

*Leave of Absence**Tuesday, June 13, 2006***SENATE***Tuesday, June 13, 2006*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

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

Mr. Vice-President: Hon. Senators, I wish to inform you that the President of the Senate, Sen. The Hon. Dr. Linda Baboolal, is at present Acting President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for His Excellency the President, Prof. George Maxwell Richards, T.C., C.M.T., PhD, who is out of the country. During the absence of the President, the Vice-President would preside over the sitting.

Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence from today's sitting of the Senate to Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith; Sen. The Hon. Howard Chin Lee; Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh; Sen. Brother Noble S. A. Khan and Sen. Parvatee Anmolsingh-Mahabir who are all out of the country. [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Dumas: “All of dem out of de country?”

SENATORS' APPOINTMENT

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

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By Her Excellency Dr. Linda Savitri Baboolal,
Acting President and Commander-in-Chief of
the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ Linda Baboolal
Acting President.

TO: MS. ROSE JANNEIRE

WHEREAS Senator Dr. Lenny Saith is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, LINDA SAVITRI BABOOLAL, Acting President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, ROSE JANNEIRE, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 13th June, 2006 and

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continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Dr. Lenny Saith.

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 June, 2006."

"THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By Her Excellency Dr. Linda Savitri Baboolal, Acting President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ Linda Baboolal
Acting President.

TO: MR. NILEUNG ROLAND HYPOLITE

WHEREAS the President of the Senate has temporarily vacated her office of Senator to act as President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago:

AND WHEREAS the Vice-President of the Senate is acting President of the Senate:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, LINDA SAVITRI BABOOLAL, Acting President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 40(2) and section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, NILEUNG ROLAND HYPOLITE, to be temporarily a member of the Senate with immediate effect and continuing during the period that Senator Dr. Linda Savitri Baboolal has temporarily vacated her Office as Senator.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 9th day of June, 2006."

"THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By Her Excellency Dr. Linda Savitri Baboolal, Acting President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ Linda Baboolal
Acting President.

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TO: ELAINE SEETAHAL TEEMUL

WHEREAS Senator Dr. Tim Gopeesingh is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

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

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 June, 2006."

"THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By Her Excellency Dr. Linda Savitri Baboolal,
Acting President and Commander-in-Chief of
the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ Linda Baboolal
Acting President.

TO: MR. WALTON FRANCIS JAMES

WHEREAS Senator Brother Noble Khan is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, LINDA SAVITRI BABOOLAL, Acting President as aforesaid, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 40(2)(c) and section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, WALTON FRANCIS JAMES, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with immediate effect and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Brother Noble Khan.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 9th day of June, 2006."

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“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By Her Excellency Dr. Linda Savitri Baboolal,
Acting President and Commander-in-Chief of
the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ Linda Baboolal
Acting President.

TO: PROFESSOR DAVID PICOU

WHEREAS Senator Parvatee Anmolsingh-Mahabir is incapable of performing her duties as a Senator by reason of her absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, LINDA SAVITRI BABOOLAL, Acting President as aforesaid, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 40(2)(c) and section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, DAVID PICOU, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 13th June, 2006 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Parvatee Anmolsingh-Mahabir.

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
June, 2006.”

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By Her Excellency Dr. Linda Savitri Baboolal,
Acting President and Commander-in-Chief of
the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ Linda Baboolal
Acting President.

TO: MS. BONNIE-LOU DE SILVA

WHEREAS Senator Howard Chin Lee is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, LINDA SAVITRI BABOOLAL, Acting President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, BONNIE-LOU DE SILVA, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 13th June, 2006 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Howard Chin Lee.

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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 June, 2006."

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

The following Senators took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law: Rose Janneire, Nileung Roland Hypolite, Elaine Seetahal Teemul, Walton Francis James, Professor David Picou, Bonnie-Lou De Silva.

PAPERS LAID

1. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the Princes Town Regional Corporation for the financial year ended September 30, 2000. [*The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill)*]
2. Annual audited financial statements of the Vehicle Maintenance Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the year ended September 30, 2001. [*Sen. The Hon. C. Enill*]
3. Annual audited financial statements of the Vehicle Maintenance Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the year ended September 30, 2002. [*Sen. The Hon. C. Enill*]

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr. Vice-President: Hon. Senators, the response to question 30 has been received and circulated. Are there any more responses to written questions? These would be passed to the Clerk for circulation.

The following question was asked by Sen. Wade Mark:

Advertising Agencies used by Government Agencies

30. (a) Could the Prime Minister provide the Senate with a list of names of the various advertising agencies employed by the Office of the Prime Minister or any Statutory Authorities, government agencies and departments under his purview for the period January 01, 2002 to October 30, 2005?
- (b) Could the Prime Minister provide the Senate with a breakdown of the expenditure per agency in respect of (a) above?

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- (c) Could the Prime Minister also state the amount of monies utilized in both the print and electronic media in a detailed way over the same period as well as the various events hosted, promoted and advertised?

Vide end of sitting for written reply.

STUDENTS' REVOLVING LOAN FUND (AMDT.) BILL

Order for second reading read.

The Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (Sen. The Hon. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid): Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move,

That a Bill to amend the Students' Revolving Loan Fund Act to provide for the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry with responsibility for Tertiary Education, to replace the Chief Personnel Officer as Chairman of the Board of Management of the Students' Revolving Loan Fund, be now read a second time.

I would like this Bill to be taken in the context of Government's policy and programmes in the education sector and, in particular, the tertiary education sector; more particularly, as it relates to making tertiary education more accessible and more affordable to our nation's citizens. I would attempt to speak very briefly on where we have come from, where we are and where we are going.

The Students' Revolving Loan Fund was established by Act 39:05, No. 3 of 1973, to provide assistance to students qualified and wishing to pursue tertiary education, at that time. There were limitations put into the Fund in that it excluded students who were pursuing law and degree programmes in the Humanities. There were further restrictions in that it applied only to students pursuing degree programmes at the bachelors level; indeed, with one exception, which was the certificate of Public Administration and the Advanced Diploma in Human Resource.

The other limitation was that it provided for a referee, which meant that, in some cases, low-income students had difficulty in sourcing referees and, as a consequence, may have found themselves unable to access the loan. It was also set up in such a way that the Minister identified in the Act was one who held responsibility for the Personnel Department. Consequently, it provided for the Chief Personnel Officer (CPO) to chair the board that would manage the Fund.

We are here today to make specific changes, which are indicated in the title of the Bill. We propose to change "the Minister" to "the Minister with responsibility for tertiary education" and the Permanent Secretary (PS) to be the one with responsibility for tertiary education. We also propose the word "department" to be

changed to “Ministry” and the other changes to be made as a consequence. That was the general scenario when this Bill was put together in 1973, a long time ago indeed, and a lot of changes have taken place since then.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, we have seen expansions in the education system. Many government schools were constructed during the 1970s in particular and, as a consequence of that, there are many more students accessing primary and secondary education. The natural consequence was that more students were eligible and desirous of pursuing tertiary educational opportunities. So we have a larger number of secondary school students hoping, wishing and eligible to move into a tertiary education system.

We have also seen over the years a wider range of programmes on offer. There are new programmes that exist today which did not exist 10 years ago. There are many more programmes now and there were even fewer programmes 10 years before that. The number of programmes we have is also relevant, because, as you would recall, the Students' Revolving Loan Fund restricted participation, thus excluding very important areas.

Concerning the wider range of programmes, you may or may not know that with the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), we have been exploring quite a few new areas. In fact, in one area we are collaborating with the University of Cambridge to develop and offer a post graduate degree programme in manufacturing. This is new to the international education system and it is also new to us. Likewise, the University of Portsmouth—I think that is the correct pronunciation—has developed and introduced a degree on entrepreneurship. There are a number of areas like these now available, which may not have been available before.

Mr. Vice-President, very importantly, we have to look at our national development needs. As any economy expands and the range of services required and expected by citizens also expands, we have to look very seriously at developing our human resources, so that we have the expertise available to offer the services, not only to offer the range of services, but to offer every service at a standard consistent with international best practice. All that is consistent with our Vision 2020 development goals.

We have to understand the challenge of accessing expertise. I want to make the connection between the education system, the availability of expertise and the country's access to expertise. In the United Kingdom, they have roughly a population of 55 million. That is a fairly large population pool out of which one can develop the required expertise; that is to their credit.

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They also have a mature education system. Sometimes when I use the words “mature education system”, people ask what I mean. I mean that they would have had their system for a very long time. They have operated a British education system for centuries and so they have had a lot of opportunities to analyze it, scrutinize it, construct and reconstruct it to improve it, develop it further and to try new ideas. They have had many, many years to work on their education system.

So they have a large population pool; a mature education system and they also have the capacity to retain in their countries a lot of the expertise that that may produce. Many of their citizens who leave the education system of the United Kingdom stay and work within it. They do not have the brain drain problem we may have. You can turn to the economists and ask them about that. The fact is, the United Kingdom's economy is centuries old. They have had many centuries to build a strong economy and we know what their history is like.

We know about colonization and what it did for the strength of the British economy. We know about other events in history and the way they would have contributed, over the years, to strengthening the British economy. We also know that they have been around for a long time and they have been able to develop and grow their economy. Today, they are able to have a strong currency. The strength of the currency is a significant contributor to the United Kingdom being able to attract expertise from around the world and being able to retain that expertise.

Those are the three points I wanted to make. They have a large resource pool; a mature education system and a stronger economy that allows them to retain and attract expertise. In spite of those three significant factors in their favour, the United Kingdom still finds itself having to import as many as half of its nurses. They still find themselves short when it comes to producing the number of nurses they need to operate a health care system that they consider to be at the standard they would like.

In fact, in September 2005 when the school term started, the same United Kingdom with all its advantages was short of 600 math teachers. The point is, that in order for any country to be able to offer services, whether it be in the education system, the health care system, the judicial system or whichever system it is, it requires expertise. Countries have a responsibility to themselves to invest in their education system, so they could produce the expertise to deliver the services that are consistent with international best practice and on par with what we call “developed country status”.

We have accepted that challenge for ourselves. I am just pointing out the enormous challenge it is, even for some of the countries already recognized as developed country, and how they struggle to maintain those standards.

In the United States, there is an even larger population pool, 270-plus million; again, it has a more mature education system than ours. It is different from the United Kingdom's system, but, again, they have been independent since 1776 and they have been operating for a few centuries. They have been able to gain results that sometimes they consider to be better than the United Kingdom's. The point again is a mature education system; a large population pool and a stronger currency than ours, yet still they have to import large numbers of information technology specialists from countries such as India, China and various parts of Asia. They have to import teachers from the Caribbean and doctors from India. They import a lot of expertise simply because, in spite of their large population pool and their education system, they find themselves falling short. What does that mean for us?

As everyone knows, we are still developing our education system. We have only been independent, relatively speaking, for a very short time. We inherited a system that, perhaps, was not designed specifically for our citizens, our country, our set of circumstances, but we have been working to develop and grow it, to make it more applicable to our situation. So we have a small population pool, a less mature education system and a weaker currency as a consequence of our young economy. What does that mean for us, considering those factors?

It means that we cannot afford to let any of the natural talent of our citizens go to waste. It means that as a Government, for every citizen who has any ability, we must play our role in ensuring that we assist that individual to develop and grow into the kind of expert, professional or skilled person necessary to make a contribution and deliver services within the economy, such that we would be on par with the highest standards in the world, international best practice and, as a consequence, allow us to achieve developed country status.

That is the point; it provides the foundation for our thinking in terms of the extent or our investment in the education system. It really explains why this Government has been investing so heavily in education, not only in terms of our institutions, but also individual programmes that we offer. Mr. Vice-President, it might be important to identify a sequence of events over the last few years that would help explain where we are and how we have come to be there.

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In 1988, you would recall a cess was introduced for the very first time in the tertiary education system in our country. Before that, tuition was free, but for the first time a cess was introduced and students found themselves having to make a payment to pursue tertiary education. Of course, the implications were obvious. Those who had money could access tertiary education and those who did not, would have greater difficulty in doing so. Over the years, that cess payment has increased. In fact, in 1988, the payment was \$2,400 to do a degree in the social sciences and that has gone up significantly since then. Of course, we all know who holds the copyright for the introduction of the cess.

In 2001, some years later the Dollar for Dollar Plan was introduced at public institutions, but was limited to first-year students only. That in itself was a very limited attempt to make education accessible to all the citizens of our country.

We have spoken at length, on a number of occasions, as to the comparison between dollar for dollar and the Government Assisted Tertiary Education (GATE) programme. Some people like to make the argument that GATE is the same as dollar for dollar. I have spoken at length that dollar for dollar next to GATE was what you might call a "pipsqueak". There really is no comparison whatsoever with dollar for dollar, in terms of the depth and breadth of the GATE programme. At the end of the year, the Dollar for Dollar Plan, perhaps, assisted in the vicinity of 3,000 students; only those pursuing programmes at public institutions, and first-year students at that. So that second and third-year students had no access to it.

We have expanded the GATE programme to include all students in public institutions, whether you are in first, second or third year, or if you are doing medicine, for the fourth and fifth years. We included all students. We have also very recently launched free tuition, as you know. GATE now provides free tuition for students pursuing undergraduate programmes. More than that, we have recognized that there is a capacity issue.

We have set a target that 60 per cent of our students leaving the secondary education system must move on to some form of higher education. In order to do that, the tertiary education sector must have the capacity to receive those students. When we came into office, the University of the West Indies (UWI) had a total enrollment in the vicinity of 8,000 persons. Working with the university, we have since been able to expand that to 13,000 by introducing evening university, et cetera. The Government has been providing more funding to the university as well to accommodate these students.

I do not know if you are familiar with the formula used, but the government of the country pays a subvention to the University of the West Indies and that subvention is determined by the number of nationals enrolled at UWI. So the greater the number of nationals of Trinidad and Tobago enrolled, the greater our subvention must be. We have kept that commitment; we have made greater and greater payments in order to facilitate the expansion of capacity at UWI.

More than that, we have established the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT). As spectacular as UTT is—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Senator: What is spectacular about it?

Dr. Kernahan: Spectacular Forum. *[Crosstalk]*

Sen. Dumas: You are doubting that?

Hon. Senator: Who was the Chairman of UTT?

Sen. Mark: *[Inaudible]*

[Mr. Vice-President pounds the gavel]

Mr. Vice-President: Sen. Mark.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: We have been investing in the development of the University of Trinidad and Tobago, which is developing quite a reputation for itself as it relates to the quality of students that we expect would graduate. It has to do with the way the programmes are developed. *[Desk thumping]*

We are developing the programmes in collaboration with international universities. The choice of university in particular disciplines is a consequence of that university's reputation in the particular area. Let me explain. Regarding information technology (IT) programmes, we are working in collaboration with a number of universities out of India, because they have a strong reputation in IT.

For our engineering programmes, we are working with universities out of Germany and developing a UTT programme in collaboration with them. For a number of our other programmes, we are working with the University of Cambridge. They have a manufacturing programme. We are working with a number of other universities to develop our UTT programmes. They have been working quite well and we are going to see the results of it, as time goes by.

