** No, I am not.

**Sen. Yuille-Williams:** As I am on my feet.

**Sen. B. Ali:** I do not know whether I want to give way because you can have your turn to speak.

**Sen. Yuille-Williams:** As I am on my feet, sorry, I thought you were. I want to advise that the Sport and Culture Fund still receives moneys from the Instant Lottery, more popularly called Scratch.

**Sen. B. Ali:** Thank you, Madam Minister. Perhaps you can tell us in the years how much has gone to the Sport and Culture Fund. That fund has very, very strict rules. It states that the Central Bank shall act as a repository for the resources of the fund. This is the kind of fund I would like to see set up for funds that the National Lotteries Control Board wants to contribute. I was coming to that, but since it has been raised, it is Act No. 31 of 1988. I only discovered that today. I find it very interesting as a fund with all the rules set out. I had a note to deal with the surpluses of the National Lotteries Control Board.

At the end of the day, we have to balance the pluses against the minuses. We know, from the point of view of financial benefits, there is a sum of \$100 million which is going into the Consolidated Fund, except for the surplus from the Scratch or Instant Lottery. I knew it and I am pleased to know that it is still there as a fund.

The major part of it is going into the melting pot. Is it not time that the funds should be circumscribed into specific areas of charity or into the arts by setting up the formal and legal structure for operating such category of funds? I believe this is a model adopted in the United Kingdom. We have a fair model in the Sport and Culture Fund, if we want to set up funds to which we can direct surpluses of the National Lotteries Control Board.

I have another question, in terms of the effects of lottery. I think Sen. Mark referred to the fact that some people say that they never win. People go under the impression that they will win when they play lottery. I believe that people at the bottom of the social ladder are the ones who get hit hardest, because they sacrifice their little resources into playing these games in the expectation that they will win. We all know that Las Vegas, Monte Carlo and the Donald's are the people who get rich, not the poor people. That is why, earlier on, I asked if we have kept track of how many paupers we have created during the year. How much are the people spending; the people who can ill-afford to do it? How much do they continue to invest in this by foregoing milk money, school books money, rent money and food money, notwithstanding school breakfasts and lunches? I know the Housing Development Corporation is always in trouble because they cannot collect their money. Utilities are things that we know people are defaulting on and it is a problem. There is default on the part of people.

When people default on their motor insurance, they are putting all of us at risk. When they do not pay their insurance, the passengers, whether it is PH or a hired car—this I know for a fact. Since the on-line lottery started in 1994, I have spoken to a very senior insurance brokerage executive who said when that started the number of people who defaulted was unimaginable. There are many persons who go around driving, especially now where you do not have to produce any of these documents—unless you are a bona fide taxi driver you do not have to use these things to renew your licence or anything like that.

There are many other examples of such virement, the transfer of funds from what you should be spending on other things into Play Whe, Lotto and the likes, in the expectation that you will get gains and be able to pay some of your bills. It very seldom happens.

The other question I pose is: Has there been any study on the addiction to lottery games? People know that gambling is or can be an addiction. Are there any studies on the addiction to lottery games to which the employees of the NLCB may be susceptible? I know personally of one case of alleged fraud due to addiction within the National Lotteries Control Board and that person no longer

lives in Trinidad and Tobago and, perhaps, will never be able to return to this country while that is hanging. I was asking my colleague whether she knows what the statute of limitation is. She told me that she did not and I do not. I am not a lawyer.

I am suggesting that if we have not gotten any data on that, then we should launch a study. If Sen. Prof. Deosaran was here today I would have posed that question to him as to whether the social sciences department should engage in it, if they have not already done. Poor people are losing their minds over lottery.

As far as I am concerned the jury is still out on the National Lotteries Control Board as a whole and on these amendments in particular.

I would like to see a remake of the Act, to give some clear direction as to the aims and objectives of the organization, rather than approach it by the piecemeal fashion in which we are doing it now.

The Act needs to be revisited in respect of administration. It is unchanged since 1968. The Act provides for a board consisting of a chairman and not more than four other members appointed by the Minister. These could be anybody. There is no specification as to who these people are. We have put them in control of \$1 billion of revenue. I would like to know—I only know who the Chairman of the National Lotteries Control Board is. I think most of us know because he sat on that side in a PAC meeting and he is a high-profile person. Who are the other four members? I do not know.

Let us take financial institutions, people who have that large amount of money to look after people's money. Every director must have their qualifications and character certificates submitted to the Central Bank, in the case of the financial institutions. I certainly do not know. I do not know how many other Members know who the members are. My colleague is saying, Madam Minister, that you have to tell us who these people are. A quorum of three can decide how to dispose of \$1 billion. That is the quorum for the NLCB. That is why I am saying, without any definition as to their qualification, I am at a loss.

I was a member of a board of a statutory authority—the Industrial Development Corporation. That was a long time ago, in 1974. I remember my instrument of appointment was signed by the then Governor General, Sir Ellis Clarke, which said that I am appointed in my capacity as an engineer because the statute required an engineer to be appointed.

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These are things to be looked at when you put people in charge of spending such a large amount of your funds. It is true that \$1 billion is only a 10 days, in terms of the \$35 billion. My friend, Martin George, two Sundays ago was talking about us spending \$100 million per day, which is quite true, so \$10 billion is only 10 days.

Before we go any further into giving additional powers to the National Lotteries Control Board, let us clean up the National Lotteries Act and further let the National Lotteries Control Board clean up its act. Thank you very much.

**The Minister of Local Government (Sen. The Hon. Rennie Dumas):** Thank you, Madam President. I am sure that we can start where Sen. Ali left off. If we had the time we could revise every single law in the country. I am sure we could improve every single one. Unfortunately, we do not always have the time. I want to suggest that at some time, the whole of the National Lotteries Act may be reviewed and brought into line with a number of things that are quite worthy suggestions that he made.

We came today to look at the proposals for amendment. If we stay with the proposals for amendment we will do them in the context in which they are made. I would like to suggest that the context would be that here we have a public institution, which has features of being an enterprise and which also has features of being a vehicle created to capture a social activity that was pervasive in this nation, but which we want to bring under a legal framework. That is the context we must take the lottery in. If we take that context, again I want to go back to Sen. Ali and use some words that he used. He said that,—and he can tell me if I am correct or otherwise,—some of the activities of the National Lotteries Control Board were fair enough, quite consistent and a reasonable ratio. He was looking and analyzing what was happening with the National Lotteries Control Board, in terms of its income and its expenditure and, therefore, the structure of that income and expenses. Therefore, in no way can we conclude that this was an institution that was running loose, rampant, destructive of its mandate or otherwise querulous with public funds. Therefore, if we take that context then what is the context of the amendment we have brought?

He also said that we have a situation in which there is a structure of earnings and a structure of assets.



**4.00 p.m.**

I am saying that your problem is with the structure of the assets, and given the structure of assets to include real property, especially where the organization is supposed to treat with activities spreading all over Trinidad and Tobago. Real property is required for such an institution to ensure that the reach of the institution is nationally distributed and its activities have the basis for action, et cetera. Therefore, justification of support for the proposed amendment, I think, can be found if Sen. Ali and every other Senator here would extend the analysis that he has made, the point where he understands—and we all understand—that real property is required if the balance sheet of this institution is to make sense. I am sure Sen. Ali would agree, if he extends his analysis. What we are asking you to do is to extend your analysis of the National Lotteries Control Board and the Act that drives its operations to understand why we need the amendment.

You know, it is quite interesting to hear that in looking at the administrative costs, we are saying that this is a proper ratio in that you had 12 per cent, 14 per cent, et cetera. With respect to the surplus, it was consistent. There was a 9 to 12 per cent showing over the period and part of this surplus goes to a fund. Sen. Ali said that we should take these surpluses and create circumscribed funds.

**Sen. Ali:** Madam President, I wonder whether the Minister is going to give way for just a moment?

**Madam President:** Minister, are you giving way?

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** I would want to treat Sen. Ali very well.

**Madam President:** Thank you very much.

**Sen. Ali:** I did an analysis and gave some figures. All I am saying is that these are the indirect costs and they are the highest costs. Could the hon. Minister tell me why in 2005 the surplus was at the lowest for that period? With respect to percentages, it dropped to 9.6 per cent which is below the level. If you can tell me why, I would be happy to know.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** I am not competing with your analysis and your capacity to analyze an income statement. I am not competing with that. All I am saying is that you were able to demonstrate that the surplus remained fairly consistent. You see, if we follow the arguments that you were making and analyze them—as one explanation, we may suggest that maybe more people are winning now than previously, so the surplus therefore would be a smaller size.

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Madam President, if we look at the amendment that we came to the table with today, it is an amendment that seeks to give the board the capacity to make investments in real property. It is a simple amendment and it is justified if you are running an organization that seeks to have a nationwide impact to treat with and service an entire country such as ours. I want to suggest to Sen. Ali and other Senators that we reexamine our positions, and I am sure that we could find the amendment supportable.

You see, Madam President, the question today is not really the operations. I think Sen. Ali has demonstrated in his analysis that this is not a runaway board. This is not a board that was not following its mandate. Whether the board is following its mandate or not, there are other ways to treat with that. The Parliament has a committee, and as the goodly Senator pointed out, the board was brought before the committee and the books were examined—behaviours were examined and so forth. That is consistent with the parliamentary system and the system of governance that we have put in place. No way was there any suggestion that the Government was hiding or the board was hiding or anything like that. Consistent with our parliamentary system, the board was placed before the Parliament and it was examined in full.

Madam President, I want to suggest that we do what we are supposed to do and that is to ensure that parliamentary debates end with better laws that would lead to the better management of the country, including better management of the National Lotteries Control Board, by allowing the National Lotteries Control Board to build its balance sheet.

Madam President, do you know what we are not here to do? We are not here to do what the Opposition took the opportunity to do and that is to malign members of the board, whether we know them or not. Fortunately, for me, some of the members of the board—

**Madam President:** Sen. Ali, is it on a point of order?

**Sen. Ali:** I just want to say I did not malign anybody.

*[Both Senators on their feet]*

**Madam President:** I cannot have both of you standing.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** I did not say that you maligned anybody.

**Madam President:** Senator, when a Senator stands it is either you give way or you say that you are not giving way. Are you prepared to give way to Sen. Ali?

**Hon. Senator:** Again?

**Madam President:** Senator, is it on a point of order?

**Sen. Ali:** Actually, I was trying to correct him. I did not make any assertions against anybody. I simply said that this board of five persons has a big—I said I only know who the chairman is. I do not know who the other persons are, so I cannot make any assertions against them.

**Madam President:** Minister, if you talk to me instead of talking to Sen. Ali across the floor, you would get out of that situation.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** Madam President, I was certainly speaking to you and I would continue to do so. What I was referring to is the question of whether we know the persons or not. I was saying, fortunately, since these persons were appointed by this side, I know a few of them. I also grew up with one of the persons in my community. I said the Opposition sought to malign them. I was very clear about that. I did not say that Sen. Ali maligned them. I do not think Sen. Ali is capable of maligning anybody. Certainly, there is a different question when it comes to Sen. Mark.

Sen. Mark has been painting these goodly citizens who were appointed to lead this board and who have demonstrated they have the capacity to lead properly and to act properly. He has been treating them with a whip, a very dirty whip; a very hurtful whip.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** Could you refute any of it?

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** I like how you are quite willing to talk when I am standing. [*Laughter*] Madam President, the question of what is advertising or what is promotion could be answered by any good marketing student. You would have a difficulty where promotions are not a functional part of the marketing expenses of the NLCB.

It is passing strange that we were reminded that promotional expenses were given legitimacy, not on this side, but by the UNC's change in the law. They are the ones who put the capacity for promotions in the law; they are the ones who suggested that moneys from lotteries could go elsewhere. It is their law and it is quite interesting to hear Sen. Mark say—

**Sen. Mark:** Give us the clause.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** We are going to come back to that matter.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** Tell us.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** We are enjoying their enthusiasm. You see, lotteries are about dreams and today we had a full exhibition of dreams. *[Laughter]* *[Desk thumping]* Today we had a dream about election next month, even when the laws of Trinidad and Tobago do not allow us to have an election next month, even if we want to; dreams that have been made actual and real over the last 50 years; dreams and fulfillment of dreams of this population; and dreams that have been actualized and fulfilled.

Madam President, I am sure Sen. Mark did not intend to castigate all the Ministers of Finance whom he associated with over his period in government. How else can we attribute or construct his arguments that the gaming industries and governments create an unholy alliance? I am suggesting that by the Senator repeating it here, he sought to endorse it. So every Minister of Finance whom Sen. Mark has associated with—if we carry the extension of his purpose—was maligned here today. I am suggesting to Sen. Mark by his continuing association with them, he refuted the argument he was seeking to bring to us.

We are quite clear on this side that while there may be an alliance between the Government and the gaming industry as managed by the board, it is an alliance that has been quite profitable and beneficial to Trinidad and Tobago. It is in that context that the amendment was brought. We can better manage this institution; we can better create the benefits that the lotteries and management have created, if we have this amendment to the law to change it for the better.

The right and responsibility of a business entity, if it is going to be real, are to acquire and hold property. That must be there. What is a balance sheet without assets? How do you manage a balance sheet if you cannot dispose of property that is no longer required? It is a simple management device that must be given to an entity that has the responsibility to manage anything.

I could understand that persons in the UNC would have a little problem with understanding good management practice. They have spent some time on it; the theory would meet the actuality. The reason we are asking for this amendment is for better management of the board's activities—management of lotteries. *[Interruption]*

I had to contrast the approach taken by one Senator as against the approach taken by another Senator. One Senator claims that there was no information and another Senator was able to give us an analysis of the activities of the board.

Therefore, the question of what is in the public domain, in terms of information of the board, we did not have a fair representation by Sen. Mark.

**Sen. Mark:** Madam President, through you, the reports that I have mentioned—the financial audited accounts for 2000 to the present time—were they laid in the Parliament? Hon. Minister, could you tell us?

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** Well, I was not referring to reports that were laid in Parliament. I was just saying that there is information in the public domain. We know that information in the public domain belongs to the Parliament. It governs our Standing Orders as to how we treat with information in the public domain. The information used was in the public domain. It was presented to this Parliament during the budget statement and in various other documents, including Oral Answers to Questions that were asked by the UNC.

**Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh:** I think you quoted them.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** Do not correct me, Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh. I know what I said.

**Madam President:** Please, talk to me.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** When you came with the information—we want to be very clear and we want to facilitate you because sometimes you help us—and say that in 1994—I want to make the point that we came here seeking better management for the national lotteries system and so forth. It cannot be that when the Government comes to the Parliament, you take the opportunity for either an individual or corporate bashing, because you want to discourage certain activities in the country, or participation in public activities by individuals, corporate society and citizens. We have to be careful how we treat with them.

We have been told that in 1994 GTECH was here and it was a very bad firm and no institution worth the salt should be associated with them. It was said that they were corrupt and the people were locked up and so forth—not “locked up”. I think we were corrected by—

**Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh:** There are some 15 areas of corruptions here.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh, I told you and I warned you to shut your mouth when I am talking. I warned you.

**Madam President:** Senator, please. I would prefer if you did not say that to another Senator.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** Madam President, my apologies.

**Madam President:** Please continue.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** Madam President, in 1998 GTECH's contract was extended when the UNC was there. The knowledge that we had in 1994; certainly they were better informed by 1998. The law is simple. With time, information becomes more widespread and, therefore, it is better known.

**Sen. Mark:** That is why we are asking you to review it.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** You would have had that information in 1998, but do you know what you did? Let me tell you what you did. You increased the rate of their commissions and the length of time they were in charge. If I have to draw a conclusion and say that the relationship with GTECH was based on corruption—if I see more money and more time given to the firm to make more money—then I would suggest that your conclusion about the game is the conclusion I must also make about your game. All I am saying is that we cannot use this platform to bash enterprises. I want to suggest that if there is information that the goodly Senator needs—he is a master at the good question—I think he could get it.

Madam President, I was told that the board paid US \$75 million to Intelisys.

**Sen. Mark:** No, I did not say that. I just got some clarification from my source. My source indicated that it was not \$75 million, so I want to humbly apologize. It was US \$270,000.

**Madam President:** It is a great difference.

**Sen. Mark:** It is close to \$2 million. So I want to apologize to the Parliament for saying US \$75 million. It was not US \$75 million, but US \$270,000. I just want to apologize and to put on record the figures that I have. The figure is US \$270,000 and not US \$75 million, as I said initially. I humbly apologize to the Parliament. [*Interruption*]

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** Madam President, I am quite willing to accept his apology, but he must also apologize to the board.

**Sen. Mark:** Which board?

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** The board who makes the decision. When you say that was the price, you maligned the board, not the citizens and the Parliament.

**Sen. Mark:** Did they have the authority to do that?

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** Madam President, I am suggesting that the activities pursued by the board could be managed—[*Interruption*] Madam President, I have to seek protection.

**Madam President:** Please, everybody would have a turn to talk.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** Madam President, I am capable of protecting myself.

**Madam President:** Minister, please continue.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** Madam President, do you know one of the reasons we can accept this amendment? Again, the goodly Senator provided quite a good platform. He demonstrated that the board knows what it is doing. When the Senator argues whether it is legal for a company or enterprise to hire private investigators to enquire as to the behaviour and moral positions, et cetera of its members, I would say that anyone who is handling that amount of money—public property, public relations, relationships or transactions on the public's behalf—should know some of the activities of its employees. It is legitimate.

If you follow the example of RBTT, as far as I know—as a good corporate citizen and one of the exemplary citizens in this country—they would ask you to provide a profile that they would use for security purposes. They would check it out and say to you: “Can you hold money?”

I have sat in this Parliament and Senators have told me that I should go and investigate every single employee who is employed with the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) and find out about their criminal record; if they have links with the Muslimeen and so forth. Madam President, I am sure that you have heard that. Am I supposed to investigate and find out who is doing what; when they are doing it; and with whom and where? Certainly, a company which is responsible for billions of dollars every year—encashed money—should be investigated.

Madam President, I do not know the truth of what he says. I am just saying that it is possible that the board has a responsibility to find out who is handling the money.

**Sen. Mark:** It is a fascist organization.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** The PNM has been in the public's eye for 50 years—

**Sen. Mark:** Yes.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:**—and we know that the PNM has never owned a Gestapo unit. [*Interruption*] The question with respect to the responsibilities of the board, again, we are quite ably reminded of what they are. We are quite proud of how this Parliament has been run over the years—whether it is this group of Ministers or the previous group of ministers—they keep our noses to the wheel. We have to be here and we have to do our things. There are audited statements that must come to the Parliament and accordingly those audited statements would come. Maybe there is need for one item in the audited statements to be changed.

**Sen. Mark:** What item?

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** The balance sheet. The balance sheet would be changed in future statements once we agree to the amendment. We would have a real balance sheet with real property. The law is simple. The audit must be a report of their expenses, earnings and assets. What we are suggesting is that if Senators agree to this amendment, we would be in a position to show them a real balance sheet with real assets.

**Sen. Mark:** That is why we cannot get the balance sheet.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** I am saying that if they are due then they are going to come, and those statements for future periods would have a change. As you agree with us on the amendment, one line you are going to add would be “real property”.

I heard protest about this expense and that expense and so forth. I want to make a suggestion in this Senate and I have said it before. Sometimes you have to help us to reconcile exactly how you want us to please you. One Senator says there should be no donations and it is wrong, morally and otherwise, to have any other promotional expenses, et cetera, and another Senator says to us that we need to have a redraft of this Bill so that the funds could be designated and so forth. I am sure that the Government is willing to look at both suggestions, but one has to be right and one has to be wrong. We can work on that.

I made the point that donations are a part of promotions and marketing. I heard arguments about certain donations, but the history is there. There were donations that went to other places and we acknowledged them. I did not hear any



argument about the donation that went to football. I did not hear any argument about the donation made by the National Lotteries Control Board to the national football effort. Was that a legitimate donation or a legitimate expense? Was it part of marketing?

**Madam President:** Minister, I am assuming that you are going to be a little while longer.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** Just one minute.

**Madam President:** Okay.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas:** Madam President, I want to suggest that enough good reason could be identified for Senators to support this amendment; and enough good business reasons could be found to support the amendment. In that context, I join my voice in urging the Senate to agree and support the amendment.

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

**Madam President:** Hon. Senators, we would now take the tea break, but before I suspend the Senate, let me remind Senators that last week, after the tea break, I had to wait five minutes for a quorum. I would expect everybody to be here at 5.00 p.m. The Senate is now suspended until 5.00 p.m.

**4.30 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**5.00 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Madam President:** Is there anyone else who wishes to speak?

**Sen. Mark:** Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh.

**Madam President:** But he is not here.

**Sen. Mary King:** Madam President, thank you. The amendment before us is to amend the National Lotteries Act, and there is not a problem with the actual amendment that the Government is seeking. Throughout the debate we have heard points made and I feel they are important. I think we should ask the Government to consider some further amendments. If they cannot be done today, I think the Act should come back for further amendments. I would explain exactly what I mean.