The idea was that if we were going to expand our capacity and take our numbers up to the 60 per cent I spoke about earlier, the UWI by itself does not have the capacity to educate the numbers of students that we would like to see educated at the tertiary level. So there is need to create more spaces and new

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spaces and the UTT would make its contribution as it relates to that. We are doing it and, at the same time, ensuring that we remain committed to the highest standards of international excellence and that the quality of the programmes would be among the best in the world.

We have done quite a bit of rationalization and sorting out of a number of institutions and some of that would be brought here in the coming months. At the Ministry, we have been looking at a number of institutions and ensuring that there is order in the tertiary education landscape. A number of institutions were trampling over each other, with all of them trying to do the same programmes, but not too clear of what one or the other was doing.

Over the last few months we have undertaken a very serious rationalization and streamlining exercise to ensure that all the disciplines are covered, that there are no gaps, that an institution's offerings are complementary rather than contradictory and that we do not find people trampling over each other to offer the same programmes, having an over-supply of one set of programmes and an under-supply of others. We are bringing that kind of order to the landscape, as it were, and you would see evidence of that in the coming weeks.

We have been working very hard to expand capacity and to create new spaces. In addition to making spaces available, we must also make them affordable. As you know, we took that very bold decision to invest in making the cost of tuition at our undergraduate programmes free. That would cost the Government over \$350 million per year. Sometimes when people talk about mega projects, investment in the social sector and buildings, et cetera, Mr. Vice-President, the free tuition programme of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is a grand mega project. [*Desk thumping*] It is as mega a project as you can get. However, there is no building to be seen for it, but the effects of it you are going to see in the coming years.

The reason for that is very simple. If you have a situation where only those who can afford to access tertiary education actually do and where there is the criterion that you or your parents must have access to an income at a particular level to be able to access that tertiary education, then we are going to have an imbalance in the way the society evolves and develops. If education is supposed to be the best vehicle to lead people out of poverty, how can you then deny the poor education? If education is the best vehicle to lead you out of poverty, how can you tell me that I cannot take this vehicle?

It is with that in mind the Government has taken the position that tuition must be free for tertiary education. We also recognize that there are some people in Trinidad and Tobago who, even if the tuition is free, still have difficulties meeting

other payments. You have the question of personal maintenance. A university student is somebody who is 18, 19, 20 or 21-plus years old. Who is going to maintain that student while he or she is at school?

You have the expenses such as accommodation, transportation and books. We have a number of students in St. George's, Grenada pursuing medical degrees there or someone might be reading for a degree at Mona, so if you are studying for a programme in another country there are additional expenses, in terms of paying rents and so on. You also have to consider the difference in the cost of living among the various islands throughout the Caribbean.

It was with that in mind the Government conceptualized and introduced the Higher Education Loan Programme. It was established to provide financial assistance to citizens of Trinidad and Tobago pursuing tertiary education, thereby expanding equitable access to tertiary education. This programme is a loan to be made available to citizens of Trinidad and Tobago pursuing tertiary education programmes. It is meant to provide you with funding to allow you to meet your non-tuition expenditure: accommodation, books, transportation, clothing, and personal maintenance.

How is this loan expected to function? We are entering into an agreement with the commercial banks of Trinidad and Tobago; we would be signing the agreement in a few days. They would provide the loans to the students. However, the Government would provide 100 per cent guarantee on the loan to make sure the students have no difficulty in accessing the loan. We would also pay all the interest on the loan, while the student is at school.

While the student is pursuing his tertiary degree programme, we pay the interest, so the student, having borrowed a sum of money, would not be faced with having to pay a significantly larger sum of money once they have graduated. The Government would pay the interest that accrues to the loan while the student is at school and six months after he graduates, he then becomes responsible for repaying the capital of the loan.

Even at that stage, we have also indicated that we would discount the interest rate, so that the student would not be faced with the full market rate. The student would be faced with the market rate less four percentage points; we are going to discount and subsidize the interest rate at that stage. For students who are studying within the shores of Trinidad and Tobago, we would lend up to \$25,000 per year and for those studying in the Caribbean, we would lend up to \$75,000 per year. All this is intended to make education accessible and affordable and to ensure that we develop the expertise required for our nation to operate as a developed country.

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All this is related to what is before us today, because the Students' Revolving Loan Fund has been operating out of the Ministry of Public Administration and Information, which is where the Personnel Department and the Chief Personnel Officer (CPO) are. We are attempting to bring all our funding mechanisms into one ministry, where we can rationalize and restructure as necessary.

The original Cabinet decision was, and still is, to take the University Student Loan Grant Fund, the cess loan, and the Students' Revolving Loan Fund and integrate them to create the Higher Education Loan Programme. This is an attempt to rationalize all the funds, as they relate to lending students money, bringing everything together as part of one ministry, under one umbrella and ensuring that rationalization takes place. This is really a step that would allow us to advance that process.

I ask hon. Senators to kindly take note of the points I have made in terms of what is before us: The challenge we have as a country to develop the kind of expertise we need; to recognize that the Government is making tremendous efforts to expand capacity at the tertiary education level. The Government is also making great efforts to make education available to all our citizens, because we have taken a policy position that no citizen must be denied access to education as a result of the inability to pay and that no one must be left behind. This is a tremendous policy position of this Government.

The amendments proposed are very, very simple. We are attempting to redefine "Minister" to mean the Minister to whom responsibility for tertiary education is assigned, as opposed to the Personnel Department. Because the Personnel Department is headed by the Chief Personnel Officer and in our Ministry the Permanent Secretary (PS) is responsible, we are asking that the PS of the Ministry with responsibility for tertiary education, replace the CPO. This was an amendment picked up in the Lower House, that the word "department" in subsection (2)(a) has to be replaced by the word "Ministry", because we form a Ministry and not a department.

2.30 p.m.

Those are the simple changes but they fall within the context of a very important drive of the Government to make our education system a better education system and to make it more accessible and more affordable to all the citizens of this country, regardless of economic, social or any other background.

I thank you and I beg to move. [*Desk thumping*]

Question proposed.

Sen. Wayne Munro: Mr. Vice-President, I rise to make my contribution to the Students' Revolving Loan Fund (Amdt.) Bill, 2006. With reference to the Explanatory Note, the Bill seeks to amend the Students' Revolving Loan Act, Chap. 39:05 to provide for the permanent secretary of the ministry responsible for tertiary education to replace the Chief Personnel Officer as chairman of the board of management of the fund and other consequential amendments.

The purpose of this Students' Revolving Loan Fund was to allow students who are nationals desirous of accessing tertiary education at the University of the West Indies at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels in our society to access some level of funding via the commercial banks in Trinidad and Tobago. What are the realities? My contribution will focus particularly on the importance of tertiary education in improving the human resource.

The role of the University of Trinidad and Tobago is to meet the needs of Trinidad and Tobago. I agree. Competition in education is a driving force for efficiency. I also agree. We only have to look at the local telecommunication market to see the rewards to the consumers of telecommunication packages where the telecommunication market was transformed from a monopoly to a duopoly. The same can be realized in the market of the tertiary education in Trinidad and Tobago.

Consider the link between education and economic development for this country. Labour is a factor of production and when trained can contribute significantly towards the gross domestic product in this economy. Would all labour units in Trinidad and Tobago, I ask, have access to this much needed educational package? What are the numbers? Where is the accessibility for the poor? How many persons who have gone through the secondary school system would reach at this level to gain some access to university training and thus contribute meaningfully towards the country's gross domestic product and hence development of all?

A large number of students who attend these secondary schools have difficulty accessing programmes that would give them an opportunity to reach such levels of achievement. Therefore, the probability that a student will academically survive to gain higher education is a very small probability. What meaningful policies are being put in place to ensure that a large number of students from the so-called depressed areas have access to this tertiary educational package, such that these students from the depressed areas would be able to make a contribution firstly to the country and, secondly to community development?

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Is there a link between the areas where crime is high and access route to tertiary education is low? Are there any A level programmes where I came from—Morvant and Laventille—to provide some form of access to poor people like myself, to gain tertiary level education currently? What are the numbers? Tell me the numbers. I need to know the numbers. I agree that education acts as an engine to change. An agent to change can be seen internationally in the case of the Asian Tigers. Since these Asian Tigers have embarked upon empowering their own human resource, education has tamed these tigers in such a way that all members can make a valuable contribution to that particular society. Access to higher education should be made available to all. Even the so-called depressed areas among us must gain some level of access to such tertiary level education.

Can UTT tame and contribute towards reducing levels of crime in the depressed areas by providing some form of access to poor people in these areas to get to such levels of training that is needed to transform our economy? Currently there exists a glass ceiling when it comes to higher learning among the poor. The glass ceiling comes about since the poor can only see educational institutions from outside, since the avenues and channels are not provided and the educational packages are not made readily available to the poor. How many schools, I ask again, in Morvant where I came from, have areas or avenues for A levels?

UTT would be a catalyst in improving the structure and effectiveness of the public tertiary education system in Trinidad and Tobago. No doubt. This will result in greater and enhanced vertical and horizontal articulation to facilitate meaningful economic developments to transform the society. I agree. I ask the question: For whom? Why do persons from Morvant, Belmont and Laventille have difficulty penetrating this glass ceiling that exists when it comes to benefiting from higher education and thus being able to make a valuable contribution to our society?

UTT will facilitate cross-fertilization and a multiple disciplinary approach resulting in the fulfilment of providing the community to reach a stage where there is globalization to be competitive on the international markets. Yes. In this cross-fertilization, would areas of Morvant, Laventille, Belmont and other depressed areas benefit? Or is this cross-fertilization not available for the poor among us?

The road to tertiary education from the so-called depressed areas is very, very long. I can tell you that. The burdens that these potential students carry, like myself, are heavy. What is the State doing to lighten the burdens? People are being left behind and left out.

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

Sen. Dana Seetahal, S.C.: Mr. Vice-President, whilst I have heard what the Minister responsible for tertiary education has said, it seems to me that, really, nothing has been addressed, in my respectful view, to the purpose of this Bill. It is a very short Bill and I expect one might seize the opportunity to deal with what is being done in tertiary education in this country, but if we are here to amend the Act, I would have thought that there should be some rationale given for that.

I think towards the end of his presentation there was a general statement made that the purpose of this is to bring everything under one ministry. But that does not really make any sense, with respect. What we are talking about here is an amendment where you replace the Chief Personnel Officer with the permanent secretary in this ministry as the chairman of the board of the Students' Revolving Loan Fund. That is the board of management. So what is the purpose; how beneficial is it going to be to anyone else? That is what I would like to know and I have heard nothing to assist me in determining that.

If one looks at the original Students' Revolving Loan Fund Act, there are two things we need to consider in determining whether this amendment is useful or not. One is the resources of that fund. I think it is vital to understand that the resources of the Students' Revolving Loan Fund consist of all sums of moneys advanced by loans of the IADB, moneys from Parliament, moneys borrowed by the board, moneys arising out of investment by the board, and so on. I do not believe that there has been any amendment to this, not from what I have found. So that would remain the resources. And there are other resources. So it is a fund that can have access to a lot of money. That is the first thing.

Secondly, one looks at the duties and functions of the board. The board determines the various courses of study with respect to which a loan may be granted, and that is very important—the various courses of study. The functions of the board include processing of applications for loans; it includes receiving, administering and investing the resources of the fund, as well as negotiating the loans. The point is, it seems to me that having regard to the resources as well as the duties and functions, that it is important who comprise the board of management.

The board of management under the current legislation includes the Chief Personnel Officer and one other officer attached to the department; it includes the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education; it includes the Permanent Secretary to the Prime Minister, and so on. I would have thought that one of the reasons for the Chief Personnel Officer is that the Chief Personnel Officer is an officer who is responsible for dealing with industrial relations matters for

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bargaining with, and part of, the Government and representing the Government in that kind of situation. So I would have thought that was a useful inclusion, because you have a lot of permanent secretaries here. You have one representative of the University of the West Indies. One would have thought possibly you might want to include a representative of UTT also. I thought that would have been a useful amendment. But there is no reason or rationale given and I would like to know what is the rationale, if there is any.

That is my main bone of contention in respect of this piece of legislation. But there are other issues that arose when the Minister spoke, that occurred to me. One is: How does the Students' Revolving Loan Fund operate with GATE? I am not sure if during the Minister's lengthy presentation that was clear. The reason I am not sure is because I did not hear anything when I was able to concentrate totally on what he was saying, because I thought it was a detailed presentation, but so wide in terms of what programmes it covered, it never dealt with specifics such as in terms of what is this Students' Revolving Loan Fund supposed to cater to, as opposed to GATE. I would have thought that that would have been an obvious statement to make. Why bother to have a Students' Revolving Loan Fund at all if the State is making provision to provide for tertiary education fully? Which is what they say. What is this about? I would think we have to guess that it is to supplement where GATE does not provide. [*Crosstalk*] I am saying that it was not clear to me. If it is clear to others, then they should say so. It may have been somewhere in the depths of the presentation.

Secondly, why do we still need to have a separate Students' Revolving Loan Fund and Act given that we have GATE? Why can the whole thing not be under one? That would have been another issue that could have been confronted. It may be that there is some use to it but I see no use. If we are going to deal with an amendment to the law in this way, why can we not have a holistic—for want of a word that is overused—approach to it? But you come with some trifling little amendment to move the powers from the CPO to the permanent secretary.

The point I am making is that we have provision by the State to provide for tertiary education, as there should be, to persons. The Students' Revolving Loan Fund was something about 30 or 40 years ago to deal with the situation at the time. It seems to me that we have passed that stage in terms of a whole piece of legislation dealing with that. It seems to me that while it may be useful to have ancillary funds to provide for those who benefit from the GATE who may want additional funding, why can we not have this under one enterprise rather than throwing our resources all over the place? You have a board here; you have a

board there, in this country where we have, I think, some 300 boards already and we cannot get people to staff them. It might be an underestimation. It is time we get away from that and start pooling our resources. That is my contribution.

Thank you very much, Mr. Vice-President.

Sen. Wade Mark: Mr. Vice-President, you know, it was Napoleon Bonaparte who once remarked that if you wish to be a success in the world, promise everything; deliver nothing—promise everything, deliver nothing. This epitomizes—characterizes—essentially, this regime, promising everything and delivering nothing. [*Desk thumping*]

May I remind you and this honourable Parliament that it was in September 2005 that the hon. Prime Minister in his budget speech of 2005/2006 stated, and I quote:

“I am therefore pleased to announce that with effect from January 01, 2006 all nationals of Trinidad and Tobago enrolled at public tertiary institutions, namely, UWI, UTT, COSTATT and other institutions where the Government sponsors students, will be...”

eligible for free tuition, that is free public tertiary education.

This was announced in September. September came and went. October came and went. November came and went. December came and went. Nothing was done by this regime. We are now in the month of June, about three months away from the next fiscal year and we are hearing from the hon. Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education that within a few days he would sign on the dotted line, for what he has described as a new loan facility for students desirous of pursuing higher education. I think it is called the Higher Education Loan Programme.