When we looked at section 21 it says that the revenue for any financial year is to be applied in a certain way, they spelled out what exactly the funds could be used for. It stipulates that they are to be used in defraying the following charges:

the payment of prize money; the remuneration fees and allowances of the board or any committees of the board; the salaries, fees and remuneration and gratuities of any employee, servants and agents of the board; and for the working operations of the entity. It states very clearly that the balance of the revenue of the board shall be applied in accordance with section 23. It goes on to tell us that:

“At the end of each financial year, there shall be paid into the Consolidated Fund, after allowing for all expenses...the balance standing to the credit of the National Lotteries Account.”

Now, we know there was an amendment that allowed for the Instant Lottery and the surplus from that lottery to go toward the Sport and Culture Fund. That is a given.

Section 27 also allows the board, with the approval of the Minister, to make certain rules and regulations. There is mention of the payment of petty disbursements and that is under section 27(d) which says that a sum can be retained by the accounts officers to meet petty disbursements and immediate payments.

Now, “petty disbursements” could in no way describe the millions of dollars that we see from time to time and which have been reported from time to time emanating from questions to this House. We have seen that there has been several millions of dollars spent as donations and that is out of the Sport and Culture Fund.

So, if we are serious about good governance—we have been telling the country that we are very serious about good governance for at least the last three or four years—I think governance mandates that we abide by the law and the regulations which are made under this Act.

I have a feeling that we are breaking the law when we are looking at the large donations that are being made from the Sport and Culture Fund.

I would like to make a suggestion that this Act be further amended. There should be a policy statement on donations. With respect to whether the policy statement should only stipulate donations to charities and other organizations is something we could debate at the time when it comes forward. I believe there is need for a policy statement within the Act on donations and this would clear up the queries that we have had and heard of over the last couple of hours on the expenditure, and which according to the Act is unlawful, and is being done by the National Lotteries Control Board.

I would like to add a question to the series of questions that have been asked today. I do not see the Minister here, but I presume that she would get the question. The question has to be asked: Are we actually making donations from moneys that should go towards the Consolidated Fund? If we are doing so, then we are certainly breaking the law and we have to do something about that.

The other concern I have is the issue of the audited accounts of the National Lotteries Control Board. They have not come to the Parliament. Is it the Auditor General who is not doing her job? Is somebody within the ministry following up on the audited accounts? There is total silence on the issue. I really feel that we cannot have good governance, transparency and accountability if the joint select committee which looks after the National Lotteries Control Board does not have these reports. They cannot do the work properly. I think this is a very serious issue and we have to ensure that the minister follows up with the Auditor General so that these accounts could be done and brought to the Parliament.

Many years gone by, when the Auditor General had so much work to be done, private accountants from outside were allowed to come in and do the accounts. I think we should allow for that to happen if the Auditor General cannot perform the function which has been assigned to her under this Act. I would like to see those reports and I would like a statement from the Minister as to why we do not have any reports to date. Who is following up on ensuring that these reports come before the House?

The other issue pertains to the agents of the National Lotteries Control Board. I think since 1988 when we established the gaming business, we allowed agents to register and there was a commission of 6 per cent paid to these agents. Since then, we have added many other types of games and services which are offered by these agents, including the payment of bills and other small transactions, and the commission has not been increased. I think, given the cost of living—other persons have had their salaries increased since 1988—they are due for an increase.

Madam President, so my three issues are: let us change the law so we can have proper accountability and a proper policy on donations; let us ensure that the accounts are audited and, perhaps, give us a time frame when we can expect them to be presented to the Parliament; and I think we need to look at a commission for agents.

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

**Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh:** Madam President and Members of the Senate, I would like to make a few points on this Bill to amend the National Lotteries Act which first started in 1968. The Minister in the Ministry of Finance gave some information on the financial aspects of the national lotteries since that time, and that was good research and important for us to know. For instance, in 1969 it was only \$1.9 million, but that was a lot of money then. The net present value then would be quite high.

In 1988, when they introduced the Instant Lottery, it was \$26 million; in 1991 staffing was \$55 million; and there were 400 agents in 1993.

In 1994 to 2004 which is a ten-year period—I do not know if the Minister's figures are correct—she said it was \$1.7 billion. So for a ten-year period, you have earned approximately \$170 million per year, and in 2004 you said \$2.56 billion—

**Sen. Sahadeo:** From its inception.

**Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:**—accumulated from its inception. The point is that generally the poor people in this country are the ones who bet. The wealthy people do not participate in it. If every year we have \$1.1 billion from the poor people—and they are spending the money because they feel that they could win money some day and support their children and so forth. They also feel that if they invest one dollar today they may be able to get \$32 or whatever it is, and they take the gamble.

The benefits that accrued from a State putting up national lotteries should really go back to the people. Out of \$1.1 billion in investments, the return on the investments for the poor people—approximately \$100 million goes into the Consolidated Fund, but you have \$100 million per year for administration. So, the hon. Minister would have to tell us, if you are gaining revenue of \$1.1 billion, and you have administration expenses of \$100 million and you have 90 workers, it means that administration costs for running this is approximately \$1 million per worker.

There are 900 outlets but the outlets pay a rent. You cannot say that the administration costs of \$100 million for 90 persons in an organization are justified. The first thing the hon. Minister should have done is what all Senators have been asking for. If I were the Minister on that side, in order to satisfy the Members of Parliament and citizens of the State—everyone here represents the

citizens—I would try to ensure that we have audited accounts showing the revenue expenses, the administration expenses, donations and sponsorships, so that the entire country would have been able to see where the moneys from the National Lotteries Control Board are being spent. So to come and ask the Parliament to pass another amendment by including “properties”—In fact, the amendment to the Bill asked Parliament to agree with a few things. Firstly, to amend section 9 of the National Lotteries Act and, secondly, to invest the board with wider powers than it was previously able to exercise. So far, we have not been able to show how the National Lotteries Control Board has been operating successfully with respect to equality, non-partisanship and in conformity with what is required of a national state enterprise or a body corporate.

Madam President, they are asking the Parliament to agree with wider powers than what the board was previously able to exercise. That is a no-go. How can you ask Parliament to pass an amendment to give the National Lotteries Control Board wider powers when we know for a fact that so many questions were asked by my colleagues, Sen. Mark and Sen. Basharat Ali? Sen. Mary King indicated truthfully and honestly that there are major concerns with the National Lotteries Control Board.

### **5.15 p.m.**

We would like to advise you that in keeping with the information Act that it would be wise for you to bring to this Parliament all these relative information, so nobody would be in any doubt as to what is happening with the National Lotteries Control Board, before asking us to okay an amendment to an Act. Then it asked to enable the board to inter alia, acquire and hold property whilst also permitting the disposal of property.

Madam President, what is the core competence of the National Lotteries Control Board? What is their core activity? Their core activity according to the Act is promotion and conduct of national lotteries. What is it about property that the National Lotteries Control Board wants to have Parliament pass? Is it the acquisition of Channel 4 so that Louis Lee Sing will be able to manage? Is it the acquisition of Channel 4 why you want properties? Do you want a studio? Who is in the business of studio management? Is it that National Lotteries Control Board can manage studios? Their core competence is the promotion and conduct of national lotteries.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** You want an answer to the question on Channel 4?

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** You want to answer it now? Yes, I would give way.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** Yes, since Channel 4 comes under the Ministry of Public Administration. No, it is not to give them Channel 4. And while I make the point; the same way North West Regional Authority had to deal with health but owned property.

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** When I was chairman of the North West—all right so bring that up—properties were allocated then according to the schedule, but you coming now to ask. North West has hospitals, it has health centres, and you must have property. But does National Lotteries Control Board need property? So you need Channel 4 and you need the studios. So, Madam President, is this a coy or a decoy, coming to Parliament so that National Lotteries Control Board could use a subterfuge measure to put power into the hands and use these things in a manner that is not fitting for any State enterprise? That is the second point?

The third one is to empower the board to utilize its revenue for an additional purpose. We do not know what the revenue is; we know that from the budget figures we have to extrapolate. Sen. Basharat Ali extrapolated that the advertising cost was \$100 million per year at an average, and administration expenses were \$100 million. So you are asking the Parliament to pass under section 21, to amend, to empower the board to utilize the revenue for an additional purpose.

So, Madam President, the first major conceptual point is that it is necessary for the people of Trinidad and Tobago to know the revenue collected over the last four to five years on an annual basis; the administration expenses; the “advertising expenses”—they say it is advertising but it is donations and sponsorship. As Sen. Mark indicated—and I would like to reemphasize and reiterate this point—there is no state enterprise that should be giving money to any organization, or to any firm, or to any company anywhere in Trinidad and Tobago. No state enterprise should be giving that; this is a body corporate. And for a body corporate that is receiving people’s money, which should go into the Consolidated Fund, you are taking that money out and you are doing whatever you want with it, which is not legal, under the pretext of advertising. [*Desk thumping*] Donations, sponsorship. I read the debate sometime in 2003 in the lower House. Carib Brewery got \$100,000 in sponsorship. What does a private company like Carib Brewery need \$100,000 in sponsorship for?

The next point I would like to bring on, Madam President, I do not want anybody to accuse me that I am beginning to say things that are going to affect the national interest, but when it is glaring it must be said. I do not want to be like what Mr. Donaldson has been saying, that any group of people who come up and oppose the Government and speak against things like crime, like Cadiz and these people, they are ghost parties. They are not ghost parties, but any pressure group that puts pressure on a government is being recognized as a ghost party. In that context, I want to bring the point which was written in one of the newspapers—I think it was *Newsday*—by one of the reporters: “NLCB spent \$2.3 million on Carnival events”. And in it payments were made to Soca Monarch \$225,000 and \$200,000; Fontclair, \$250,000; NLCB J’ouvert Bomb Competition, \$100,000; Custom Boys Cultural Competition, \$100,000; TUCO, \$200,000; International Soca Competition, \$200,000. Now how much is given to other organizations? This is what the country wants to see. They must see some equity; lack of discriminatory practices and they must see that there is equity in the distribution, nothing is wrong— The first thing, the principle is wrong in giving state enterprises money, to anybody. Then when you give it and there is inequality in the distribution of the funds, based on the whims and fancies of the members of the board of directors, that is doubly wrong. You cannot be wrong once and then be wrong a second time.

**Sen. R. Montano:** You can if you are PNM.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** Only PNM.

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** And if this is the practice, we abhor that practice, Madam President. This is not to be respected; it is not a respected practice. So what we are asking for and what we are saying is that there is inequality in the distribution. In the first place, it is wrong to give and then there is inequality in the distribution. And what all the citizens of this country would have wanted to see was, where has the money been donated, who was sponsored and what they were sponsored for. There is nothing wrong with giving money to football under the thing of advertising. You are taking State money and you are giving for football. Football is carrying us towards a world stage, it is beautiful.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** We are seeing a benefit from it.

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** We are going to see a benefit from it, and there is—

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** A value to it.

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** —a value.

**Hon. Senator:** That is one of the—

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** No, I am not accepting that. I am not accepting that it is right. They must justify why it is being given, and there must be a basis for the distribution of it. Madam President, you are a medical practitioner, you have worked hard in medicine, and you sacrificed a lot by coming to Parliament and giving to the people of your time; we all do that in our profession. You see that in Canada, the Princess Margaret Hospital, which is the major cancer institute in Canada, has a lottery system that provides all the funding for the management and for the construction of the Princess Margaret Hospital, which is a cancer hospital. You see it advertised on the Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto. How much thinking goes into this? Where does the people benefit? Do they benefit in education? Do they benefit in health? Do they benefit in social welfare after they have spent their \$1.1 billion?

Why can the National Lotteries Control Board not promote or conduct national lotteries so that the people of Trinidad and Tobago will benefit? [*Desk thumping*] Why are you coming with this legislation? So when Sen. Dumas speaks about the ability; what they want to do as a lotteries board, this is how they should be thinking. You see, it is unpardonable; it is unforgivable that this Government seems not to be able to have the mindset, the imagination and the brain power to move the country forward. [*Desk thumping*] These are the things that they have to think about. The Leader of Government Business in the Senate is a bright man and he should open his thinking and his brain power to doing things like that. Why can we not do lotteries for the schools; for the early childhood education centres? We have a lot of money. We have to open a cancer centre.

You know, Madam President, that there are almost 3,000 cancer cases in Trinidad every year; almost 1,000 people die with cancer and we do not have a good cancer centre in Trinidad. When we demitted office, everything was set for a stage four years ago, to move towards implementing a cancer institution. Bring on the National Lotteries Board to fund a lottery for the establishment of a cancer institute—this is the type of thinking. This is why I am saying, Madam President, Trinidad and Tobago ranked on the corruption perception index in 2001, 31<sup>st</sup>; 2002, 33<sup>rd</sup>, they are going down; 2003, 43<sup>rd</sup>; 2004, 51<sup>st</sup> and 2005, 59<sup>th</sup>. In five short years they move from 31<sup>st</sup> to 59<sup>th</sup>. When I am talking about human development—



**Sen. Mark:** That is PNM.

**Hon. Senators:** That is PNM.

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** —that is PNM for you. [*Interruption*] No, it is because Senator, Madam President through you, things like state enterprises which you want to bring on—13 new enterprises—will facilitate that type of nepotism, corruption and mismanagement. This is one of the reasons we are falling on the corruption perception index. If we have poor people spending \$1.1 billion per year, we need to improve the human development and the quality of lives of people. But if we analyze the UNDP Human Development Index, we see in 2001 we ranked 49<sup>th</sup>; in 2002, 50<sup>th</sup>; 2003, 54<sup>th</sup>; 2004, 54<sup>th</sup> and in 2005, 57<sup>th</sup>. So, we have moved on despite all the money that we had. These are things—hon. Senators on the other side—that you all have to be thinking about. How does one look? How does one characterize and analyze a country's well being and good governance when the corruption perception index is moving from 31<sup>st</sup> down to 59<sup>th</sup> in four short years. The UNDP Human Development Index in four short years has moved from 49<sup>th</sup> to 57<sup>th</sup>, and this last one, I am tying this into the National Lotteries Control Board as a corporate body and a state enterprise. They want to go into acquiring properties and they want to go and own studios and television houses and so on, and they are not being competitive. National Lotteries Control Board should be earning much more if they use their mind, their ability and their talent in particular ways. Look what has happened to Trinidad in the growth and competitive index. In 2001 we were 38 in the world—that was just UNC at the time, remember. In 2002, we ranked 42<sup>nd</sup>; 2003, 49<sup>th</sup>; 2004, 51<sup>st</sup> and 2005, 60<sup>th</sup>.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Oh, good grace!

**Sen. Mark:** Angels of death! Angels of death!

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** So, Madam President, in three areas in which a country is determined in terms of competence, ability and good governance, we have moved from 49<sup>th</sup> to 57<sup>th</sup> on the UNDP Human Development Index; 38<sup>th</sup> to 60<sup>th</sup> in the growth and competitive index; and 31<sup>st</sup> to 59<sup>th</sup> in the corruption index.

**Sen. R. Montano:** What! Read that again, read that again. Corruption index: 31<sup>st</sup> to 59<sup>th</sup>—Wow!

**Sen. Mark:** Three strikes and you are out.

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** And it is all in the context.

**Sen. Mark:** That is three strikes, boy.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Three strikes and you are out.

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** Three strikes and you are out. Madam President, there are two other areas I would like to touch on and I will close. *[Interruption]* Well you know we can lecture for two to three hours, Sen. Dr. Saith. When we are on the floor we can teach our students for two to three hours.

**Sen. Mark:** Well Jerry you would know about that—lecturer. He is going back to it just now.

**Madam President:** Sen. Mark!

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** He is going back to Barbados. Madam President, I hope my Senatorial colleagues do not trouble Sen. John Jeremie anymore, please.

**Sen. Mark:** Jerry is going back to lecture.

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** I feel sorry. Madam President, you know we spoke about GTECH. Sen. Mark spoke about GTECH; Sen. Dumas tried to say that GTECH was under our time. We appointed GTECH in 1994, they moved on to 2001. The one point I want to make about GTECH is that within the last four or five years, GTECH has been found to be a major corrupt enterprise in the world. What we are asking is for you to review the present contract with GTECH, because of a number of situations.

Madam President, I would like to draw the attention of this Senate, so what we are saying would be justified. I have pulled out from the internet 10 areas of corruption in about 10 different countries where GTECH is now functioning. GTECH is being referred to as the Microsoft of the lotteries industry. So they are the power house of the lotteries industry. I would like to bring to the attention of our colleagues, the first is the George Bush, Ben Barnes GTECH ring of corruption on October 03, 2005.

“The Bush/Ben Barnes/GTECH Ring of Corruption

While serving as Governor of Texas, George W. Bush was guilty of fostering corruption in order to salvage his political career.”

An example of corruption and state lotteries are bound. A Rhode Island based company name GTECH, the Microsoft of state lotteries. That is a document

coming out from the internet. Next one: on the topic of yesterday's Myers/Bush/Barnes GTECH corruption post, green boy at Lead lows mentioned this:

“Because of corruption like this, GTECH was not on good terms with Texas. In the scandal was a Rhode Island company called GTECH, which had a contract with the State of Texas. Eventually the details of the GTECH's corruption became known to the public.”

Madam President, this is Texas. It is in Pennsylvania, it is in Brazil, and many other countries in which GTECH is operating. What we are asking for is that this present regime reanalyze and rethink their whole position—Yes, I would give way to you. I loved you as a colleague at the university at one time. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Jeremie:** I do not know if that was meant to soften what I was about to say. Sen. Dr. Goopeesingh, the GTECH arrangement is of some vintage, it goes back away. And I can give you the assurance that that arrangement is being actively investigated by the authorities in Trinidad and Tobago, the authorities in the United States, and that you would hear more on it, in the not too distant future.

**Sen. Mark:** All right, we investigating Lee Sing.

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** Thank you very much for the reassurance from the hon. Attorney General, because this is what we are asking for. It has come to the attention of the State, to the people in this country that this is happening with GTECH and if the company has been found in massive corruption; if they want to free themselves away from it, they would analyze what is going on and probably bring an end to the contract with GTECH if it is not a correct thing, so review it.

So all these are really documents to show and to confirm that GTECH is involved in major abnormalities, major corruption problems worldwide—Texas, Pennsylvania, Brazil. This has come about within the last three or four years. When we hired them in 1994 there was nothing like that at all.

**Sen. Mark:** No, no, no, PNM hired them in 1994.

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** Yes, that is true. Yes, in 1994 it was under the PNM regime, and we had to continue it. We continued it. [*Crosstalk*] We had to renew the contract.

Madam President, the last one I would like to speak about which my colleague raised, is the question of . It is important to raise these concerns, it is worth repeating and reiterating, just to solidify our points of concern. I would like to

*National Lotteries (Amdt) Bill*  
[SEN. DR. GOOPEESINGH]

*Tuesday, December 13, 2005*

refer the honourable Senate to an article in the *Trinidad Guardian* on Sunday, December 05, 2004 by Sasha Mohammed:

“The investigations at the NLCB are part of the ongoing investigation into the Piarco Airport Development company.”

What had happened, Madam President? The Integrity Commission appointed a company called to investigate the Rowley affair in the Tobago Landate scandal. Subsequently to that, if there was a relationship—I am sorry that Sen. Conrad Enill is not here, because at the top of that article Enill denies conflict of interest. What happened if there is a relationship between Mr. Enill and Mr. Louis Lee Sing? NLCB went on to hire that same company to do a witch-hunt on the former UNC board, under the pretext that they want to investigate the Piarco Development Corporation or Piarco thing.

I note that this Canadian firm, which was hired by the Integrity Commission to investigate the Landate affair, had also been hired by Louis Lee Sing of the National Lotteries Control Board. So who pays for? is hired by NLCB to investigate and do a witch-hunt on UNC, and the same was hired by the Integrity Commission. So was NLCB paying for to investigate the Landate scandal? So, if they are paying for that, he who pays the piper plays the tune.

**Sen. Jeremie:** Can I? The Integrity Commission, as the Senator must know, is independent and it answers to itself. It hired on your own account before the National Lotteries Control Board hired. Mr. Enill would be the best person to answer the question as to why they were hired in relation to the National Lotteries Control Board. But surely, you cannot say that there is a link between the later hiring and the hiring by the Integrity Commission.

**Sen. Mark:** Why? Why? Who say so?

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** I am glad the hon. Attorney General made this point. If a State hires a particular company to investigate a matter, the Integrity Commission which is supposed to be full with integrity, you will tell us that a body corporate would hire that same company? Why must the body corporate, NLCB, hire that company?

**Sen. Jeremie:** Can I just again—

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** Well, you know because I respect you in your way Attorney General.

**Madam President:** Please, please, please. Attorney General, speak to me please and not to the Senator.

**Sen. Jeremie:** Through you, Madam President, what the Senator is saying is that the Integrity Commission cannot hire, let us say Mr. Martineau, if the National Lotteries Control Board is hiring Mr. Martineau. They are providing services, and that is all— These are service providers being hired by persons separate and apart from each other; not acting in concert.

**Sen. Dr. T. Goopeesingh:** Madam President, he drew an analogy or a reference to a local attorney. Local attorneys are free to—if there is conflict of interest they would not take a case. He referred to Mr. Martineau. Mr. Martineau, when he sees a conflict of interest he would not take a case. And there is conflict of interest with the same firm, the same two investigators doing the work for the two people. So I just want to simply make the point that he who pays the piper, plays the tune. Therefore, if NLCB appointed , they would be to the whims and fancies of NLCB.