What is really the purpose of this amendment? It is to provide for the permanent secretary of the ministry with responsibility for tertiary education to replace the Chief Personnel Officer as chairman of the board of management of the fund, and other consequential amendments. As Sen. Dana Seetahal, S. C. indicated earlier, we got no plausible rationale, no reasons were advanced for this proposed change. As you are aware, as a former Public Administration Minister, scholarships fall under the purview of the Ministry of Public Administration and Information. There is a link between the Ministry of Planning and Development and the Ministry of Public Administration and Information.

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If we are planning 2020, as we are saying—although we all know it is a pie-in-the-sky dream of this administration; a lot of words; plenty words, no substance. But let us assume and not admit that they are serious, at least, on this occasion, we must be able to project where our country is going. If we know where our country is heading, we plan accordingly. We know that we live in a world, in spite of the fact that the PNM has not recognized it, where the world is no longer natural resource driven. Oil and gas will soon disappear. The world is knowledge-driven; it is technologically anchored and rooted. But we have a situation in which a ministry that was created a couple years ago is now being given the responsibility to dispense with funds via this students' revolving loan arrangement for students who are desirous of pursuing higher education.

But what is the rationale? The Minister has not provided us with any understanding of what is the purpose of this amendment. But I am not surprised. This regime does not really have a clue of what is required to make this nation a great nation. I want to share with you a definition given by Noah Webster in his American Dictionary of the English Language, when he defined education as “the whole set of instructions and disciplines which sought to do a number of things.” He identified four areas that education should focus on: Firstly, it should seek to enhance understanding. Secondly, it should seek to correct temper. He said in addition, it should seek to also form the manners and habits of young people and, finally, it should prepare youths for useful positions in our society.

It is clear that our education system has failed the young people of this nation. There is need for a fundamental overhaul of the education system in our country. We have not, in the last few years and particularly under this regime, given any focus whatsoever to a knowledge-driven society. That is where, as I said, the world is heading. I would have thought that the Minister would have brought together some rationale and in the process, rationalization of this whole process. Scholarships are being given by the Chief Personnel Officer through the Ministry of Public Administration and Information, coming from Commonwealth countries. The Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education is also issuing scholarships, as we are seeing, based on this amendment that they would like.

Hon. Senator: No, they are not involved in scholarships.

Sen. W. Mark: They are not involved in scholarships. I withdraw. I also understand, and I would like the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs to indicate to us whether her Ministry is involved in the issuing of scholarships, because we understand a lot of people have been approaching that ministry and have been gaining access to funding in terms of

education and scholarships. So I would like the hon. Minister, when she is making her contribution, to allow us to know whether that is so.

Sen. Yuille-Williams: I am not making a contribution and I could tell you now. I would say no.

Sen. W. Mark: But the key thing is that we have a situation where Trinidad and Tobago is lagging in technology. I want to refer you to an article written in the *Daily Express* dated Thursday, May 18, 2006. It is headlined: "Trinidad and Tobago Lags in Technology Report." I would come to this particular statement in a short while.

I would like to ask the hon. Minister who is seeking this amendment this afternoon whether he can tell this Parliament where the audited financial statements of the Students' Revolving Loan Fund are. I have asked the library to make available to me the latest reports on the Students' Revolving Loan Fund and the last one I was able to get was February of 1995. So give us an update. What has happened? They are still looking. Maybe they would come up shortly with some additional reports. The hon. Minister should inform this Parliament of how many outstanding loans there are. This Students' Revolving Loan Fund was established to allow persons who are desirous of experiencing higher learning to go to the bank, get money at a reasonable rate of interest and after they would have completed their studies, they were supposed to pay.

I remember when I was in another incarnation, there were hundreds of people owing millions of dollars to the Students' Revolving Loan Fund. I would like to know if that fund has stopped revolving. [*Desk thumping*] Here it is, the Minister is seeking to get our support for an amendment, but he does not inform this honourable Parliament what is the outstanding sum of moneys owing to this particular fund; how many students are involved in not repaying the funds that they borrowed from this particular mechanism. We want the names. I am not afraid. When I was Minister of Public Administration, I caused to be published in the newspapers all the names of those persons who were owing the country. Persons who were able to go to the University of the West Indies to do undergraduate or postgraduate studies, came out as lawyers, doctors, dentists and all kinds of professionals and they would not repay, so that other persons who would have liked to unlock the frozen revolving doors were denied.

So I do not think that the hon. Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education can come to this Parliament, seek our support for an amendment without giving us a proper accountability of the Fund. Where are the reports? If

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the reports were there, I could have told you this afternoon that 400 students or 200 students are owing \$5 million to \$25 million. I cannot say that because the reports are not before us.

3.00 p.m.

I call on the hon. Minister to tell this Senate how much money is owed and outstanding to this fund. How many students owe money to the fund? I want the names of all those students so that we will know the culprits in this matter. I think the hon. Minister owes us an explanation.

May I refer you to the Students' Revolving Loan Fund Act. Section 16 says:

- “(2) The annual statement of accounts shall be audited at the end of each financial year of the Fund by the Auditor General or by any other Auditor or auditing entity agreed upon by the Inter-American Development Bank and the Board;
- (3) A copy of the audited statement of accounts shall be transmitted to the Minister as soon as practicable to be laid before both Houses of Parliament.”

The PNM regime is breaking the law because we do not have before us—and I cannot put my hands on in the library the audited accounts of the Students' Revolving Loan Fund for the last five years. Where are those reports? I call on the hon. Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education to give an account to the Senate for this slippage and deficiency in accounting to the population on these financial audited accounts that we do not have.

I want to peruse an article on the issue of Trinidad and Tobago in the technology report. Trinidad and Tobago has sunk very low under this administration. In the area of competitiveness we are down; in the area of corruption we are up and in the area of the human development index, we are down. The latest one is the technology report. I want to share with you what was said at a recent world economic forum discussion that was held in Port of Spain. It says:

Despite a burgeoning economy, a construction boom, plans to reach developed nation status by 2020, Trinidad and Tobago is being left behind in the global technology race. This was evident by the country's fall of 15 positions to rank at 75 in the 2005/2006 Global Information Technology Report.

The report compiled by the World Economic Forum ranks 115 world committees based on a network readiness index (NRI) which measures a nation's degree of preparedness for participating in and benefiting from the information communication technology development.

The results of the report were unveiled by the World Economic Forum senior economist Dr. Eileen Mayer at Crowne Plaza last week in a programme hosted by Microsoft Trinidad and Tobago.

In 2003/2005 Trinidad and Tobago was ranked as No. 52, falling in 2004/2005 to 59; now it has gone to 75 in 2005/2006. Jamaica ranks at No. 54 this year and Guyana at 111.

When the hon. Minister indicates to us all these efforts being made by the Government to focus on higher learning and gives scholarships to persons who are studying in Grenada, who are given those scholarships? We do not see these advertisements in the newspapers. From what he has said we understand about 50 students from Trinidad and Tobago are studying at St. George's University in Grenada. The hon. Minister indicated that there are several citizens on scholarship at the university. I know of about 50. There could be more. We would like to know the process. How did these people become scholarship winners? Has this been openly advertised? Are citizens allowed equal access and equal opportunity? Is there discrimination in the allocation of scholarships to the citizens of the country? Years ago when I was the minister of public administration we advertised these scholarships in the newspapers. I do not now see these things in the newspapers again. It seems as though PNM is running a lodge, a secret order. We understand that 50 nationals are studying in St. George's University and we do not know how they got there. Who are these people? Are they qualified? I think it is important that the country get information on this matter.

Another point the hon. Minister made mention of is the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT). When the hon. Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education was on the campaign trail and he was acting for the Minister of Education at the time—based on reports that we are getting which are very disturbing—many principals are reporting to us that a large chunk of the student population is not present in the school system. I am talking about the secondary school system with an intake of 1,600 students and at any point in time you find about 900 present. Where are the rest of students?

Mr. Vice-President: Tertiary education.

Sen. W. Mark: This is education. Mr. Vice-President, to reach tertiary education you must pass through the secondary school system. If the students are not there in the secondary school system, how are we going to have tertiary education? We cannot have tertiary education. I am asking the Minister of Education through you, whether she is aware of missing students. We are told that hundreds of students are missing at the secondary level.

Sen. Manning: On a point of order.

Sen. W. Mark: You would like to answer?

Sen. Manning: Yes, please. Mr. Vice-President, at this point in time many students are having exams. We have a national exam in Form 3; CXC in Forms 4 and 5 and CAPE in Lower 6 and Upper 6. A large percentage of the school population from late May until the end of June will be taking exams.

Sen. W. Mark: You see why education is in a mess. I did not ask the hon. Minister that. I asked her through you, if she could have an investigation conducted into students who are missing in the system.

I want to refer you to an article in the *TNT Mirror*. It dealt with Hamid, free tertiary education by 2008. In this article he was on the campaign trail just as how I saw in an affidavit that recently, he was on a campaign trail. I hope that the Attorney General took appropriate action. We will deal with that shortly. I do not know if it is the same Hamid I saw.

Mr. Vice-President: Sen. Mark, please address me.

Sen. W. Mark: I do not know if it is the same Hamid Abdul I saw, or is it Mustapha Abdul? Hear what the same Mustapha said. He made mention of the monetary investments by the Government in UTT.

“We have invested \$500 million in the university. That is one third of that of the airport.”

I was shocked when I read this article because according to the Minister, we are investing—this article is dated August 19, 2005. We are investing \$500 million in UTT and up to now the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago has not received an account. There is no legislation governing the University of Trinidad and

Tobago. We know an announcement was made by the hon. Prime Minister. Prof. Ken Julien is the czar of UTT as he is the czar of energy. We do not know how our money is being spent. We know that many private multinational corporations as bpTT, British Gas, Enron and Repsol have invested in the UTT. We in Parliament and the people of this republic never got an opportunity to debate UTT via legislation. What is UTT? Is it the private entity of Prof. Ken Julien or an institution that has been designed to promote education on a technical level for the people of Trinidad and Tobago? If it is so, should that not be in the form of legislation? Where is the accountability?

The hon. Minister has told us that they have invested \$500 million in UTT. We have no account. Who spent that money? Who audited the accounts of UTT? This was in August 2005. UTT was established in 2003. It is almost three and a half to four years since this institution has been established and not on one occasion we have seen in the Parliament, an audited account of UTT. Where is the money going? I call on the hon. Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education to give an account of this \$500 million that has been invested in the University of Trinidad and Tobago. Where is this money? The czar of UTT—"dey doing dey own ting!" They are employing whom they want. They are setting their standards. Nobody is monitoring that institution. There is no monitoring mechanism. Do you know what is happening?

They are stealing university lecturers. They are paying university lecturers three and four times the money they are getting at UWI. Right now there is a run at UWI in some instances, as I understand. We need to get an account of this \$500 million. Remember BP, British Gas, ENRON and Repsol also invested. We do not have a clue as to how much money was invested.

We have a government that is in office that is abusing the process. It is abusing power! Where are the accountability, transparency and scrutiny? The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs is going to build a centre in the Savannah for \$800 million. That was never approved by the Government; it was never approved by the Parliament. They are building a stadium for \$1 billion. That was never approved by the Government; it was never approved by the Parliament.

Sen. Yuille-Williams: I am not building a centre in the Savannah for \$800 million.

Sen. W. Mark: Is it 700?

Sen. Yuille-Williams: \$500 million.

Sen. W. Mark: It is five now. I do not know who is telling the truth. She is saying \$500 million and we read in the newspaper \$700 million. Who is telling the truth? There is an abuse of power. I want to warn this Government; the day of reckoning is at hand. It is only a matter of time. The downfall of this regime; the clock has begun to tick. It is a matter of time. You think they could continue to abuse their power forever? Not at all!

On behalf of the UNC I demand a statement from the hon. Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, an account of the sum of \$500 million that has been invested in the UTT. We want a detailed account. He must tell us today when he is going to bring to Parliament legislation to incorporate this institution.

I understand that the poor Minister does not have control over UTT. He does not even know what is taking place. It is the czar who is in control. When the czar says, "Come here," you come and when he says, "Go," you go. He could only do that under PNM. Under the UNC you think the czar could do that with us? He cannot do that.

We have a situation in our country where the Minister has indicated the elements to us. It is the Higher Education Loan Programme where they would pay transport expenses, accommodation and four per cent of the interest and give the students a period of time before they begin to pay the loan. I believe that the Minister should hasten to have this arrangement put in place. In doing so, may I enquire which other institution will be involved? Which commercial banks would be involved in this arrangement?

There is another article which I want to draw to your attention. How do we keep our intellectual capital at home? The brain drain is real just as capital flight is real. There is a concern that graduates are not getting the jobs. People are going to tertiary institutions; graduating with different degrees and becoming professionals, but where are the jobs for these graduates?

I want to refer you to an article dated May 04, in the *Daily Express*. It is headlined, "More grads than jobs." It says:

Trinidad and Tobago is among the top three countries in the world per capita in exporting its intellectual capital, according to the University of the West Indies principal, Dr. Bhoë Tewarie.

There is a situation in our country where we are training our students but there are no jobs available for them, or if they do get jobs the rate of pay is too low. They are being attracted by overseas institutions, organizations and governments. I know that the hon. Minister said that they are trying to tie down our students who would be accessing free tuition from the Government and depending on the amount you access you would be asked to serve an equivalent period of time. I think \$50,000 is a year; \$100,000 is two years and \$300,000 is three years. I also understood him to say that these students upon graduation would be able to work either in the public or private sector. They can work at your place or for the State. How are we going to attract; how are we going to keep; how are we going to absorb these graduates? The Minister needs to tell us the Government's plans to deal with it.

The article goes on:

The region was one of the highest regions for the export of intellectual capital in the world, with the top three countries per capita for export of brain power being Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

Oil and gas brought in a lot of money but did not create many jobs. Unless we do something in the economy beyond oil and gas and to create a knowledge sector that can absorb the graduates who are going to come out in the tertiary system, we would have a challenge which will manifest itself in migration of the most valuable asset we have.

It is good that we are encouraging our young people to go to university and pursue higher education. Nobody could object to that. What system do we have in place to ensure that when these students graduate, there is a sector within this economy to absorb them? You would know whilst they want to bring aluminium smelter plants here that nobody wants except the PNM—"we doh want it and de people say dey doh want the aluminium smelter."

Oil and gas do not generate the kind of jobs that our university graduates would demand. Where is the knowledge sector to absorb our people? Sen. Mary King said in an article that I read that in the 1970s Ireland was known as the poor country of Europe. Today, Ireland is the rich country of Europe. You know why? Education! They invested in a knowledge-based economy. They encouraged their students to study science, maths and engineering. All the huge corporations, whether Microsoft, DELL or the huge pharmaceutical companies, are being located in that country today and they have full employment.

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The highest per capita in the European Union is Ireland and that took place within 20 years or less. We are talking about development in our country. We are spending \$320 million per annum in terms of tertiary education. When these students graduate where are they going? You have no jobs for them. We are producing graduates for the United States. We are training persons as doctors, lawyers and engineers for Britain, America and Canada, not for Trinidad and Tobago. The Government has not provided the infrastructure, mechanism and environment to absorb these grads. Where is the knowledge in our country?

You read in the monetary report that the manufacturing sector retrenched about 3,000 persons, but Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP), the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) and the make-work programme took them up. That will not take our country forward. That is why last week I said in my contribution that we have to train those workers and give them a greater kind of expectation, not this four hours, five-days arrangement that brings nothing to them.

I would like the Minister to indicate the steps that are being taken by his Government to generate a knowledge sector in this country. We do not believe from what we are seeing—we have no reports; we have nothing before this Senate from the UTT. I want to let you know that TTUTA is up in arms with this institution called UTT. I am sorry that Dr. Lenny Saith is not here.

There is an advertisement on page 62 of the *Sunday Express* dated June 11, 2006 by the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association (TTUTA). It is headed:

“Trinidad and Tobago's Unified Teachers' Association

Threats To Education...

Cabinet has approved the transfer of John S. Donaldson Technical Institute and San Fernando Technical Institute from the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT) to the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT). The Legal transfer of the Institutes to COSTAATT from the Ministry of Education had previously been made via the COSTAATT Act 2000.

In December 2005 Cabinet accepted the interim report of a Working Committee for Teacher Education under the chairmanship of Professor Ken Julien. The major recommendation was the transfer of Valsayn Teachers' College and Corinth Teachers' College to the jurisdiction of UTT.”

What is wrong? If you want to do this—all TTUTA and the teachers are saying is to consult with them. We are talking about UTT as part of the thrust towards higher tertiary learning in our country. They are attempting to impose their will on the teachers of John S. Donaldson Technical Institute and the San Fernando Technical Institute.

3.30 p.m.

This is what they said in this ad.

“No official communication was forwarded to the Association despite repeated letters of inquiry from the Association.”

I heard the Minister say that shortly something is coming. I do not know if it is this. The quote continues:

“No enabling legislation has yet been passed.

The procedures being proposed threaten the professional and economic future of the teachers and other workers at the institutions.

Indecent haste is evident since implementation is scheduled for September 2006.

Similar moves in the past resulted in sordid experiences and a long list of anomalies, which have not been dealt with satisfactorily to date.

Lack of communication and rumours have created anxiety in teachers.

Mismanagement of the change process is creating personal trauma for teachers.

The future direction of Teacher Education and its impact upon the students in our classroom must not be compromised by improvising...”

And it goes on, Mr. Vice-President.

Mr. Vice-President: Hon. Senators, the speaking time of the hon. Senator has expired.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. W. Mark: Mr. Vice-President, I think the hon. Minister needs to tell this Parliament—as the Minister who is in charge of the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT)—what is the conflict between the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association (TTUTA) and the UTT. Why did TTUTA have to put out a

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full-page ad to complain about the high-handedness of this UTT, in this instance? I think the Minister owes this Parliament an explanation for this particular development.

Mr. Vice-President, you would have seen teachers march outside the John S. Donaldson Technical Institute; they marched outside the San Fernando Technical Institute, outside the Valsayn Teachers College and outside Corinth Teachers' College because they are not happy. The Government seems to be almost hell-bent to force these teachers into UTT with new terms and conditions. Whereas they are now permanently employed in the public service, the UTT is offering them contracts. Tell me, Mr. Vice-President, which teacher will leave a permanent job and go for a contract job? Like this Government is not thinking! We need an explanation from the hon. Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education on this conflict and confrontation, and we want a resolution to this matter involving TTUTA.

Mr. Vice-President, it is as if the Government has a plan—I do not know if it is the Minister of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development because I do not think he is anti-labour, but sometimes one gets the impression that this Government has an anti-labour agenda. I am sorry that Dr. Saith is not here. I read, with interest, in a newspaper—we train all our professionals, and they work hard—that they brought a foreigner called Mr. Peter Davies from London and they are paying him £50,000. He has all the perquisites that you can think about and he is telling our workers and our Government in Trinidad and Tobago that they must mash up and get rid of the unions. This is what they told the workers at BWIA—a white man from London came here to tell us how we must conduct our business!

Mr. Vice-President: Sen. Mark, please!

Sen. W. Mark: Mr. Vice-President, I have nothing against white people but I do not like—

Mr. Vice-President: Sen. Mark, please!

Sen. W. Mark: Mr. Vice-President, you see this colonization of our country; we are not in support of it and we will not give any support to it! Why treat the workers of BWIA in that way?

Mr. Vice-President: Sen. Mark, come back to the Bill, please.

Sen. W. Mark: Mr. Vice-President, I call on the acting Leader of Government Business to convey to Dr. Lenny Saith that that business plan is not a

secret plan. The business plan must be shown to the workers and to the union of BWIA! [*Desk thumping*] Give the workers a copy of the business plan!

Mr. Vice-President: Sen. Mark, I have asked you to come back to the Bill; do that please!

Sen. W. Mark: Yes, Mr. Vice-President, I am coming back to the Bill. I think the Minister wants to convey—

Sen. Yuille-Williams: I was just going to ask about the relevance of what you are saying, Sen. Mark. I know you feel hurt but still—

Sen. W. Mark: Mr. Vice-President, all these things are relevant because we are talking about professionals who are working at BWIA, who went to university and right now they are leaving BWIA! We want to keep them in BWIA! I am a patriot! BWIA is higher education and they have a complaint. They have said that senior Government Ministers are only seeking to have their friends and relatives upgraded when they are going to London, so that if you buy economy class ticket for \$7,000, to go to London it is \$25,000—[*Interruption*] I am telling you what I read!

Mr. Vice-President: Sen. Mark, definitely irrelevant! Please stay within the confines of the Bill.

Sen. W. Mark: Mr. Vice-President, I hate to see waste! So many people are dying in this country; they are poor; they have no money and the Government is wasting money. I call on the Minister to establish what we call, a one-stop-shop. We would like him to explain to us a number of areas where he was not clear. Let the hon. Minister explain to us the real role of UTT. There is an arrangement between private tertiary institutions; let the hon. Minister explain to this Parliament what is this new role that he has designed for these private institutions because they are going to access funding.

I have asked him to provide this Parliament with some information as to how scholarships were issued to students at St. George's College in Grenada. He told us in his presentation that in a few days the Government is going to sign an agreement for the loan for the Higher Education Loan Programme. We would like to know which commercial banks are involved in this particular exercise.

Mr. Vice-President, you and I are avid football fans and I cannot complete my contribution this afternoon without paying tribute to the glorious Soca Warriors of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] I am sure you realize that is part of the training and education that we would have to provide to them when they come back.

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I felt elated as a national of this country to see that our team held one of the “Brazils” of Europe—they say—to a goalless draw. [*Desk thumping*] I, on behalf of the UNC, would like to congratulate our Soca Warriors, particularly Shaka Hislop and Dwight Yorke, from Tobago—your island. They formed a formidable defensive shield that the “fellas” could not penetrate at all. We hope that they would do us proud.

Mr. Vice-President, no government has been able to achieve for this country, what these players have been able to achieve. Five billion people are watching our Soca Warriors throughout the world! Trinidad and Tobago is now known throughout the world! We hope that our players would continue to make us proud.

Mr. Vice-President, I must tell the acting Leader of Government Business that next Tuesday we are playing Paraguay, and if you do not want to have an empty Senate, I want you to consider rescheduling, because all of us want to be home taking in that football game. I want the hon. Minister to consider this issue. I am not threatening her; I am telling her that she must take that into account. It is not a threat; it is a consideration.

Mr. Vice-President, I could not speak today without paying tribute to the glorious Soca Warriors of Trinidad and Tobago. I thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand: Mr. Vice-President, I have a very short contribution. I do not know what is left to say after the hon. Minister. I am very glad to see that provision is being made to assist our tertiary level students. I have one or two little caveats and questions about it. I am making some assumptions; I am assuming that the Students' Revolving Loan Fund will disappear, as the Higher Education Loan Programme establishes itself. I want to support Sen. Mark that we cannot make the Students' Revolving Loan Fund disappear without finding out all those who owe money and making them pay back the money. We cannot, by the stroke of a pen, and by absorption of the loan, make those debts disappear. I support Sen. Mark that we really have to find out who still owes.

I understand from the hon. Minister that we have free tuition for all university students and the possibility of a loan for books and maintenance, and I welcome this. I hope that all students or prospective students get to know about it and do not have to find out halfway through their problems.

I want to find out from the Minister and I hope he will explain it later, why does the free tertiary education not apply to persons pursuing graduate degrees? Is it that graduate degrees are less desirable? Is it that you want your population to stop at a certain level of development? Graduate work is really the source of

knowledge and information which is used at the other levels and we need, especially, to encourage our graduate students to conduct research in our environment relating to problems this country has to resolve. Nobody is going to do the research that we need in solar energy, refrigeration, air conditioning and in the use of wind energy. There are all kinds of problems that we have to deal with and if we do not spend the money now and get our graduate students to do it, we are going to have to pay for imported technology and expertise.

Mr. Vice-President, I want to go to what Sen. Mark said about the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT). You might say this is an institution that is moving very fast and because it is moving very fast there will be lots of gaps in its operations; that happens, but I think we should have a little more goodwill. The Minister spoke about different kinds of collaborations with universities overseas. I would put the emphasis somewhat differently and explain that my understanding is that the University of Trinidad and Tobago is, what one might call, a niche university. It looks at gaps in the provision of tertiary institutions and it seeks to fill those gaps.

Mr. Vice-President, the same Irish miracle that the Minister spoke about, if you look at it, the UTT is striving to go into the manufacturing, packaging, and the kinds of engineering that are particularly immediate and relevant. It is not only looking for the niches in the education system; it is looking for holes in the economy that need to be filled. This is a very complicated thing to do. This may look nebulous; it may look high-handed; it is the kind of thing that if you sit in a room with 15 persons in a committee and talk, you will get nowhere. You need to get somebody to come with a vision and say, this is what we should do and let people argue against it.

As far as I understand, this is how the UTT is operating. My own experience of the UTT, working with something that is lumpily called Academy for Arts, Letters, Culture and Public Affairs, is that one is encouraged to find niches and to look for gaps, so that the academy is getting money to do cultural research into the hidden cultures of Trinidad and Tobago. The academy is getting money to set up sport studies, not only to find out about coaching and sport medicine and things like that, but also to develop courses in money management, in cultural literacy, which our sportsmen would take.

I know it is a fledgling university but I think the overall vision is to find gaps in the education system and gaps in the economy and try to solve both problems at the same time. I think we really need to be a little more sympathetic. Before I got close to it, I used to wonder where they were getting the students. Are they

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watering the brandy? Are they going to take part-time people and spend time and money on them and they would never finish it? Are they just producing technicians? Maybe it is the fault of the UTT that they have not advertised themselves sufficiently, although there are a lot of ads and brochures in the newspapers.

Mr. Vice-President, as I said, I am very excited about the country's decision to develop tertiary education but I do have lots of reservations. You could say that my main reservation has to do with direction of investment. The Minister says that at the moment there are between 7,000 and 8,000 persons entering university per year and he hopes that 13,000 would do so in due course. If, indeed, 7,000 are entering tertiary education per year, where are they coming from? If you look at the education statistics for 2001—

Sen. Abdul-Hamid: Mr. Vice-President, may I correct the Senator, please? What I did say was that in 2002 the intake into the University of the West Indies was between 7,000 and 8,000 and today it stands at 13,000. I was speaking specifically about the University of the West Indies. That 13,000 does not take into account what is happening at UTT, COSTAATT or any of the other private tertiary institutions. That is just the number as it relates specifically to the University of the West Indies.

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: Thank you very much. It does not really nullify the point I am about to make about investment. If we are finding 13,000 people to take tertiary education, we have to ask what kinds of qualifications they have. Are these all people with, at least, two A levels and what used to be called General Paper? I am not sure that is the case because if you look at the statistics for 2001 and 2002, there were 101,411 students in secondary schools. But there were only 7,842 in Sixth Form, and that figure is deceptive because Sixth Form means Upper Six and Lower Six. There are actually 3,851 in Lower Six and 3,991 in Upper Six. So we have a problem—if we want to get more people entering tertiary education—of how to qualify them.

I agree with Sen. Mark, the road into the tertiary system is through the secondary system. The road into the university is through—at the moment—A levels or Caribbean Assessment Proficiency Examination (CAPE). If we want to get 13,000 and we do not want to lower our standards, we would find that after we have absorbed the backlog—because we are getting the 13,000 from a lot of backlog from the time when there were not enough university spaces and the

standards were a lot higher, a lot of people who are getting in now could not have gotten in then, so there are a lot of older people who are coming into the system—we would still have the problem in the next few years of producing more people with the A levels to get in the tertiary system. I would like to see a balance between the kinds of investments we are making. It is all well and good to invest a lot in tertiary but the tertiary system is going to find itself over-expanded and vacant if we do not take steps to increase the number of people who are going into Lower Six and Upper Six forms and being qualified to go to university.

There is another problem about investment. If we say that 20,000 people, roughly, who take the SEA are guaranteed places in secondary schools; if we say 20,000 enter secondary schools every year, and if we recognize that 4,000 out of 20,000 are coming out of form six every year, we have to ask what is happening to all the others who do not get there; the ones who drop out during the junior secondary schools; the ones who do badly at the CXC and the A level exams? We cannot think simply in terms of primary, secondary and tertiary; we really have to look around us, study the facts and see that we have primary education, secondary education but we have to have a category called post and continuing secondary, which will mop up and recognize the existence of a whole set of people who have fallen out of the secondary school system. This has been happening for generations. We have to recognize that we need to invent post-secondary institutions that would continue the secondary education of some who have dropped out; post secondary education, which will be shaped to suit the aptitudes and talents of the people who did not get through the academic system of our secondary schools.

Going to tertiary: Mr. Vice-President, there is really a need to look at tertiary and say, we have a whole set of, what I would call—it is not a respectable term, we would have to find something different—pseudo tertiary institutions, places that offer what look like tertiary education; different types of skills training and so on—and I am not saying that they are unimportant, they are important and useful, but we really need to make a survey of these pseudo tertiary institutions and try to rate them to see whether they are providing something that is fulfilling enough and whether in any way we can rope some of the graduates from the pseudo tertiary institutions into the tertiary stream proper.

Sen. Yuille-Williams: Could the Senator give way? How do you relate what you are saying to the Transition Studies Programme that you are, probably, familiar with?

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: Yes, but I like to spell it out because then I become aware of the amount of work that I have to do and the amount of thinking that I have to do. I may come out with something that says that there are about 11 different kinds of secondary institutions in this country; they may all take a core syllabus of language, communication skills, mathematics, geography and history but apart from that some will be going in technical directions, et cetera. We really cannot think of a single, simple type of secondary school, and that is part of our problem.

Similarly, with tertiary, we have to recognize that there are people who get a kind of technical training in the pseudo tertiary system, who can go into the workforce, who can feel fulfilled and who can have happy lives. You do not have to go into the university proper, or so-called proper, and get a university degree to be trained to do a job that you enjoy and to have a happy life. All I am saying is that while I welcome the emphasis that is being placed on helping students into the tertiary system, I feel—and I know that the Minister of Education is aware of this and there are all kinds of initiatives—that perhaps we need even more money to be put into bringing up the huge body who are not, at the moment, getting up to the Sixth Forms.