So we are bringing up this point, and the two investigators, hear what the newspaper article said:

“NLCB sources also confirmed last week that not only had the same firm been hired to probe the two cases, but also, the same two investigators, Bashir Rahemtulla and Sandy Boucher, were conducting both probes.”

A number of people on the UNC side were being called by these two people to ask them about donations by the NLCB. So what? Did the NLCB hire them to do a witch-hunt on people on the other side? And that is the same NLCB that this Government say that we must give power, and to amend the Act when they move so devious and fraught with problems in their management! We cannot tolerate that, Madam President; we cannot support that.

What we want , the Integrity Commission and the Government to know is that we are looking at this. We send them a warning, do not believe that we would allow anybody to cloud the issues and for anybody to cover up for PNM corruption. I say no more at this time, except to say that that was a witch-hunt to victimize people on this side as well. So, we cannot support a state enterprise— imagine a state enterprise hiring investigators to investigate other people. That is naked shame!

Madam President, I would like to conclude by indicating that based on the operations of NLCB, the lack of financial respect, their inability for the Government to provide audited statements and financial reports to this Senate on

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revenues, expenditures, donations, sponsorships, advertising—and I almost forgot to make one point before I close. That was when we asked the question—I was here in Parliament when an answer was given to a question, I think Sen. Baksh had asked: How much money is being spent by State corporations in advertising? We found that out of 56 state corporations, the hon. Minister of Finance at that time, Sen. Conrad Enill, stated that he could have only given answers to four of the state corporations, and four out of 56 had already spent \$27 million in advertising, and out of that NLCB had spent \$12 million, and out of that NLCB had spent almost \$700,000 to Radio 195.5; whereas the other radio stations were getting \$100,000. It is in the *Hansard*, how much money was paid to Radio 195.5 in that advertising budget—\$700,000 in one year versus the other radio stations \$100,000 and \$100,000.

**Sen. R. Montano:** No, no, no, it was not \$100,000, they were getting \$3,000 or \$4,000.

**Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** Some of them got \$3,000 or \$4,000. So, Madam President, I am bringing this up in terms of the advertising. You know that this Government is spending \$322 million in advertising, publicity and public relations in a short space of three years. On our side when we were in administration we spent at an average of \$5 million. This is why you see gloating advertisements on many pages of the newspapers by the Ministry of Education; by the Ministry of Health; by the Ministry of this and the Ministry of that, and they are spending \$322 million in three short years on advertising. That does not include the money spent on the people who are supporting the different ministries, the public relations firms and the public relations officers.

So they are spending approximately \$600 million in advertising in a short space of three years, and who are benefiting? And you want us to accept that National Lotteries Control Board, so we can give them carte blanche to do anything they want; to advertise and advertise on Radio 195.5 to the detriment of the rest of the people in Trinidad and Tobago. I had to bring this up because I just remembered it.

This is why, in summary, we feel that it is a dishonourable—I would like to put it—corporate body. I say it emphatically, it is a dishonourable corporate body, and in our conscience we cannot support any further legislation to make anything more than they are doing legal. What they are doing is already illegal and we cannot legalize something that is illegal already. [*Desk thumping*] What

we would like to see—and I would like to reiterate what my colleague Sen. Mark had indicated earlier on in this debate—we would like to see a forensic audit into the NLCB. We would want to have some investigations done into it by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) based on the forensic audit, and we want to see appropriate action taken where it is required.

Madam President, I thank you.

**5.45 p.m.**

**Sen. Brother Noble S.A. Khan:** Thank you, Madam President, for allowing me these few moments in which I will share on what is before us, an amendment to an Act to provide for the establishment of a National Lotteries Control Board for the promotion and conduct of national lotteries.

The amendment that is before us, that is today, 2005 and this Act seems to me, I seem to recall had started in 1968 and it is a landmark position, a milestone in the history of movement in our country. A milestone in the furtherance of what I may say, a challenge to what morality and ethics and nation building is supposed to be. Of course, it could also bring to our mind things like “whe whe” in the old days in the backyard. It could also bring to our minds things like the clubs that used to exist at one time that go by the names of the club—“fellas who was the “casa”, like Buncans club, Papits club, Teddy’s club and others, and what they stand for or what they stood for, because many of them have gone the way.

Even as I have indicated that the “whe whe” originated in the backyards coming—according to the oral history—out of Guyana, the Chinese connection into the backyards and then it was there. The Chinese connection was not directly out of China, it passed through Guyana and came. So it was built up and established and somewhere in 1968 this grew into national recognition, this law before us. But as I have indicated, the question of morals, the question of ethics will arise, because basically, what the lotteries is about, it is about gambling; and you know many of the great traditions look very differently on what has become a national input into our society. I am sure many of us have heard the contributions and so many of the negatives that have been derived by these types of activities in our society. I would hardly burden you with some of that or the repeat of some of that.

We have heard too, the question of the management of it and this is very important because from ’68 to now we have had a time to overlook and see some progression. And you have one—the financial progression—this is one of the few statutory boards that have been able to pay itself; that is bringing in more than

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what is going out. It is very few, so we could look at it from that angle, but it also has with it the history of the statutory boards, particularly where, when they come in, when flows come in it does not cover the outflows. This has implications for that because you see the establishment of a fund, so there is a major control mechanism that is absent with regard to national lotteries, [*Interruption*] because it is viable, so to speak. [*Interruption*]

**Madam President:** If I recall, Sen. Mark, when you were speaking, there was absolutely no interruption. When you talk like that I cannot hear what is being said. Could you please maintain your silence for a little longer? Thank you very much.

**Sen. Mark:** I sincerely apologize.

**Madam President:** Accepted. Thank you.

**Sen. Bro. N. Khan:** Thank you, Madam President, and so we are always thankful for the way you will intervene. I am grateful for it, thank you.

Yes, I was making the point that national lotteries gets in more than goes out, and that check that obtains in other state enterprises where they are getting less on their own and they are supplemented by the Treasury, so to speak, affords for a check that does not exist with national lotteries to a great extent. That is, they never ever come with hand-in-glove to the Treasury and that in itself, as I have indicated or seemed to hint would have been a good control because you will be meeting the first line of a battery of budget officers, of civil servants who would have established parameters that by far, do not exist in what obtains now in national lotteries, because of its viability.

But, again, the question of the morals; now if we are to build a society—and I think all of us are committed to that—based on strong morals and strong ethical principles, I would think that this Bill that is before us today, coming as this, is totally out of place and should have been one that should have been denouncing the parent Bill. It does not meet, in my humble view, what a sound, moral and ethical country should be. When we think in terms of what obtains—and again, I would touch on the point that some of our colleagues have touched on—is basically, you would have people who can least afford it, intervening in allowing for national lotteries to be as viable or more viable as it is at the moment.

With the draw-off of that you have the economic effect on those who can least afford it taking place in a negative way and also the sort of backward push in the type of society that we ought to aspire to. Though very often we hear very beautiful



speeches and commitments as far as words are concerned and perhaps this might be one of the areas that we could possibly look at, that we examine what we say and see how far it goes as to making those qualities of the morals and ethical principles that we are supposed to follow. I will remind ourselves that basically, our country is one in which our people are faith based and the leadership, I would say, recognize that and we should pay a little more attention to those areas that we bring before the Senate, because from our history, our ancient noble African heritage, if we could think in terms of financial, we think about the “sou sou” and there are other elements, instead of building this sort of national lotteries, where you take off, and it is definitely not of that heritage. We could think in terms of the Judaic Christian, Islamic, the semitic sort of heritage that we have too, and you would find that the question of what is before us is totally a “no go” as far as these traditions are concerned.

Also, by this initiative, we see a deepening of the processes for what we have now: one-hand, two-hand, three-hand bandits; there is hardly a street in Port of Spain where you will not find this type of activity taking place; where again it is bringing gambling to a high amount of sophistication beyond this. The other element which I would like to touch on here is the question of the participation of drugs and alcoholism which I understand is by far the more dangerous as these other inputs that we have, which is before us through the National Lotteries Act.

The universal urge that is taking place now is to meet the challenge before us, and though this might appear to be isolated, a society is not based on particular things; it is a whole comprehensive mechanism that is entrusted upon us and which we have to meet together in a wide way. So though it may appear to be that national lotteries may not have any great bearing in the total system, there are elements in it. Because we could think in terms, as you have heard it mentioned, of the international connections. I recall—I think I may have mentioned it here—when investors from the very, very Far East had made their intervention and they were on our main street revising and renovating buildings to bring the gambling systems into a high sophistication. You are talking about people with very sophisticated techniques being introduced in our country. I would think, too, that some of these things that operate within the national lotteries are becoming more and more sophisticated as some of our colleagues have mentioned.

It seems to me, therefore, that the road we are following will lead us to an almost unlimited hurly-burly, running down the road to destruction. What are the benefits to be derived? There will be some benefits for a limited few, as far as gambling is concerned. It always is. The “casa” is always the winner, that is the

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house, so to speak; in this case the National Lotteries Control Board in this investment. I think it is an open secret in the way some of these agencies and, from what we are hearing, even national lotteries have been subjected to.

So I think that what is before us, I cannot support it, even if my own conscience will tell me that way, but I will suggest to our colleagues in the Senate today that when Bills such as these come and we are at a fortunate situation now as far as funding is concerned, if something is wrong it is wrong. In 1968, they may seek to justify that because of the paucity of cash that was around but today we are by far in a greater and better position as far as cash is concerned, though I dare say that we hardly see it coming down to the ground. Christmas is upon us and I hope by the grace of God that our tables would be historically as we know it to be, but the indications are it is not so rosy from where I sit at the moment. So I am making an appeal that if there are other areas where we could speed up the processes, I am sure all of us would be grateful for that. Because in local parlance your table has “lamb, ram and jam” but what do your neighbours have? These are things—and I am speaking here about conscience now—which I think we definitely ought to pay some respect to.

So in closing, Madam President, I would like again to—in dealing with matters such as these before us which we know definitely have negative effects as far as the social justice is concerned and the social fallout is definitely bad, that we pay attention to this aspect of it. Again, I will say that I am unable to support what is before us.

Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan:** Thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to contribute. I would be just about five minutes. I wanted to respond to an issue that was raised by Sen. Dumas, when he mentioned before this Senate this real balance sheet and the National Lotteries Control Board not being able to produce a real balance sheet because of the issue with properties.

[*Sen. Dumas stands*]

**Madam President:** Please sit down.

**Sen. Dumas:** No, but she is saying that I said that there is not real—

**Madam President:** I cannot have both of you on the floor. Will one sit down! She is not giving way, Senator.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Let me finish and then you will get a chance to clarify.

**Sen. Dumas:** You said I said real balance sheet.

**Madam President:** Are you prepared to give way?

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Okay, let me give way.

**Sen. Dumas:** Madam President, my argument is, that in a future time and a different time. I never said that you cannot do a real balance sheet now. I said if they are relevant and they should have been presented they will be presented.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** I still do not understand what you are saying. *[Interruption]* Listen, let me just finish my—*[Interruption]* The issue is, what I am concerned about is what is being tabled in the Parliament and what went to the Public Accounts Committee, because as far as I am concerned what we reviewed as accounts for the National Lotteries Control Board, which were audited by the Auditor General, I would hope to be real balance sheets for the company.

So, Madam President, if it is that they have properties, which is what I gleaned from the Minister's presentation; if it is that they have been acquiring properties and it is not being recorded on the balance sheet, there is a serious problem and I have a serious problem with that.

**Sen. Dumas:** You are misleading the Senate.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** No, you all need to clarify your issues, okay. You all need to clarify it, because everything—*[Interruption]* any company can produce a real balance sheet and everything can be accounted for. *[Interruption]* If you are using a building, you pay a rent, even if it is from the Government. If you pay zero rent it is recorded; if you pay \$10 it is recorded as an expense; if it is a lease arrangement it is recorded on the balance sheet, Madam President, through you.

I wanted to make that point because these accounts have been tabled in this Parliament. They have been forwarded to the Public Accounts Committee. They were audited by the Auditor General, which were reviewed by the Public Accounts Committee and I would hate to think and this Senate—and I just wanted to get the record straight—that is what we were doing. We were reviewing accounts that were not real, according to the Minister, real balance sheets. Okay, so, I just wanted to make that point.

The other issue I wanted to raise, and it was a point raised by Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh. When we talk about \$1.2 billion in revenue coming into the National Lotteries Control Board and at the end of the day we are talking about \$100 million going to the Consolidated Fund, and in this particular case we are talking

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about less than \$100 million, we are talking about less than 10 per cent and the Government needs to look at this issue. And furthermore, \$1.1 billion is being spent by the National Lotteries Control Board and I am not sure that we are getting proper accounting for that; this is why Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh was making the point. That is the point he was getting at. We do not want to legalize, at this point in time, there are too many questions being raised about the accountability of the National Lotteries Control Board. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Basharat Ali raised the issue because it was an issue before the Public Accounts Committee raised by the Auditor General and in all cases we have asked the National Lotteries Control Board to go back and review their position with respect to what they are calling advertising; what they are deeming as marketing; what they are deeming PR; and what they are deeming donations.

**Sen. Dumas:** Donations, yes, yes.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** But the first thing you hear from the other side when you try to raise these issues, these very important issues, is what was done under the UNC and they do not like to look at the issues. And that is the problem that we have here in the Senate. But, Madam President, even to talk about the UNC, which you all always love to talk about—

When Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh talked about the situation in Toronto with the Princes Margaret Hospital; when you talk about a donation, nobody here has a problem with a donation once we can see the value of that donation, it is a realizable donation, it is tangible! The one that you want to accuse the UNC of is a mobile clinic—not so Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh—it was a mobile clinic that was acquired under the UNC that can reach to the rural areas where people do not have easy access to health care. That was the purpose of it. So, when you talk about donations in that light; yes, state enterprises must contribute. When you come to these nebulous donations—and it is a PR, and it is for Carib Brewery—if you have for football we can see the benefit of it.

Let me just say—I am just being forward-looking in this—when we are looking down the road, what we have asked—and I just want to assure Members of the Senate, Members of the Public Accounts Committee have asked the National Lotteries Control Board to go back and come back with a policy position on how you determine and how you are going to measure the benefit and the value of the donations that you make. What is your PR? What is the impact of your PR? Are you getting value for money? So, it is not to say that the matter was not reviewed and it was not handled; it was reviewed at the Public Accounts Committee.

Madam President, one other point and this would be my last point. When we talk about the National Lotteries Control Board and you are acquiring properties and so on which is what this Bill is seeking to do, what are you attempting to do when you talk about acquiring property? The Minister mentioned they were trying to acquire property to be able to house a studio and this is why Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh raised the issue. Is that the core activity? Are we going into areas—is the National Lotteries Control Board going into areas that do not belong to their core business? And this is the problem we have with state enterprises, especially as we talk about times when we are enjoying so much money in the times of plenty. We have state enterprises that start moving outside of their core business activity, and that is why their competitiveness falls and the profitability of these institutions fall, and the people who suffer are the taxpayers at the end of day.

Why are we getting into studio business and why are we acquiring property? What is the purpose? That is not the core activity of the National Lotteries Control Board. And if there is a need to house them in a building or there is a need for office space, I am sure the current arrangements that prevail right now, through the Government, will continue to prevail and they will be sufficient. But this is the problem that we have throughout all the state enterprises. And this Bill today, tells me that the Government continues to allow state enterprises to move outside their core business activity and that is what we must stem if we are to bring back efficiency into the state enterprises.

On that note, Madam President, I thank you for allowing me to make this contribution. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie:** Thank you, Madam President. I would just like to make a few comments in response not only to the amendment but also to some general comments that have been made.

Madam President, I understand the National Lotteries Control Board operations to a very great extent, because, actually, I know of people, very close, who are agents of the board. I want to say to Sen. Bro. Noble Khan, nobody could stop people from gambling if they want to gamble. It is an addiction for some people and I have known of people who played “whe whe”, they still play “whe whe”. And I could tell the Government they still play “whe whe” underground. When the Government is giving \$24 to \$1 the people are giving \$30 to \$1.

**Hon. Senator:** Yes, that is true.

**Sen. Dr. E. Mc Kenzie:** And they are honest and they are real organized and everything. So Bro. Noble Khan could talk till Mohammed come back [*Laughter*] he cannot stop gambling. Even if they do not play Play Whe, Lotto and so on, I see people working on sites, they have their lunch break and they are there playing cards. The hon. Minister, Hazel Manning could say, in the schools, coming to the last weeks of school the children played cards and they played for money. The guards catch them and if they do not play there they play under trees. You read in the papers last week they killed a man, he said “do not gamble in front my house”; so what are we talking? No law could stop that. It is an addiction for some people and I could tell you that I have been in a Play Whe agent’s place for three weeks, every day, Monday to Saturday, and never even played a Scratch. It is your own heart and mind, so, no law, no matter what you do with the law you cannot stop people from gambling if they want.

Madam President, the 1988 amendment to the original Act, gave the National Lotteries Control Board the authority to put all the moneys from Scratch—now for those people who do not know what is Scratch it is the coin game; you buy a ticket and they have different rules, if you “thing” below the coin and you scratch out, whatever you get—I have known people who won \$1,000, \$25,000, all sorts of things. All the moneys, all the profits from that game is going to a Sport and Culture Fund and the National Lotteries Control Board has the authority to use that to sponsor, donate, contribute, whatever you want to term it, to any event upon request from a bona fide organization for money.

I will give you an example. We are in the Tobago Heritage Festival. I helped to produce the show for Mount Pleasant, Sen. Sadiq Baksh was there, he visited my presentation, and we were sponsored by the National Lotteries Control Board. We actually built them into our production and say, well, look, tonight you are at Carnbee, Mount Pleasant our show is “Nutten day”, so those who play today and you do not get anything, do not be vexed, we made a humour of the thing, but they contributed and all we did was to advertise. They said let everyone know the National Lotteries Control Board contributed; they did this with the old time wedding and they did this for Bethel and so on.

So, because of that 1988 amendment there is the permission given to the board to put into that Sport and Culture Fund, apart from the Consolidated Fund, that money from the Scratch is specifically—so whether it is to sponsor schools, jerseys, whatever it is; that goes into that. So this is what I know.

Radio advertisement, you know sometimes we have organizations and we would say we want the message to go to a target audience. I go to my daughter, she is young, I say: Girl, if I want to get a message to the young people, what to do? She would say to me. “Mammy what is the message?” According to what the message is she would say 98.1; according to who the target audience is she would say channel five; she would say Tambrin; she would say, old people 97.1 and 97.9; [*Laughter*] she would say “is things what you want people to thing”, call it 95.5 for you here and 95.7.

What I want to say is that we cannot just think of saying that all the moneys for advertisements would go unfairly to one specific radio station or media house, or whatever it is. It depends on the message; it depends on the target audience you want to meet and it also depends on the time of day that you are going to have the “thing”. If you want something—death notice, everyone in Tobago knows who dies every day in Tobago, because you must turn on your radio to 92.1 at 6.30. As soon as the death news done, all the old people turn off their radio; they say, because all they have is boom doom boom, boom doom doom, boom doom boom; we do not want to hear any boom doom boom. While we are turning off because we do not want to hear boon-go-doom, the young people are turning up and put on their radio and they are jigging and dancing.

I do not want us to get away from the fact that according to the message; according to who you want to meet, the time of day and all of that, you choose the medium where the people would listen, read, go and so on. I admit that I am a bit concerned about the types of advertisements—if you want to call it that—that we have in the newspapers, especially from Government, state enterprises and agencies and ministries. I am really fed up, sometimes. It is a bit too much and I think we need to do that.

**6.15 p.m.**

A waste of money and too much money for that, because the people who need the message do not read; the people who want the message will read it once; but the people who need the message more and more and more, sometimes the newspapers will not be the right medium to use.

Madam President, the next thing I want to say is that I want to re-emphasize, reiterate what everybody before me had said, the need for reports to be laid in the Parliament. Public Accounts Committee—that big fat thick book—not everybody

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reads through the whole thing. I am sorry for the Members of those committees who have to go through all of this and they get nothing for doing it.

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

**Sen. Dr. E. Mc Kenzie:** Yes. I want to tell you that a Motion is going to come to that effect soon, the need for the report to be laid in the Parliament. So I want to ask, Madam President, through you, the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance to see that we have those reports from the National Lotteries Control Board (NLCB) laid in the Parliament according to law.

I want to re-emphasize the point made by Sen. King, the need to treat the agents better. They cannot boast about how much profit and run competitions for the agents and if they make so much over, they carry their quota by so much. Since these agents started and they have, I think a flat rate of 6 per cent commission or whatever it is; they have all sorts of added expenses since then. Minimum wage went up twice; National Insurance went up for the workers they have; many more games. They just started with Donsai, Pick 2, Play Whe and Scratch. They are now selling phone cards and you could pay your phone bill through them. More work, therefore you want more staff. Do not talk about banditry, robbery, and everything else and I think that it is time that they look at that and review this, if we are going to have this.