Sen. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan: Mr. Vice-President, it was not my intention to speak on this Bill, because this is a fairly simple Bill. Like Sen. Seetahal, S.C. and the speakers before me, the same questions arise, and I would also look forward to hearing the Minister's response as to the rationale for this particular Bill before us.

Mr. Vice-President, on listening to the Minister, I could not help but take the decision to respond to some of the issues he raised. Sometimes I wonder if this administration understands education; if they understand what it takes to become a technology-driven society and to develop what we call a knowledge-based economy. It is the vision of Trinidad and Tobago—it was the vision under the United National Congress and when the PNM administration took office, they adopted the same vision—to become a technology-driven society and a knowledge-based economy. Basically, the basis for that is because we were looking at the revenues coming in from the energy sector; the energy sector being a non-sustainable sector, which involves a rapidly depleting hydrocarbon resource that is non-renewable, and the urgent need to convert those proceeds into sectors that are sustainable, well into the future after the natural resources of this country have been depleted.

4.00 p.m.

It was under the UNC government that we developed the Dollar for Dollar Plan which is forever criticized by this particular Government. I will get back to that issue. I wanted to go back to some of the issues raised so far, and including what Sen. Prof. Ramchand raised and that is the whole issue of the University of Trinidad and Tobago and the ITT and so forth and what it takes for us to get there.

Mr. Vice-President, when I first started in this Senate I spoke on an issue during that budget debate on what was called the *Virtuous Cycle*. It was a document put out by the World Bank at the time. It talked about emerging economies, emerging countries that want to become technology driven. It referred to countries like Singapore—the Asian Tigers. One of the issues there, if you want to become technology driven, you will always end up in a situation where you will have a technology skills mismatch. That is because either we are moving quickly into the industry, industrializing, and we do not have the skills to meet that demand; or we are over-producing on the skills side and not generating the demand side by the industrialization effort. So we will always have that mismatch.

We end up in a brain drain because if we produce too many skills and there is no demand for those skills locally, there is no way to absorb those skills, those skills will migrate. The other is, if we end up industrializing at such a fast rate, and we do not generate the skills to fill that gap, we end up with a productivity problem; we end up having to import labour and so forth, and then it is said that Trinidad and Tobago's labour force is not skilled.

That is why when the UNC adopted its energy policy, one of the first things that it did, before it looked at its industrialization effort in the energy sector, inviting foreign participants, it looked at its training needs, its skills need. They did a skills assessment and this is how the NESC (National Energy Skills Centre) was born; and out of NESC it was determined that we were going to tell the multinationals that they were not going to be allowed to have so many work permits. The justification for these work permits was the many skills that were lacking at the time to fill the needs of the energy sector.

When the NESC was born, centres were set up all over the country. Following that, we went on to the ITT, which is what this Government changed to UTT. All they did was change the name, because they did nothing else. The programmes were there, and I heard the Minister saying otherwise. I was part of that process and I remember bringing in the master's programmes in petroleum and the engineering programmes, et cetera, but the focus was slightly different.

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It was not there to duplicate the effort of the University of the West Indies because the University of the West Indies had an engineering faculty with the fields of electrical, mechanical, civil, agricultural engineering, including, civil engineering, production, project management. These fields were all there and they were expanding based on the needs of the industry. In fact, in fulfilling the requirements of the accreditation programmes in the Faculty of Engineering you had to meet with the industry. When the team is here with the accreditors, they will come in and meet with the industry and ask: Is the particular department meeting the needs of the industry? If you are not, it goes against you. So the department itself must be meeting with the industry to ensure that the programmes that they deliver, either at the undergraduate level or at the post-graduate level or as a special training programme, are all meeting the demands of the industry.

The purpose of the ITT was to fill a gap we had and that was one where we needed technologists. At the time, whereas we were producing engineers and we were producing graduates out of NESC, there was a gap. The NESC graduates would fill the bottom layers of the industry, the engineers and the graduates would fill the top level of management positions, but there was a gap for which the multinationals would still approach you for work permits and tell you they do not have someone who could manage the distributive control system or an advanced control system; or they do not understand PLCs, for example, or how to operate CNCs and so forth.

That was the reason for the ITT. It was to mirror what we call the Indian Institute of Technology. They used to call them the "jewels of India". These are the same people the Minister spoke about because these people exported all over the world and they filled that need. When technology is imported into the country, their job is not only to understand and command it, but to adapt technology. That was their role. So they could configure a distributive control system as needed and there would be no need to go back to the foreign vendors to say: I need to configure. I can now do it on my own. These were the people that could fill that role. It was at the level of a degree programme, but they were focused programmes. Therefore, I will always say that this Government did not understand and they still do not understand, how to make this society a technology-driven society.

Mr. Vice-President, I heard the Minister say that UTT is going to be offering better quality programmes than the University of the West Indies and I thought what a very, very poor statement on the part of the Minister.

Sen. Abdul-Hamid: On a point of order. The Senator is misleading the Senate. I never said UTT—

Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan: Repeat what you said, then!

Sen. Abdul-Hamid: I said that UTT will be offering programmes that are on par with the best in the world. I never made specific reference to the University of the West Indies saying that they offer better programmes than the University of the West Indies. That is categorically untrue.

Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan: Mr. Vice-President, I take his correction, if that is the case. I really wanted him to correct that because I would not like it to go down on record in this Senate.

Let me just say that the University of the West Indies is also on par and it is also accredited internationally. They go through their accreditation process every three or four years as required. The people who design most of the programmes at the UTT are persons from the University of the West Indies. Someone just mentioned how many people are leaving the UWI and moving on to the UTT and I hope that the purpose is that the two institutions will be filling the void that exists, as you so rightly said, and it will continue to do so.

Mr. Vice-President, I wanted to respond to some specific issues. First of all, the Minister mentioned the Dollar for Dollar Plan and said: this pipsqueak programme—I am sure I have that accurate, or whatever term the Member wanted to use—that was being offered by the United National Congress; dollar for dollar, which was where you paid 50 per cent of the tuition fees of the university student. The UNC government offered that with US \$12 per barrel of oil. This Government can afford to say they are offering GATE, which is 100 per cent with over US \$70 per barrel for oil. In fact, they should be doing more than just that. I will tell them why, but before I get there, free education is not the solution to every problem that you have. This Government feels that at the end of the day their performance is gauged on how much money they spend, or how much money they throw at problems. That is how they solve problems, they throw money at problems.

Mr. Vice-President, everywhere that they have offered 100 per cent free education, one can check any country and one would see there is a problem with the age of graduation. When a student now has free education, that student no longer has a motive to continue to ensure that he or she passes the examinations at the end of the year. I will show you a specific example. When I entered the university, I think around the 1980s, we did have free education. You just had to pay a minimum fee and students would repeat year after year. They would put in

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their medicals, but if they had to pay, like the engineering students eventually had to pay \$1,300/\$1,400 and, as the fees went up, you suddenly realized how quickly they graduated out of the system.

That is a problem that I think this Government is going to face. I am sure that the average graduation age for a first degree could well reach 27 and 28 years. If you know you are going to have your tuition paid, plus all the other assistance that is being given to you, based on what the Minister was saying, there is no need to get out of the university system quickly and get into the workforce.

Mr. Vice-President, I want to know what the Government is putting in place to ensure that if you are offering this as a scholarship, that it be treated like a scholarship to ensure that at the end of the day these students are properly monitored, that reports are generated, and that they ensure that if students continue to fail that they are disqualified from the GATE programme. It is the only way that you would ensure that our students do not abuse the system. It will work to the detriment of our own economy when they do not graduate quickly enough to go into the workforce.

I had asked this in the budget debate. I did not get an answer and I am asking it here again today since the Minister was so intent on telling us about all these programmes and he was so passionate about it, which I have no problem with.

Going on to the whole diversification of this economy, Sen. Prof. Ramchand raised some very, very important issues in terms of development and so forth. When I spoke in the budget debate, I spoke about that virtuous cycle. It is where you start off in the first stage talking about adoption of technology. That is a stage that we have gone past. It is finished and we have moved on to what we call the second and third stages, which are the adaptation and creation stages for technology.

In the adaptation stage, we not only now adopt, but we adapt the technology and what we do to be able to adapt and keep that technology—as I mentioned before, the technology skills mismatch—and to prevent that problem, we are creating a demand and a supply side.

When the UNC came up with the idea of the Wallerfield Science Park, the technology park, it was on that basis. What we were trying to do was to invite foreign investment which eventually would become local investment. That foreign investment was to develop all these hi-tech centres that could generate the

demand—high technology intensive industries that would generate that demand for the skills that you wanted to generate. So you generate the supply, the skill side, the technologists and so forth and as they come up they are absorbed into the Wallerfield Park.

What it also does, as you keep that going—because it takes a certain amount of planning, monitoring what is happening in that particular industry, and as you go along, making sure that your supply side meets your demand side—you reach to the point where you can get to the creation stage. That is because you have accumulated so many of these industries—in the past I do not know if Sen. King would remember, we used to call that the business incubator kind of thing. That was started under the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR). I also participated in that project. After a while, because you would have developed that critical mass, you would have generated also a demand for some research and development, which we call the creation stage. That is, Sen. Prof. Ramchand, where we need to go.

If we had gotten this science and technology park up and running, we would have been able to get the skills side generating, which is what is happening right now with the UTT, NESC and so forth, but, at the same time, those sets of skills, you do not want them to leave Trinidad and Tobago. They will be absorbed into this technology park and as the technology park grew and grew with more industries, you would have generated now a demand for creation of technology, that is where the research and development would have come in. And it would have fed back into the system. The university had started something like that in the engineering faculty when it had done the industrial outreach programme, but we were not at that scale to be able to afford that.

I am saying this because I still think the Government has an opportunity to modify their approach because they continue to talk about the university and the campuses and so forth, and I am saying that there is a more urgent need to address the technology parks. That is still very urgent, more than just continuing to expand, because you would expand manufacturing and packaging and you would train these people, but when there is no opportunity for them what are they going to do? They are going to find themselves being absorbed by other countries. It would have been money spent through GATE and where does it go after that? You have to think long-term to ensure that these people remain right here, otherwise we are really spinning top in mud and we are not diversifying the economy.

I heard the Minister talking about the strength of the currency. He talked about this mature education system and brain drain, then he was telling me this English system probably does not have brain drain because of the strength of its

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currency. That is what tells me I do not think the Government understands what this is all about. It has nothing to do with the strength of the currency and being a mature education system. It depends on what incentives you put right there in your local economy. [*Desk thumping*] If you are serious, this is what you are supposed to be using the money from the energy sector to do; not creating the shortages we are creating right now and driving up the prices.

The Government continues with this excessive expenditure in what they think is development and it is not developing. Building buildings and putting up a stadium here, there and everywhere, spending \$800 million, is not development. Development is in developing the intellectual capacity of our people so that they would become, one day, the exporters and the importers. They would become the revenue earners of foreign exchange in this country. That is what development is. That is meaningful development. This Government has no understanding of what that is and that is why we are faced with this problem.

We must remember we went through an energy boom in this country and it was this same Government that crashed this economy when we went through the worst time in the 1980s because it failed to use the proceeds of the energy sector meaningfully to diversify the economy and they are doing it all over again.

Mr. Vice-President, I was a bit disappointed to hear—I know we want to become the financial centre of the Caribbean; we have gone through two Bills, that is gone—the Prime Minister talking about our replacing the New York Financial Centre. Do you feel to accomplish that you put up two sky scrapers by the waterfront looking like the World Trade Organization? That is not development. Development—and that is what I am trying to bring it back to because it is not the erection of a building—is to get people into technology. You would be surprised if you exposed them to ICT—we have a technology centre and they understand how the world's financial markets operate. Based on technology, you might be able to do it in one little room and become a financial centre. That is the point I am trying to make and it has absolutely nothing to do with erecting buildings. It is not the trappings. It is building that human capacity, that intellectual capacity and that is what we need to do. It is not to say it cannot be done. This is where the training comes in and I would love to know if the UTT might be going into that area, the sort of ICT required to support the financial sector because that is what is badly required in this country today; the technology.

Sen. Prof. Ramchand started off by talking about the issue of UTT and that we should probably give it some kudos and hope that it would produce. We all hope that it would produce as it moves on. It is still an issue and there is need for

accountability. Why is there the University of Trinidad and Tobago with this level of expenditure and no account has been generated? Why do we have no accounts tabled here in this Parliament? Tell me if it is not incorrect that this one man, Prof. Ken Julien, operated this board for an extended period at the University of Trinidad and Tobago without a board of directors and then I am hearing from the Minister of Finance that this is good corporate governance. How could this be good corporate governance? We need accountability. A lot of money is being spent and again it is one of the issues being raised that where we see all this money being allocated, we are seeing no results.

What is UTT doing? I keep hearing about campuses. Let me say one thing, and I am telling the Minister that almost every programme that the UNC put in under the ITT is what is being used today. I want to know what they are doing. Have they built a laboratory since they have been here? I keep hearing about fancy designs. They are always in a design stage. This new campus we are talking about, is it a classroom? These are the problems that we are having. *[Interruption]* It could be a virtual university.

Mr. Vice-President, I join with those who mentioned so far that we cannot just allocate millions of dollars in tertiary education unless we understand what is happening in primary and secondary education. I support that call at this time. They must go hand in hand, and not because they are separate Ministries. If the quality of our secondary school students—and we saw it even at the university—starts falling, they would not turn out to be good students at the university system. Several times, even at first-year engineering, we ran into problems with mathematics and with fundamentals because they were not set right. There were problems bringing them right through; one would be surprised that they reached right up to final year and realized suddenly that some of these students had fundamental problems from year one, which should have been addressed when they were in Sixth Form.

If one does not deal with that issue coming out of the secondary school system, our tertiary education system would not flourish. One would see more difficulties. There would be more complex problems. If one does not get the sciences right at the secondary school system, one is going to run into serious problems, especially if we are trying to deal with technology. The UTT, from what I understand, which was the intention of the ITT, is focused in the direction of technology and we need to get this right. I know it is not anymore, but the focus is there. There is still a heavy demand for technology and that is important.

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Some concern was raised here about the 20,000 students that go from SEA to secondary education; 4,000 going to the tertiary education and the 16,000 that we do not know where they go to. Like any other country, I think Trinidad and Tobago has reached the point—and I know some have mentioned the tertiary education institutions we have around, some of which are private; I think that is a healthy sign—where it can become an exporter of education. I always say so. I have no problem if people educate themselves and, if there is no demand for them here, they go abroad. They are still in a productive way instead of being on drugs and on the road.

We have reached the stage where there are so many sub-specialties and so forth, even in the medical field, I see no reason, given the kind of money the country has right now, that money cannot go into the medical institutions to develop training for people who may want to practise in other parts of the Caribbean. There is nothing wrong with that, especially in the technical fields. There are so many fields developing.

That is not only specific to health but other areas as well. It tells us that there is nothing wrong with the 16,000 students who leave the system and pursue an alternative route if that is what they are doing. Many of them end up right back into the tertiary education system, but some years after. Nothing is wrong with that. It may just probably be the maturity level of the student at that time. The student may have left the system, probably worked and then matured and then re-entered. They may enter at NESC, and, in fact, the ITT was set up for that purpose, that you do not have to graduate with A levels you can come out with your O levels and still find a way through the ITT. Nothing is even wrong with going from the ITT to UWI. That was the plan.

At the end of the day, some of us may go up to Sixth Form and then go to the University of the West Indies. Nothing is wrong if I leave at the level of Forms Four, Five or even Form Three, pursue a different path, but end up at the same destination. It is that you are now meeting the needs of different types of students. We are living in a society with different types of people and we must cater for that. I am not overly concerned with what is happening if the 16,000 do not make it through the A level system. I am concerned that they do go through that alternative route and when they go through that alternative route, they end up in some meaningful form of employment for themselves where they are able to sustain themselves. I wonder, therefore, if the Minister, being in science and technology, could tell us if any of that is being monitored right now and what data they may have to support this particular issue.

Mr. Vice-President, countries like the Asian Tigers, developed based on what was called a participative workforce—women and men meaningfully participating in generating towards the productive end of the economy of those countries. That is what we have to ensure. Through all of this, in tertiary education, we must understand and appreciate if this is going to allow us to have what we call a participative workforce. We are heading towards a technology-based society and a knowledge-based economy and I want to know, with all this money being spent in the tertiary education sector; not just tertiary, science and technology, but the various development programmes by this Government, if it is going to allow us to move towards a participative workforce.

In fact, the Asian Tigers, if you go back to their economic data, one would see that it is because of their participative workforce, not foreign direct investment, not technology catch-up, but the participative workforce by both men and women that was able to allow them to converge with the economies of First World nation status. I want to know if Trinidad and Tobago is on that route. *[Interruption]* I hope they would understand that.

I, therefore, conclude with this issue of making our education system suitable. I think it is more in making the various programmes that we have applicable to fill the demand for what we have locally. Before we talk about suitability, this is what made me realize that the Government does not understand development. If they understood what was required and what demands they have to put in place, what they need to generate on the demand side, then they would know how to design their programmes that are suitable, then they would know how to design an education system that is suitable, that would be able to fill the supply to meet the demand that they are creating.

Mr. Vice-President, on that note, I say thank you.

Mr. Vice- President: It is almost 4.30 p.m. and we shall suspend now for tea and return at 5.00 p.m.

4.28 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie: Mr. Vice-President, I just want to make a few points. The hon. Minister, in his presentation, reminded us we were doing just two minor amendments. One was to change the chairman of the board from the CPO to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, therefore, the board is to decide in the Act the areas of study

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for which they will grant moneys or loans. There must be some sort of discussion and agreement among members of the board or between the board, the Division of Planning and Education and the other divisions to ensure that the areas of study for which they are granting loans are relevant to the needs and the development of the country. They must know the direction of the country.

The Government is giving \$75,000 per year to those studying in foreign countries and \$25,000 per year to those studying in Trinidad and Tobago. What sort of criteria do you have in place, especially for those studying in foreign countries? Do you have any sort of monitoring as to whether they are performing? Do you have anything coming from the university, such as a report, saying that they are enrolled and what grades they are chalking up? What do you do with those who do not return?

I am saying this from my personal experience. I remember when the loan facility was introduced in the 1980s I was a guarantor for someone receiving a students' revolving loan to study abroad. After studies, this person did not return to Trinidad and Tobago and the board kept asking those of us who had guaranteed the loans for those students, who had completed their studies and had not returned, what could be done. If the Government does not ensure that something is in place—because it is guaranteeing the loan and if the students know that and they do not want to return to the country, they will feel happy that the loan is guaranteed by the Government. That could be supporting a type of delinquency.

I am very concerned about the amount of money the Government is giving to students and the rules and regulations they will have in place to ensure that students return or, if they do not return, what sort of—I do not want to call it punishment—is in place.

About the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) programme, there are many people who want to study in Trinidad, Barbados, Jamaica or wherever they know they will get free tuition. When they are told they will get tuition, are they told that they can also qualify for a loan to help with accommodation, books and transportation? I know, in many situations, students who do not live in and around St. Augustine, especially those from Tobago, are really in a tough situation with rent, books, transport and everything else. Some of them actually try to work and save towards getting to university. When they are given the application form for GATE, they should be given a leaflet with the information that if they need assistance with accommodation and so on, they could apply for a loan to help them. Many students do not know this.

Everybody talks about investment in technology and science and so on. I am very peeved that there is such a strong bias towards science and a lesser emphasis on the Arts and the Humanities. I keep saying we are going to produce criminals and export terrorists with the science we are teaching them because we are educating their heads and not their hearts. [*Desk thumping*] We have to learn balance. Scientific studies are hard facts and do not appeal to that inner quality of feeling that is in the Arts, the Humanities and the literature—putting ourselves in one another's shoes. If we go on like this, we will breed a lot of people with hearts as hard as stone and heads full of technology. All we will be doing is using the university to produce people to give the hon. Minister Martin Joseph headaches and worries. We have to watch that.

My next and final point is: Let us not appear as if we are having an imbalance in the investment in education. Everything we do towards education, tertiary or otherwise, is a human resource investment. Let us try, not only to see if we can make the tree bear more fruit by pollinating the flowers, but also let us see if we can make the tree bear more fruit by fertilizing the roots.

I urge the hon. Minister of Education to fight with her sinews, every muscle in her body, to ensure that her pre-schools, primary schools and secondary schools do not suffer for investment to the advantage of the Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education. I am very serious about this because there would be less and less people qualified to go into the level of education that Sen. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan spoke about. You need that cream coming out of the University of the West Indies, the University of Trinidad and Tobago, the medical school, the dental school and the veterinary school, et cetera. You also need the people who would go into different areas of endeavour, which are just as worthwhile and important, to be the building blocks of the economy of this country.

I want us not to lose sight of the fact that the emphasis we place on tertiary level education is excellent, but if we do not continue to increase our investment and to show more concern for what is happening at our pre-schools, our primary schools and our secondary schools, the feeder groups, we will not have the quality and quantity of students to fit into the tertiary level that the hon. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid is talking about.

I do not know why we are replacing the CPO with the permanent secretary except that probably in that area of tertiary level she or he would know more coming from within the Ministry than the person outside the Ministry whom you would have to indoctrinate as to what is happening in the Ministry. It is probably

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more appropriate to have your permanent secretary, who is dealing with all areas of tertiary education, even the funding programme, and who would be in a better position to understand and to be able to relate to other board members and probably educate them when they have to decide on issues related to the tertiary level and the Students' Revolving Loan Fund.

The loan is a good facility. Some people have abused it. Some people have taken advantage of those people who were generous enough to guarantee loans for them and had the Students' Revolving Loan Fund agency breathing down their necks asking them to repay loans that they guaranteed for people who went abroad to study and who completed their studies and never returned to the country and never paid back. Something should be put into the contract that is signed with them to ensure that they return.

At one time I had to threaten to tell the people to deport them. We have to set hard rules. I think it will be difficult now that Government is guaranteeing the loan. They will feel that it is Government's money and they can do as they please. I think also that the Government should ensure that there is an annual report coming from the institutions at which the students are studying to say whether they are really there. I have heard of people who took the people's money and went abroad and bought cars and did not use the money to study, so that when you think these people are studying, they are not studying at all. I think the Government has to tighten monitoring of the people who take these loans and ensure that what they take the loan for, they are really doing that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Vice-President.

The Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (Sen. The Hon. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid): Mr. Vice-President, I begin by thanking all those who took the time to make contributions. I ensure Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie that while we have heard today, a lot about what is taking place in the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, if we were debating a Bill piloted by the Minister of Education, we would hear as much taking place in the Ministry of Education as well.

The spotlight is on a Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education programme in a different setting, in a different set of circumstances. In a different Bill, Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie would be hearing the other part of the story, which is as interesting and exciting as what we have spoken about today.

Let me continue by giving some information in response to questions raised by both Sen. Mark and Sen. Seetahal, S.C. about the balance of the Students' Revolving Loan Fund. In response to the question about the Auditor General's report, the Auditor General and the IDB agreed to an independent auditor, Anthony P. Pierre and Company, Chartered Accountants, and the audited financial statements for the period 1993—2004 were submitted to the Auditor General's Department in October 2005. *[Interruption]*

How it works is that the Auditor General and the IDB have both agreed on whom the chartered accountant would be—Anthony P. Pierre—and he has now submitted the reports to the Auditor General's Department. So the reports are where they should be now and we will proceed from there.

In terms of the information as it relates to what we have out of Anthony P. Pierre, in the financial year up to 2004 there is a balance of \$75,263,000 in the Students' Revolving Loan Fund. There are a few other things I would answer shortly about the number of beneficiaries. We are talking about 1,349 beneficiaries. There are 657 persons who are in arrears for six months or more and the dollar value of the arrears amounts to just about TT \$20 million. *[Interruption]* Out of the 1,349 beneficiaries, it is just under 50 per cent of the beneficiaries. We are talking as at September 2004.

Sen. Mark: *[Inaudible]* I am struggling my way.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: You are getting GATE. I know you are getting GATE.

There is a reason for moving the loan programme from the Ministry of Public Administration, the CPO's Department, to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education. There have been two loan programmes to students—the University Student Loan Grant Fund, that is the CESS loan, and the Students' Revolving Loan Fund, both with limitations. One only offers tuition and the other one is limited in terms of the disciplines. You cannot get it for Law. You cannot get it for the Humanities. So they are both deficient. We need to develop a new programme that does not contain the deficiencies of the both programmes.

We have integrated both programmes into the Higher Education Loan Programme. Sen. Prof. Ramchand was right. We are really speaking about winding up both loans—the Students' Revolving Loan Fund and the University Student Loan Grant Fund. They will both be wound up and replaced by the newly conceptualized Higher Education Loan Programme.

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In order to integrate the Students' Revolving Loan Fund into the Higher Education Loan Programme—remember this is governed by an Act of Parliament—there are rules that govern the expenditure of the money and there are outstanding issues. How do you make arrangements for people who have loans to continue to pay? There are also outstanding issues in terms of the IDB. Remember, originally, it was a loan taken from the IDB to allow the Students' Revolving Loan Fund to be put in place. There are those two major issues to be dealt with.

We have to complete the repayment of the loan to the IDB by 2007, next year. That is a relatively minor matter; we will get that done. Then there are arrangements to be made to continue to receive payments borrowed under the Students' Revolving Loan Fund as we wind up the loan to introduce a new programme.

In terms of the \$75 million balance, remember this is by an Act of Parliament and we cannot simply move that money. We are putting everything under one umbrella to coordinate all the arrangements. We have the Higher Education Loan Programme in tertiary education. We are moving the Students' Revolving Loan Fund across to our Ministry so that we could then coordinate the entire exercise to facilitate that integration. We will come up with the sequence of events that we need to undertake to ensure a smooth transition from the Students' Revolving Loan Fund and a smooth integration into the Higher Education Loan Programme; put all the arrangements in place so that we have a single Higher Education Loan Programme dealing with all the needs of the students without the deficiencies of both the University Student Loan Grant Fund and the Students' Revolving Loan Fund. That is the explanation for bringing it across.

We have to come back to Parliament in any case. This is just the first step. If we are going to repeal the Students' Revolving Loan Fund and replace it with a higher education loan fund, whatever it might be called, then we are going to have to get Parliament's approval to take the money and to put the money into the new fund. The board, now to be chaired by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, will now make all those arrangements and design the plan of action on how to move forward to get things done. It could not stay in the CPO. They are removed from the Higher Education Loan Programme. We had to bring it all together to have a single group working on it and charting the way forward. That is perhaps the explanation some were looking for.

Sen. Mark asked about the audited financial statements. He asked how many outstanding loans there were. He also asked about the commercial bank. Scotiabank has been appointed the trustee following on from the University Student Loan Grant Fund. All the other banks have expressed interest. We have already had discussions with all of them. Sen. Mark did say that the Prime Minister made an announcement in the budget. It has taken some time, as it must. This is not TIDCO paving roads. It will take time. You cannot do it by "vaps". You have to design a proper system and you have to be very careful how you make the arrangements for your loans.

Let me touch on something that Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie said about foreign students not repaying the loans. The experience of the Students' Revolving Loan Fund is that the most delinquent students are those who study outside of the region—the ones who go to England and the United States. They give us the most trouble in repaying their loans. What have we done?

In order to try to deal with that to some extent, in the Higher Education Loan Programme, we have recognized that this is a serious problem area, so we have restricted it to this region as of now. We may, as time progresses, try to look at other possibilities. That is part of what we propose to do. We are also toying with some other ideas which have come up, trying to give the student a particular number so that employers can make a deduction at that point. Those ideas are not easy to work out. We are having discussions with the Board of Inland Revenue, the National Insurance Board, et cetera, with a view to determining to what extent those options might be feasible.

On the question of students not repaying their loans, the Students' Revolving Loan Fund was a government fund. With the Higher Education Loan Programme, we are using commercial banks' funding and we pay the interest. This means that the commercial banks will have the responsibility primarily to pursue debtors and the government guarantee really will be a guarantee of last resort. It is after all the avenues are pursued by the banks to recover the moneys in instances where there might be delinquency that the government guarantee will kick in. We have moved away from using government funds and have decided to use commercial bank funding so that the commercial banks could use their expertise and strategies to ensure that the loans are repaid. This we think to be a superior option to that which was employed in the construction of the Students' Revolving Loan Fund.

How do we keep our intellectual capital at home? Members of the Opposition need to have some kind of caucus before they make points. I keep hearing factions. If one person argues one point, the other person argues a different point.

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Sen. Mark said that we need to keep intellectual capital at home. Sen. Seepersad-Bachan says she has no problem with people leaving.

Sen. Seepersad-Bachan: They might end up on the street. Of course, we want to keep them here.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: Hello! Did you not speak already?

Sen. Seepersad-Bachan said that she has no problem with labour finding its way outside. Sen. Mark said we have to absorb the graduates. He does not make any reference to the disciplines in which they might be. Sen. Seepersad-Bachan said we have to create suitable graduates. There is no consistency and the factions are having a deleterious effect on the Parliament. You all need to sort out your business.

How do we keep our intellectual capital, if that is in fact the position? There are three variables that need to be aligned—

Sen. Seepersad-Bachan: [*Inaudible*]

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: Do you want me to give way for you to make your point?

Sen. Seepersad-Bachan: Go ahead!

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: There are three variables that need to be aligned whenever we are talking about the delivery of tertiary education. An examination of the needs of the economy must be considered: the spaces that are available at any university. There must be an alignment with the specific places, whether it be engineering, social science, humanities or whatever, with the needs of the economy. There also has to be an alignment with the demands of the students—what they want to do. You have to align what students want to do with the places at the university and the needs of the economy. That means, the university, being in the middle, you have to balance the two. You have almost to shape the demand such that people who pass through the university find space in the economy.

If you have a situation where the university is not considering what is taking place in the economy, you will have a situation where the economy might need 1,000 engineers, 100 socialists and we find ourselves producing 1,000 socialists and 100 engineers because that alignment is not there. That is a problem that the University of the West Indies has to examine.