The differentiation between donations, advertising and marketing, I think this is something that Sen. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan brought up and I think it is a very strong point. I think that they need to categorize by saying, if it is a donation, if we are advertising or whether our advertising is a part of the marketing as Sen. Rennie Dumas said.

Madam President, to be personal with the amendment, I think there are instances where the NLCB would have all sorts of things on its hands that we do not use. Some of the machines are obsolete; some of the things that they used are no longer relevant and appropriate. We have upgraded. I know about the GTECH story, especially their services in places like Tobago where they do not get signals. You have to call them in Trinidad; you have to do all sorts of things, and they would come and service you when they are ready.

I must confess, we have noticed a little improvement within the last few months, but they are a problem. The profit from NLCB is very high and this is something you need to look at. They receive a lot of money from the NLCB and I have seen where they have begun to push back some of it into the society. We



have experienced it in Tobago. They tried to take care of the less fortunate and so on, but I believe it is because some of us “cuss” one or two of them.

Madam President, despite all of this, I support the amendment personally, because I hope that with the airing of our grievances and disappointments, that better would be done. I know that the GTECH contract would be coming up next year and I hope that what we are hearing now, we would see the whole thing being done. Do not be fooled by improvement in the last six months before the contract up to say: “We were bad all the time, but you see how good we have begun to improve”. Do not worry to look at that. Start to look at the thing from the very beginning and assess the whole situation.

Madam President, I did not intend to speak, but having heard some of the comments made and so on, I thought that I needed to make a short intervention. I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity and as I am standing and I have the opportunity, Merry Christmas everybody and a blessed and prosperous 2006. [*Desk thumping*]

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

**Sen. Dr. E. Mc Kenzie:** We coming next week, you want to kill Sen. Dr. Saith.

**Sen. Sadiq Baksh:** Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, even at this late hour I am compelled to join the debate on an Act to amend the National Lotteries Act, Chap. 21:04

Madam President, I join this debate, mainly because— [*Interruption*]

#### PROCEDURAL MOTION

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):** Madam President, I beg to move that this Senate continue its sitting until the completion of this Bill.

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### NATIONAL LOTTERIES (AMDT.) BILL

**Sen. S. Baksh:** I do agree with Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie that no law or no legislation will allow people to discontinue gambling. If they want to gamble, they will gamble. But Madam President, as a Government, we have a right to choose, whether we want to expand what we have or we want to keep it where it is.

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Madam President, what is even worse, is that we heard a lot of talk this evening about the National Lotteries Control Board and their operation and the intention of this Bill is to allow the NLCB to hold property and also permit it to dispose of property that it no longer requires. But no one said what property they have and they want to dispose of, and nobody showed any projection or any intention as to what type of property they wanted to acquire. I find that extremely strange, that in this Bill before us, which has been here for at least two years—a two-year period—a lot of things could have been changed since then. If you had equipment that you wanted to get rid of, maybe at present, it is of no value, and you might not even have a salvage value and it might be good as waste, so it might not be necessary. I would have thought that an organization with a poor track record as the National Lotteries Control Board in terms of accounting for what they already have should not really be encouraged to go into an expansion mode. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Mark:** Definitely not.

**Sen. S. Baksh:** If you cannot account for what you have, you cannot tell me you want more. Tell me what you have; show me the reason you want it and I feel that we are reasonable people in this Senate to say yes, go ahead.

Madam President, this is the first time in this honourable Senate that I have seen the Government make out such a weak case in any one of its proposals. I have been here a long time and I have always seen them make a proper, at least, reason, rationale, a case, an argument. Today, the Government is putting across its worst performance to date. And I do not think, coming out of a conference the way you came out over the weekend that you would come out on a back foot; I expect you to be stepping forward and driving the ball all across the place. I really expected that.

So, Madam President, the signs of the time to come is what we are seeing. [*Desk thumping and laughter*] We were there and I knew when we were not putting our best foot forward. I knew when we were looking for better ideas and I could recognize it on the other side from my own experience.

I would like to recommend to the Government, do not put this Bill to a vote this afternoon; maybe go back and wait another year; have all your records in place; show a good plan; dispose of what you have now anyhow, and in the meantime save some money and pay the agents a little more. Those retirees selling the Classic should get a little more incentive and I feel certain, we would get everybody on this side to support it, except me.

Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Christine Sahadeo):** Madam President, at the onset, let me take the time to thank all Senators for making their contributions on this amendment here, though the unfortunate thing about this evening's proceeding is really regrettable; there has been so much misinformation, particularly during prime media time, and one wonders if it has all been intentional.

Madam President, a lot has been said on the accounts and correctly so, what we understand and what has been said here, that the reports since 1999 have not been laid in Parliament. Madam President, let me draw to the attention of this honourable Senate that requests—as you know, section 25(2) requires that the accounts of the board shall be audited by the Auditor General. Let me say very clearly, the company has indicated that requests have been made and as we are all aware, the Auditor General's office is understaffed and that situation is at present being regularized.

Madam President, let me say right away, accounts have been prepared and audited by Pannell Kerr Forster, as sanctioned by the Auditor General. Let me say at the onset, that the Auditor General with their permission can allow these accounts to be audited and of course, they would review the accounts before they can be laid in Parliament.

For the benefit of this Senate, let me say when this current board took over in 2002, the accounts from 1999 were not prepared or laid here. Sometimes it seems that those on the other side seem to forget that they also had a responsibility and those accounts were not prepared or laid.

There was a lot of talk as I have said and misrepresentations were made here. I was very happy when Sen. Wade Mark magnanimously apologized for saying that we paid US\$75 million to Intelysis. But you know what is really upsetting to me, a statement was made that a building was purchased for \$25 million by the late Willard Gopaul and here is a person who has gone to the great beyond and to make such an inaccurate statement, when in fact, the building was acquired at a cost of \$2.2 million.

When you make such distortions, I wonder if there is any creditability in any statements made by those on the other side. And again, let me say, it seems when statements are made on that side it is exponentially gross, so really anything said must be taken as they say with probably less than a pinch of salt.

Madam President, we can concur on this side that we have a responsibility, state enterprises/corporations, they should lay these reports and that situation is

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being rectified. But again let me summarize regarding the accounts. I am pleased to note that up to 2003, the accounts have been audited, prepared for 2004 and I understand that situation is being regularized.

Much was said in terms of the cost, in terms of the administrative costs, in terms of just over \$100 million. Let me say right away that 75 per cent of this cost of over \$100 million annually is really for GTECH services. That alone as a matter of fact, I understand, is close to 75 per cent and another 5 per cent for GTECH marketing, because the business of the NLCB involves a high level of marketing. So when you hear \$100 million and my friend on the other side always boasts he did this Executive MBA with me and I would have hoped that the whole module on financial management—but it looks like I would probably have to do a course and do some training. But I would imagine, they would have taken time to analyze these costs and not stand in Parliament and make a gross statement and the reporter listening all he hears is \$100 million and may not hear when it goes on to say, really over 75 per cent, fees which were negotiated by those on the other side.

Let me say again, I do not think my colleague probably spelt it out clearly, but it is my responsibility as a finance person to do so. Those commissions were 4.5 per cent. Madam President, in 1999, it was increased to 8 per cent. Here it is, you have gross revenue increasing, commission is a percentage of gross revenue, is there any rationale for increasing the commission from 4½ per cent to 8 per cent? Madam President, no business school can tell me that and nobody on the other side can justify that.

Madam President, I want to congratulate the present board, they are in the process of renegotiating this downwards, because this is untenable. [*Interruption*]

**Madam President:** Silence.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Thank you, Madam President, for your protection. We on this side are saying that this is untenable, this is unacceptable and we will not condone it. So they are very correct, we on this side cannot accept it and again let those on the other side recognize that they contributed to these escalating expenses.

Madam President, I think Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie summarized it very well when she indicated that the successive boards have done a lot in terms of growing, in terms of the revenue base. As I indicated in the first year, they made just over \$1.6 million and at this time, currently, the NLCB contributed to the Consolidated

Fund, over the 10-year period, we said \$1.7 billion, approximately \$170 million, as was pointed out; arithmetically correct, Sen. Dr. Goopeesingh.

Madam President, in terms of these issues, I believe that needed some level of clarity. [*Interruption*]

**Sen. Mark:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. Jeremie:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. Mark:** Yes, I want to hear about Michael Toney.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Madam President, a lot of questions have been asked as to why certain expenses are allowed and let me say—and I think many of my friends on the other side, either sat on boards, chaired boards or health authorities or other things, and we must know that in order to run an enterprise, we must incur certain expenses, wholly, exclusively and necessary in terms of that business activity. If a board determines that there is need for an audit, there is need for an investigation, we should commend that board for implementing that type of investigation. Madam President, every time we come to Parliament, I hear from the other side, “why you do not conduct a forensic audit on this enterprise, why you do not do that. [*Interruption*]

**Sen. Mark:** Plipdeco.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Because you know you would find corruption.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Madam President, as I have indicated, the mere fact that the board commissioned an audit in terms of , reviewing the transactions to me signals that the board is going in the right direction and certainly, as was corrected and I was so pleased to see Sen. Mark getting up and correcting that cost is just \$1.2 million.

I know a lot of questions have been asked on the board membership and I think I should probably inform this honourable Senate here, we have this board, everybody knows it is chaired by Mr. Louis Lee Sing. We also have four other Board Members, Miss Cheryl Guide, Miss Norma Lewis-Phillip, Mr. Carl Groome and Lindsay Parmashwar. Madam President, this is in fact, the board that we have in place.

A big issue was raised regarding payments made to Daniel and Associates. Again, I heard a large figure of \$400,000; even I was concerned. I rushed across and

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said, “Can, I get this figure”. I could not believe it. I actually got concerned. Madam President, you know what is so vexing, when I got the figures, to date \$11,000.

**Sen. Mark:** Only \$11,000?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** We take advantage of prime media time and I hope that this information gets corrected in the media. It is regrettable. As I started off my deliberations, I said it is regrettable that while we debate this Bill, Members on the other side used the opportunity of media time to make such misrepresentations to this Senate. And let me say again the rationale for this. Madam President, you would know in institutions such as these, internationally, because of the nature of the business activity, the people they recruit, their backgrounds must be checked. So they are not running around checking all their employees or investigating all their employees. The policy really involves for any new recruitment, a check is done and this is why Daniel and Associates in Trinidad and I think it is Duke in Tobago are used. I am sure Sen. Mark would agree with me that the board should be complimented on this approach to ensure that really on the recruitment policy, that they recruit people of the correct caliber and standard of living to ensure that there is no fraudulent activity.

Madam President, a lot was said in terms of advertising. As I indicated that an advertising cost is a necessary cost of a company of this nature. What was more of concern, again, the misinformation, the misrepresentation that all the advertising went to one agency CORE-STYLE.