Even at Mona, the Deputy Principal at one of our meetings recently was complaining of a large number of graduates of the Mona Campus being unemployed in Jamaica. Much of that has to do with the economy not being able to absorb these graduates because the university did not contemplate the needs of the economy as they produced these graduates. To the extent that they continue to do so, more and more we are going to have a situation where large numbers of university graduates would find themselves unemployed and having to travel elsewhere to find employment. What must be done is that an assessment of the needs of the economy has to be undertaken and the university itself is the best place to do that. They are the ones who have the academic and intellectual capital to do that kind of exercise. That is about making the university relevant.

Something that Sen. Seepersad-Bachan spoke about UTT and UWI. UTT and UWI are highly complementary. They were never intended to be at loggerheads. The University of the West Indies alone cannot deliver the number of tertiary education places we need as a country, especially given the development objectives of the Government—the development path that the country must take.

5.30 p.m.

There is ample room for more universities. In fact, the private tertiary institutions, by themselves, provide opportunities for 10,000 citizens of this country. That is why we undertook to support them. They have internationally-accredited programmes and they provide educational opportunities for large numbers of persons who could not and would not be able to find a place at the University of the West Indies, under normal circumstances. This is simply because UWI does not have the kind of capacity that we need. This is why we signed an agreement with GATE with 32 private tertiary institutions, so that they are all included and their students would be able to benefit from the free tuition programmes that the Government is offering. This is a tremendous achievement. When I used the word “pipsqueak”, I meant, when you look at the achievement of GATE and that of the Dollar for Dollar Plan, the achievement in the Dollar for Dollar Plan looked very puny. That is the point, metaphorically speaking.

Sen. Dr. Kernahan: You are looking very puny with your stupid analysis.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: Mr. Vice-President, I am appealing to you.

Sen. Dumas: Do not respond.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: We are very comfortable that the people will decide. They asked what development is. I would tell you what development is. They spoke about buildings. We do buildings. They talked about infrastructure. We do infrastructure. What is development? Development is 26,000 people benefiting

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from free tertiary education and the Higher Education Loan Programme. A total sum of 3,000 persons have already graduated from the MuST programme. We have another 2,000 training in construction skills; that is development. More than 25,000 citizens between the ages of 16—30 have passed through the On-the-Job Training Programme and they have all benefited from the programme. There are thousands in the HYPE Programme and the National Skills Development Programme with Metal Industries Company (MIC). We have certainly demonstrated a loud commitment.

Sen. Prof. Ramchand spoke about the graduate degrees. We are making the Higher Education Loan Programme available to students pursuing postgraduates programmes. It is felt though that if we are to provide free tuition, we must certainly start with the undergraduate because the undergraduate is the student who is now coming out of secondary school and who really has no professional qualifications or any opportunity to start to invest or earn; such a student has the greatest need. We have started with that and as we evolve, we may look at the possibility of going beyond. As of now, what we have available to the postgraduates is the Higher Education Loan Programme.

The Government has been funding research. There are a number of university projects where lecturers, failing to attract funding elsewhere, have approached the Government and they have found favour. Sometimes they would submit an interesting, relevant developmental proposal and they are able to access funding to complete their postgraduate research.

The last point I would like to make on the A level access is that of the link being made between A levels and the university. That, again, is the old British system. We all passed through A levels and went to university to do the three-year programme, under the British system. We know that there are other systems available all around the world. The A level system really restricts the number of persons who can access tertiary education. That number is restricted by the number of A level places there are. We have looked at what is taking place around the world and other systems have evolved.

In the University of Trinidad and Tobago, for example, there is a National Engineering Technician Diploma Programme for which you only need O levels to gain access and you can do a diploma and move on to do a degree in engineering, via the diploma. Even if you do not have the full O level requirement to enter the diploma programme, there is a transition studies programme which is a pre-diploma, which would last for one year. We would take you in with the shortcomings that you may have, understanding the reality that there are people who may be seriously

interested in having a skill, but do not have all that is required to enter the programme. You do not cast them aside; you create programmes and avenues to allow them access to tertiary education; you open a lane for them. That is what the transition studies will do; take people in for the pre-diploma programme, strengthen their skills where they may be deficient and admit them into the diploma programme. While you are doing the programme you would have a line of sight on the diploma programme. It is very important, instead of sending people off to get two or three more O level subjects. We feel this is a more successful formula to use.

We will do the same thing in the new community college. I am saying the "new community college" because that is the transformation we are looking at for the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT). As you know, quite a few changes have taken place. We would come to Parliament again to talk more about that. COSTAATT will be grown into a pure, genuine community college, emphasizing health sciences, arts and culture, performing arts, foreign languages and liberal arts and sciences.

We have taken the engineering components out and those have gone to UTT. We are creating a pure community college and, again, persons with O levels can enter to do the associate degree and move on to the degree programmes. They can also do degree programmes within the community college or at the UTT or UWI, depending on the discipline they would like to follow. Even within the community college, we are looking at the distinct possibility of students being able to do the transition studies, strengthen their skills and moving into the associate degree programme. It is all about opening up the education system to allow students who may not necessarily have gone on to do A levels, but who may have done something else. This would allow them access at multiple entry points into an education system, so that they can move forward and complete their tertiary education.

There was a point made on pseudo-tertiary institutions. The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago, as you know, was established less than two years ago and we have made very good progress. We have developed a document which would be called policies, procedures and processes. This outlines how the Accreditation Council would operate. Once we get approval for that, we would start to develop regulations. There is a distinct possibility that the ACTT can commence its work almost immediately. Part of its function is to confer titles on institutions, so that institutions would not be able to call themselves a university unless they meet certain minimum requirements. Institutions and programmes will be accredited. We

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have already put in place the infrastructure necessary to perform those tasks. It is simply a matter of getting the paperwork done and the right approvals, so that they can move on and ask the ACTT to fully discharge all of its responsibilities.

The Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Technology—I do not know of anything called ITT. I know of something called TTIT. I do not know if Sen. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan was referring to something from somewhere else. The institution I know, that I suspect she was referring to was TTIT. The Senator needs to get her letters right. [*Interruption*] Okay. The Senator mentioned that we did not have enough technicians and TTIT was established to provide the country with technicians. The story is broader than that; it starts earlier than that. For years, John S. Donaldson Technical Institute and the San Fernando Technical Institute were the institutions charged with the responsibility of creating and developing the technicians for the country. They were starved of funding and resources. They were allowed to be run-down and drained. Those institutions suffered under the last administration. Out of that scenario—we had two institutions, one in the north and the other in the south that were starving, suffering and limp—we have a bright spark springing up to be called the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Technology.

The Senator was using NESC. The problem there is a philosophical problem because one can easily argue that those two institutions were deliberately and systemically deprived in favour of another. The concept of the National Energy Skills Programme (NESC)—I do not know if they did not understand the skills concept as well—is energy skills and not degree. We are now refashioning NESC to concentrate its resources on training people in skills associated with the energy sector. We are talking about oil spillage, underwater welding, roughneck drilling, rigging, pipe construction and pipe fitting; all those skills that are associated with the energy sector. We are asking the NESC to provide this.

There was chaos created by TTIT and COSTAATT. There were three different diploma programmes that were equivalent. There was the associate degree in engineering, the national technician's diploma and the NEC. The administration of COSTAATT was pushing hard to get the associate degree programme. The same teachers at John S. Donaldson Technical Institute and San Fernando Technical Institute resisted that. No one understood what the associate degree in engineering was about. It was something that somebody made up and introduced. It was an alien in the system. The system could not receive it and the teachers

refused to teach it simply because the teachers preferred to teach NEC, because the NEC was tried and tested. The Faculty of Engineering at UWI accepted the NEC. If you had NEC you were allowed admission into the Faculty of Engineering but the Faculty of Engineering did not accept the associate degree, yet COSTAATT's management was insisting on the associate degree programme. The teachers were resisting because they knew the impracticality of it, as it relates to UWI. There were three different programmes.

There was more chaos. To get into John S. Donaldson Technical Institute to do an associate degree programme you were required to have four O levels. To get into San Fernando Technical Institute to do the same programme, you were required to have five O levels. That is madhouse sports. That is the same madhouse sports that they tried to bring.

We have scrapped all three and we have a National Engineering Technicians Diploma, created and administered by UTT, in collaboration with the best universities in the world; a superior programme, clarified, rationalized and streamlined with no issues, in terms of quality. When they talk about fancy, let them understand that there was a lot of chaos. They tried to indicate on the surface that it is all about dressing and decoration; hang some ribbons and see how good they look.

The last point I want to make baffles me. Sen. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan argued for the maintenance of tuition fees. I cannot believe that the merits of charging a tuition fee is brought—[*Interruption*]

Sen. Seepersad-Bachan: May I? I never argued for maintaining tuition fees. I said if you do not monitor it effectively you would end up in a situation where it will be abused. That is my point.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: The only people who argue to maintain tuition fees are those who could afford to pay the fees. All those poor people who have two A level subjects and all the qualifications: the people that Sen. Munro spoke about, do not argue for fees to be introduced or the merit of maintaining tuition fees. Mention was made about a paltry sum. It depends on the size of your account. The sum of \$2,000 per year can be a hefty sum for some. Again, it has to do with how you see the world and what your reality is.

In response to—[*Interruption*]

Sen. Mark: Before you finish.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: Oh gosh! You talked for one hour.

Sen. Mark: I only want clarification. I asked my colleague if he could share with us the steps that are being taken by the Government to ensure that there is some system of accountability to the Parliament, with respect to the \$500 million invested by the UTT.

The other point is that I asked him if he could tell us how soon a legal framework would be introduced, so that this particular institution can have some legitimacy within the parliamentary framework. I do not know if he could respond to those matters.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: The UTT is a perfectly legal organization. Some of the questions the Senator asked are questions, sitting at the desk, to which I cannot provide the answers in the depth and breadth. He knows the mechanism. I have advised him before, that he can file his questions and it would give me ample time to research and put the proper answers before him.

Sen. Seepersad-Bachan: \$500 million gone in to UTT and you cannot—

Sen. Dumas: Nobody said that. Do not try that. Obfuscation! You are carrying your own battles with Julien all about.

Mr. Vice-President: Senators, could we allow the Minister to continue his winding up, please?

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: I would like to end by saying that this particular move is intended, as I have said at the beginning—I would bring this to a close—to harmonize and bring in a single place and space, so that the thinking is rationalized, harmonized and streamlined. We are looking at integrating two loan programmes. We have developed a superior loan programme, the Higher Education Loan Programme, which we know would provide the kind of relief and assistance to our students. It is to be launched next week and, Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie, once we have launched the programme, we would make public all the information that is necessary to allow our nationals to access this programme.

Mr. Vice-President, I thank you very much. I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole Senate.

Senate in committee.

Clause 1 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 2.

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

Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie: Mr. Chairman, why do they have the 'Minister' means the Member of Cabinet" and not "the Member of Parliament"? It must be a Cabinet Member?

Sen. Abdul-Hamid: Yes.

Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie: Okay, fine, no problem.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 2 ordered to stand part of Bill.

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

Senate resumed.

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

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams): Mr. Vice-President, I rise to move the adjournment of the Senate.

Congratulations to Soca Warriors

The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams): Mr. Vice-President, I know the Prime Minister had sent his official congratulations to the national team. On behalf of my colleagues, I would also like to add our congratulations to the Soca Warriors for the victory.

I, too, would love to also acknowledge the support the people of Trinidad and Tobago gave to the team. It brought me back to the Strike Squad and that spirit of unity which we had at that time. I am seeing that the performance of the team, so far, has helped us to rekindle that spirit of unity and I hope that it will continue and all of us here will do all we can to ensure that spirit remains with us in Trinidad and Tobago.

At the same time, I would also like to tell this Parliament that we are well aware that the Government did send a contingent to accompany the team to Germany. The purpose of the contingent is partly for tourism and to develop trade and investment. The cultural contingent would help to market both. So far,

Congratulations to Soca Warriors
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we have had fairly good success with the TIDCO booth. We moved from Dortmund to Nuremberg and to Kaiserslautern. Wherever the team is playing the booth will go along with them and similarly for the cultural contingent.

We are overwhelmed with the successes of the cultural contingent. They told me the last time when they played before an audience in one of the stadiums, there were wide screens; because people would go there to look at the game; 30,000—40,000 persons looked at the game and as soon as the game was finished they had to get on stage and perform. We had a specially choreographed Soca Warrior dance. They were pleased to know that the entire audience of 30,000—40,000 were now singing and dancing along. This has done a lot for Trinidad and Tobago.

You would have noted that in today's newspaper mention was made of the carnival parade in Dortmund. There would be one in each of the cities. On and off the field, Trinidad and Tobago is doing exceptionally well and we are very proud of them. We wish them all the best for Thursday. Win, lose or draw, they have our fullest support. I am quite sure that we would acknowledge that.

Somebody told me today in the tea room, when I asked her if she sat and looked at the entire game last Saturday, she said she felt that if she moved away, something would have happened to the team so she could not move from her television. In that vein, and in the spirit of unity and support, we want to send to the team and all those out there our best wishes.

Mr. Vice-President, I wish to move that the Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, June 27, 2006 at 1.30 p.m. when we will do the Tourism Development (Amdt.) Bill. Sorry, that will be Private Members' Day and we promised to have one from the last day. We would have that as Private Members' Day. Thank you for reminding me.

Mr. Vice-President: Hon. Senators, leave has been granted for a matter to be raised on the Motion for the Adjournment by Sen. Wade Mark.

Government's Immigration Policy (Details of)

Sen. Wade Mark: Mr. Vice-President, there has been some concern in various quarters in respect of the infiltration by foreigners, over the past few years, in our country. The evidence emerging out of the Ministry of National Security has revealed that between the period 2003—2005, up to March 2006, 3,400 foreigners

were granted residential status and/or citizenship. One of the main vehicles for the infiltration of foreigners and strangers to our shores appears to be the private security industry.

I will refer to an article in the *Sunday Guardian* of January 8, 2006. The headline read:

“Firms taking on illegal migrants

Illegal immigrants and people with criminal records are being hired by ‘fly-by-night’ security firms,

Last weekend, Central Division police arrested an illegal Ghanaian immigrant working as a security guard at Price Plaza in Chaguanas. The 33-year-old man, lawmen said, was nabbed while wearing the uniform of a security firm located on Market Street in Arouca.”

The article went on to say that the East-West Corridor had become a haven for fly-by-night security companies. The President of the Estate Police Association, Mr. Dardaine, said he had encountered several immigrants working as guards.

“‘Some of them are well-trained and mostly from Uganda or Nigeria. They were either policemen or have worked as law enforcement officers.’

‘We have had instances in which security guards who have been arrested already had criminal records.’

Sunday Guardian tried to speak last week with an official of a security firm that allegedly employed the illegal African immigrant. Attempts to reach the human resource manager of the security firm were futile. Contacted on Thursday, an official of the Immigration Department said the authorities would continue to crack down on persons entering T&T illegally. The official said in the past year there had been an increase in the number of illegal immigrants entering Trinidad.

‘We have noticed an increase, especially in nationals from Ghana...’ The spokesman added that many ‘fly-by-night’ security companies knowingly employed people who had entered the country illegally.