Madam President, let me correct this anomaly right away, again. Only very recently, I understand advertising for the Scratch and Play Whe was given to CMB and AMPLE. Right now, they are waiting to award the contract for, I think Cash Pot is another game and I understand there are four other advertising companies that qualified for this.

So again, when you hear these statements, what really you are hearing is just gross misrepresentation. As a matter of fact—I do not have the information—but what I am saying is that those payments are disbursed very widely and the advertising is well shared. Let me correct it again. CORE-STYLE is not the major advertising unit.

**Hon. Senator:** How much money you get?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Madam President, on the issue of bonus. Here it is we have seen and demonstrated a company which continues to grow and the various products and services it offers, it certainly increases. I am not here to condone whether people should play Play Whe, Cash Pot or any gambling for that matter. I think I would agree with Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie, but in some people this is what they continue. I said very early if I remember, that Play Whe was in fact, a replacement of Whe Whe which was really an illegal game and all the moneys remain in the banker's hands; nothing came to the Consolidated Fund. So if we have to do it at all, let us do it correctly and the Government get some funding.

Madam President, in that regard, a lot was said in terms of where these funds should probably go, specifically I think mentioned, be it a hospital and I was a little taken aback, he said schools, because really a previous speaker, one of his colleagues indicated, we should not associate schools and young children with anything with gambling and I would imagine that is generally accepted. But when these funds go to the Consolidated Funds, they then become available for funding as we know, be it our medical facilities, schools, et cetera. So the fact remains, that all moneys going to the Consolidated Fund, certainly is one of the most transparent mechanisms in terms of how these funds are placed to the Consolidated Fund.

Madam President, I can go on and on, but I think by and large, I hope I have clarified and corrected all the misstatements. I am not giving way. [*Interruption*]

**Sen. Mark:** You see, it is the truth. It is the truth. Michael Toney is a corrupt fellow and it is the truth.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Madam President, I would like to summarize. In summary, I think I have indicated very, very clearly that all efforts are being made to get the Auditor General to prepare and have these accounts completed, so that they can be laid in Parliament. As I indicated again, the statement made about, I think someone said that they cannot manage and they are not really dealing with the issues, I think again it is certainly totally incorrect. We have seen an organization move from \$1.6 million annually to over \$100 million going to the Consolidated Fund. We have seen a high level of responsibility. We have seen every effort being made to manage and contain costs and certainly correct the errors that have been made by that administration.

Madam President, in closing, I beg to move. [*Desk thumping*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a second time.*

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

*Senate in committee.*

*Clause 1 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clause 2.*

*Question proposed, That clause 2 stand part of the Bill.*

**Sen. Seetahal:** The amendment there, is that—section 9(f) you mean?

**Madam Chairman:** “Is amended in section 9”—

**Sen. Seetahal:** I am not sure, but my colleague here is telling me that it should be “after 9(f)”.

**Madam Chairman:** I am not hearing what you are saying.

**Sen. Seetahal:** I was discussing with my colleague and she was wondering if we should put “after 9(f)”, but on consideration if we are just inserting it, we would need to put “after”. I am withdrawing that, Madam Chairman.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 2 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clause 3.*

*Question proposed, That clause 3 stand part of the Bill.*

**Sen. Sahadeo:** Madam Chairman, there is a typographical error at 3.20A(a), “bequest gift or delete in or any other way;” “in” should be deleted. It should read, “acquire, hold and enjoy any property, real or personal by purchase, devise, bequest, gift or any other way; and”

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clause 4 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

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

*Senate resumed.*

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



*Adjournment*

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**6.45 p.m.**

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):** Madam President, I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to a date to be fixed. I put Senators on notice that there is a possibility that we will meet again before Christmas, but at this time, it is to a date to be fixed.

#### Season's Greetings

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):** Just in case we do not have to meet, let me take the opportunity to wish season's greetings and happy Christmas, prosperous new year to all Senators. To all members of staff of the Parliament who serve us so well. [*Desk thumping*] To the security and even to members of the media without whom Sen. Mark would not be able to make a contribution. [*Laughter*]

I was reflecting how fast the years go by and this year has gone by quite fast. I want to, again, wish everybody the best. I am sure we will come back in the new year renewed for the battle, Sen. Mark.

**Sen. Wade Mark:** May I take this opportunity in extending warmest season's greetings to everyone—though at times we have to say and do what we have to, I am full of love. [*Laughter*] I am a man of peace. [*Laughter*] On this occasion, I extend to all my colleagues on the opposite side, on the Independent Bench and all my colleagues in the Opposition, on behalf of the alternative government of Trinidad and Tobago, the UNC, warmest greetings.

We extend greetings to all members of staff who have worked very hard during the year. We extend greetings to all the police officers; all the members of the media; all the staffers; the Clerks who have been here with us. I am happy to see Mrs. Jacqui Sampson, the Clerk of the House of Representatives. We thank her for being here and we extend to her warmest seasons greetings.

On a note of sadness, my heart goes out to all those citizens who may not be able to have a merry Christmas because of all kinds of challenges and difficulties: the poor; the down-pressed; the oppressed and the marginalized. I also wish, even in their oppression and depression, that they too would have a very warm Christmas.

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As the hon. Minister said, we have the possibility of meeting again before the end of this year. I hope it is not so, but if we have to come, we are always willing to do our duty and we shall be here.

Madam President, to you in particular, because I know you love me very much, [*Laughter*] I know that we do have our little interactive moments, I extend to you and your family warmest season greetings and I wish you the best in 2006; health, peace and happiness.

Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie:** Madam President, on behalf of the Members of the Independent Bench I would like to say to all Senators here, our best wishes for a very happy and peaceful Christmas season. We hope that 2006 will dawn on us bringing a lot of prosperity and happiness and solutions to the many problems we face as a country.

I extend greetings to all of us here also; the parliamentary staff; those members who work in all areas of the Parliament: our protective services, the members of the media and all those who serve us in one way or the other; our pantry staff who ensure that we are not falling down because of hunger. Madam President, to you and your family, on behalf of all of us on the Independent Bench, special greetings. We do miss you when you go away so long from us, acting and so on and going on your little holidays. We say thanks to the Vice-President, who has done a very good job in your absence. [*Desk thumping*]

To bring a little light moment to it; you know sometimes Sen. King and I would look at the situation when you are away, Madam President, and he is there. We feel sorry for him, because when he is there, if you want to step out for a minute you can call him, but when he wants to step out for a minute, he cannot go to the bathroom, so all fall down. We say to him thanks also for his resilience and for filling in the breach so well. On behalf of all of us, we say thank you to him.

We also thank the members of the Hansard staff, because sometimes some of us mumble and talk beneath our breath and we wonder how they really decipher what we say, but they seem to be very, very adept at looking and reading lips. So we say to the member sitting there to convey to the other members of staff how much we appreciate your putting up with us and our shortcomings.

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One thing I say of all Senators here, from my experience, that the Members of the Senate, be they Members of the Independent Bench, the Opposition or the Government, from how we react here, we only know how to love; there is no hate in this Senate. I hope that 2006 will see us come through with the love for each other, despite the fact that we may not see eye to eye on every issue.

Thanks again and best wishes on behalf of all of us, those who are not here as well, to you and your family and to the general public. Let us try and be sober for the Christmas; drive carefully. Let us have no more crime; no more violence. *[Interruption]* It is just a wish, because this is the time to wish and to hope.

So to all of us I say, a very bright and merry Christmas. Happy Christmas and hope the New Year dawns with a lot of health, peace and prosperity. *[Desk thumping]*

Thank you.

**Madam President:** Hon. Senators, let me join with the previous speakers in wishing each of you and your families, members of staff and their families, the media, the security services and members of the public, a very holy, safe and happy Christmas and a new year filled with peace, success, good health, prosperity and all the other good things that we all wish for.

It is kind of old-fashioned now to make New Year resolutions, but I would like to see Members maybe make one resolution. *[Laughter]*

**Sen. R. Montano:** We would do it if you do.

**Madam President:** I will; you cannot know what resolution I will make. I am asking you to make one. I ask you to make our presence in the Senate purposeful and our contributions meaningful. In this way, to elevate the stature of the Senate in the opinion of the public, so that it is perceived as making a useful contribution to our democracy. In the midst of all the festivities, ensure that you rest; that you clear your minds of all the problems and all the difficulties and that you allow yourself to relax. Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh would agree with me that is important; that you come back rejuvenated and refreshed. Share your time with your loved ones; that is important so that when you come back, we can be prepared to get down to the work and business of the Senate.

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Let me wish you a very, very merry Christmas, a happy New Year and blessings to you and your family. Please be safe on the roads and in your homes and everywhere else.

Senators, I also have a bit of news for you. Mr. Jaggassar, who has been acting as Clerk of the Senate, has now been promoted to the position of Clerk of the Senate. [*Desk thumping*] Hopefully, he will be with us at the next sitting.

Before we leave, we still have a matter to deal with and that is the Motion on the Adjournment.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** Both sides of the House have been asking me, in the spirit of the season and given that you have a function scheduled from 4.30 p.m. [*Desk thumping*] and there are many temporary Senators outside waiting on us, that we defer the matter. Both the Minister of Education and myself are prepared to go forward with the matter, if the Senate so desires. [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam President:** Thank you very much. Hon. Senators, let me just remind you that you have an invitation for cocktails and for some cheer before you leave here today. I hope you will all join us.

This Senate is now adjourned to a date to be fixed.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Senate adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 6.55 p.m*

#### WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

#### **Change of Residence (Hon. Prime Minister)**

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

With respect to the change of residence of the Honourable Prime Minister, could the Minister of Public Administration and Information provide to the Senate the following detailed information:-

- (i) The names of the owners of the residence which the Prime Minister is currently occupying at Federation Park, St. Clair?

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- (ii) The monthly rental of the residence?
- (iii) The duration of the lease?
- (iv) The actual cost of the lease to taxpayers?
- (v) A complete list of the repairs, if any, undertaken?
- (vi) A detailed breakdown of the cost of such repairs?
- (vii) The details of the terms and conditions of the agreement governing the entire repair and refurbishing process undertaken prior to occupation? [*Sen. W. Mark*]

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):** The name of the owner of the residence is Vinfed Investments Limited of 50, Boundary Road, San Juan. The Directors of the Company are Mr. George Espa Joseph and Mrs. Norma Joseph. The monthly rental of the residence is US\$ 6,000.00 which is equivalent to TT \$37,800.00.

The duration of the lease is twenty (20) months with effect from October 1, 2005. The actual cost of the lease to taxpayers is TT \$756,000.00 and no repairs to the residence have been undertaken by the Government. Parts (vi) and (vii) of the question are therefore no longer relevant.