‘These firms are supposed to go through screening to ensure papers, including travel documents, are in order. But they don’t do that; it is simply a matter of money.’

The immigration official identified the coastal areas as weak spots where illegal immigrants can easily enter T&T. Another popular method was via the use of false passports and identification cards.”

Mr. Vice-President, I have raised the matter in the past that it has been brought to our attention that there are hundreds of illegal immigrants, particularly from Africa, not to mention the Caribbean, who have infiltrated the borders of our country. They have been employed by security firms. That is the main conduit for their illegal presence in our country. I am talking about illegal Caribbean immigrants and foreigners from outside of the Caribbean who are here illegally.

We do not have the freedom of movement of labour in the region; we only have categories that have been allowed to come into our country. It is of concern to us. We know with the boom in the country, the Government is using the explosion in the construction sector to facilitate the free movement of illegal immigrants into our country. I do not know what role the Ministry of National Security is playing in this whole matter, but we are convinced that there are hundreds of illegal immigrants in this country and they are working on the construction sites and private security firms. We know that many of them live in the Barataria/San Juan area. Hundreds of Jamaicans are living in the East-West Corridor. We do not know what their status is. We are concerned that under our law, once you are here for two years and/or more, you can attain residential status. We are concerned about the democratic process and how this process can be manipulated by the ruling party, given the floodgates that have now been opened to facilitate these illegal entries of immigrants into our country.

I think this is a very serious matter. This is why we are raising it today. When we look at the information provided to us by the Ministry of National Security, concerning the persons who have qualified for residential status over the period 2002 to March 31, 2006, we can see what is taking place.

We are seeing that the Chinese seem to have been the popular nationals that are coming here. Would you believe that over the period 2002, since the PNM came into power, up to March 31, 2006, 400 Chinese have been granted residential status? The Minister of National Security needs to explain to us.

Sen. Joseph: How many others?

Sen. W. Mark: Do not worry. You would have your chance to speak. I have a chance to speak now. Do not interrupt me when I am speaking. Mr. Vice-President, you need to protect me from this Minister of National Security. A total of 398 Chinese were granted residential status and citizenship over the last four years, under the Ministry of National Security; 15 from Ghana; 211 from Grenada; 917 from Guyana and 1,000— [*Interruption*] Are you from Trinidad? I am going ahead: 285 from St. Vincent and the Grenadines; almost 300 Vincentians were

granted citizenship. How many Trinidadians and Tobagonians are granted citizenship in St. Vincent, the United Kingdom and Venezuela?

Hundreds of citizens have been granted residential status here. Residential status has been granted to 11 persons from the Bahamas. Again we saw Grenada. Grenada is not only in terms of residential status where there are approximately 300 persons. In addition, there are approximately 233 Grenadians and 490 Guyanese being granted citizenship. My concern is that there appears to be an invasion of illegal immigrants into our country.

What I am concerned about is that approximately one year ago police raided the home of a citizen from Pashley Street, Laventille and what was discovered was amazing. There were mechanisms and apparatus to print and produce false drivers' permits, passports and identification cards. The borders of our country appear to be open. Illegal immigrants are coming from Africa, in particular, into our country.

I have seen them at the university outlets. I have seen them in Port of Spain and the East-West Corridor. They do not speak our language, but they are in Trinidad and Tobago and they are working. What would happen at the end of the day is that these same people would go to the Minister of National Security, through his immigration department, and seek to regularize their status. We are concerned that what this Government is doing in this period of so-called boom, is opening the floodgates, bringing all kinds of strangers and allowing them to flood the country with the view that at the end of the day, they may become citizens and may be entitled to exercise their voting rights at the appropriate time.

The objective of this whole exercise is to give the PNM an added advantage in the next election. We are concerned about the floodgate that has now been opened to allow illegal immigrants into our country. I would like to know what the Minister of National Security is doing about it. How many illegal immigrants are living in our country? If the Minister of National Security is doing his job properly, he is supposed to know all the illegal people in this country; this is a small country. He is supposed to give us an update of what is taking place. We are concerned. I have raised this matter and I hope the hon. Minister can provide us with some answers to our concerns.

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

The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Martin Joseph): Mr. Vice-President, I have been asked to respond to a matter to be raised on the Motion for the Adjournment of the Senate as follows: Government's Immigration Policy with respect to the entry of foreigners into Trinidad and Tobago, particularly

Nigerians, during the past two years, and that I am going to respond to. Sen. Wade Mark used answers which he received from three written questions, which was the basis for this.

According to section 9 of the Immigration Act, Chap. 18:01 of the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, persons who are neither citizens nor residents of Trinidad and Tobago may be allowed to enter and remain in the country for a period deemed appropriate, in relation to their declared purpose of visit by the immigration officer at their port of entry, in accordance with the immigration legislation.

As stipulated in the immigration legislation, a visitor to Trinidad and Tobago must produce a valid travel document and visa, where required, to be allowed entry. In addition, he or she must satisfy the immigration officer of his or her ability to return to his or her country of origin, present place of permanent abode, or any other country as evidenced by his or her possession of a valid return ticket. Moreover, the Immigration Department recognizes four categories of countries in establishing entry status to non-nationals. These are:

1. Countries whose nationals do not require visa for entry. This applies to nationals of most of the 53 countries of the Commonwealth.
2. Countries whose nationals require visas for entry. These 10 countries are noted in the Second Schedule of the Immigration Regulations.
3. Nationals of countries with which Trinidad and Tobago has concluded visa abolition agreements.
4. Nationals of countries on which visa restrictions have been imposed. These countries are Australia, Cameroon, Fiji, India, New Zealand, Nigeria and Sri Lanka.

With respect to the fourth category identified above, it is to be noted that prior to entry into Trinidad and Tobago by citizens of those countries, an application for visa must be made at the nearest Trinidad and Tobago mission. In this regard, it is to be noted that Trinidad and Tobago missions are located in India and Nigeria.

In those countries where Trinidad and Tobago missions are not located, applications can be made directly to the Chief Immigration Officer in Port of Spain. Once the application is approved, the Chief Immigration Officer then issues a waiver of the visa upon payment of the prescribed fee.

Over the past three years, the Immigration Division of the Ministry of National Security has had cause to request nationals of certain countries, including China, India, Syria, Lebanon and Nigeria, entering Trinidad and Tobago as visitors, to vest a bond in the sum equivalent to a return ticket to their country of origin, as a safeguard measure in the event of any possibility of repatriation of such foreigners.

The Chief Immigration Officer has the authority, however, to waive these requirements in certain circumstances, for example public officials, professionals, academics, et cetera. This imposition came about following several incidents whereby nationals of the countries in question failed to return to their countries of origin at the expiration of the duration of their legal permitted entry and failed to produce a valid return ticket when apprehended. In these instances, the cost of their repatriation had to be borne by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago at considerable cost to taxpayers.

In relation to Nigeria to be specific, this cost is estimated at \$25,000. The posting of a bond to the value of a return ticket to their homeland by the visitors was, therefore, imposed as a means of ensuring that the offending visitors could be repatriated at no cost to the Government, since the value of the bond could be used to purchase their return ticket.

It must be stated that all foreigners who leave at the expiration of their permitted stay are refunded the bond. With respect to the Nigerian nationals, it is to be noted that in addition to the need for them to have visas to enter Trinidad and Tobago, they may face further difficulties in arriving at their final destination, due to the need to secure visas for countries through which they must pass in transit to Trinidad and Tobago and vice versa back. These countries are usually reluctant to grant transit visas to persons of African nationalities for fear of claims for refugee status.

Furthermore, due to the fact that there are no direct flights to Nigeria, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago would have to charter an aircraft to Nigeria to ensure that the individuals in question are in fact repatriated. For example, approximately six years ago, the assistance of the United States of America was obtained to have a special charter where deportees pass through Trinidad and Tobago to airlift Nigerian deportees who could not obtain transit visas.

At present, there are six nationals awaiting deportation, who are not in possession of valid return tickets. The Government will have to spend over \$150,000 to repatriate them. It is to be noted that one transit country has demanded that in order to transit their country, each deportee must be accompanied by an immigration officer; a factor that will double the cost of repatriation.

Government's Immigration Policy
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The records indicated that notwithstanding the foregoing, Trinidad and Tobago's mission in Abidjan, Nigeria, issued 268 visas for Nigerians to enter Trinidad and Tobago in 2004, 293 in 2005 and five in 2006.

I thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

Congratulations to the Soca Warriors

Mr. Vice-President: Hon. Senators, before I put the question on the adjournment, I would like to join in offering congratulations to the National Football Team.

I would like to share with you an observation that I made and something that gave me the greatest satisfaction to date. Every time world sports commentators spoke about the World Cup and they spoke about the group with Trinidad and Tobago, you would hear about Trinidad and Tobago only when they were mentioning the name; everybody else had a chance. Trinidad and Tobago were supposed to be the whipping boys. Very quickly, after that match on Saturday, they stopped saying Trinidad and Tobago Football Team and they changed the name of the team from the Soca Warriors to the "Soccer" Warriors. That gave me the greatest amount of satisfaction. Whatever happens now is really going to be small, in terms of the impression that has already been created by the National Football Team.

I sincerely wish to extend congratulations and wish them all the best to go as far as they could as true "Soccer" Warriors.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 6.18 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

The following question was asked by Sen. Wade Mark:

Advertising Agencies used by Government Agencies

- 30.** (a) Could the Prime Minister provide the Senate with a list of names of the various advertising agencies employed by the Office of the Prime Minister or any Statutory Authorities, government agencies and departments under his purview for the period January 01, 2002 to October 30, 2005?

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- (d) Could the Prime Minister provide the Senate with a breakdown of the expenditure per agency in respect of (a) above?
- (e) Could the Prime Minister also state the amount of monies utilized in both the print and electronic media in a detailed way over the same period as well as the various events hosted, promoted and advertised?

The following reply was circulated to Members of the Senate:

Advertising Agencies employed by the Office of the Prime Minister, including the National Aids Co-ordinating Committee (NACC) Secretariat, and the Social Services Delivery (SSD) Division over the period January 01, 2002 to October 30, 2005

1. All Media Projects Limited (AMPLE)
2. Advantage Advertising
3. Audio Works
4. Black Ice Studios
5. Colthrust Limited
6. Collier, Morrison and Belgrave
7. Corbin Communications
8. Creative Directions
9. Desktop Designs

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- 10. Lonsdale Saatchi & Saatchi**
- 11. Media 21**
- 12. O Leo Lo Kai**
- 13. Resource Factory Limited**
- 14. Willow Works**
- 15. Edge Advertising & Design Limited.**
- 16. Sight Factory**

January to December 2002

| ADVERTISING AGENCY | AMOUNT EXPENDED | BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES eg. Print/Electronic | EVENT Hosted/Promoted/Advertised |
|--|----------------------------|--|---|
| 1. ALL MEDIA PROJECTS LIMITED (AMPLE) | 23,059.24 | Production Cost 5,500.00 Media Cost Express 5,606.35 Guardian 5,634.00 Newsday 4,028.55 Vat 2,290.34 | Press Advertorial—the Prime Minister’s Address to the nation for Independence |
| 2. - | 1,614.60 | Trinidad Publishing Company (Advertisement) | Nominations for National Awards |
| 3. - | 1,472.46 | Daily News Limited (Advertisement) | Nominations for National Awards |
| 4. - | 1,412.78 | Trinidad Express (Advertisement) | Nominations for National Awards |

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January to December 2003

| ADVERTISING AGENCY | AMOUNT EXPENDED | BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES eg. Print/Electronic | EVENT Hosted/Promoted/Advertised |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| 1. - | 34,258.50 | National Broadcasting Network Limited Production & Airtime Broadcasting for T.V. & Radio | Conversations with the Prime Minister |
| 2. AMPLE | 60,607.23 | Production Costs | Christmas Celebrations |
| 3. - | 1,842.30 | Trinidad Publishing Company (Advertisement) | Promotion of Sport and Culture Fund |
| 4. - | 736.23 | Daily News Limited (Advertisement) | Promotion of Sport and Culture Fund |
| 5. - | 1,718.10 | Trinidad Express (Advertisement) | Promotion of Sport and Culture Fund |
| 6. - | 6,871.48 | Daily News Limited. (Advertisement) | Nominations for National Awards |
| 7. - | 7,634.80 | Trinidad Publishing Company (Advertisement) | Nominations for National Awards |
| 8. - | 7,764.80 | Trinidad Express (Advertisement) | Nominations for National Awards |

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January to December 2004

| ADVERTISING AGENCY | AMOUNT EXPENDED | BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES eg. Print/Electronic | EVENT Hosted/Promoted/Advertised |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Corbin Communications | 152,557.09 | Rental of advertising spaces | HIV/AIDS Awareness for Carnival 2004 |
| 2. Advantage Advertising | 90,025.43 | Guardian 12,307.99 Daily Express 12,302.47 Sunday Express 7,682.58 Newsday 12,076.24 Newsday (Carnival Health) Feature) 5,682.15 FM 104 3,312.00 FM 95.1 11,500.00 FM 105 11,500.00 FM 93.5 4,968.00 FM 98.9 5,464.80 FM 101.1 3,229.20 | HIV/AIDS Awareness for Carnival 2004 |

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January to December 2004

| ADVERTISING AGENCY | AMOUNT EXPENDED | BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES eg. Print/Electronic | EVENT Hosted/Promoted/Advertised |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|---|---|
| 3. Media 21 | 30,475.00 | Filming of the Chutney Monarch Competition | HIV/AIDS Awareness National Chutney Monarch 2004 |
| 4. Advantage Advertising | 17,068.30 | Television Production Costs | HIV/AIDS Awareness—National Chutney Monarch 2004 |
| 5. Collier, Morrison and Belgrave | 713,000.00 | Campaign Co-ordination Services - 235,750.00 Production and Design and Model Fees - 477,250.00 | Police Reform Legislation and the War against Crime. Public Education Campaign |
| 6. Advantage Advertising | 119,307.81 | Guardian 8,144.99 Daily Express 12,243.71 Newsday 12,076.86 The Blast 2,319.55 Friday Mirror 3,045.20 The Probe 2,125.20 | AIDS Candlelight Memorial & HIV/AIDS Awareness-National Chutney Monarch 2004 |

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January to December 2004

| ADVERTISING AGENCY | AMOUNT EXPENDED | BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES eg. Print/Electronic | EVENT Hosted/Promoted/Advertised |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|---|--|
| 6. Advantage Advertising (cont'd) | 119,307.81 | FM 106 Stereo 7,590.00 FM 103 Stereo 6,900.00 FM 90.5 Stereo 6,900.00 FM 98.9 Stereo 7,707.30 FM 96.1 Stereo 6,900.00 FM 94.1 Stereo 4,600.00 CCN Channels 6 & 18 28,750.00 TTT Channels 2 & 13 3,105.00 Gayelle 6,900.00 | AIDS Candlelight Memorial & HIV/AIDS Awareness-National Chutney Monarch 2004 |
| 7. AMPLE | 92,000.00 | Launch Activities | Launch of the NACC and Five Year HIV/AIDS National Strategic Plan |

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January to December 2004

| ADVERTISING AGENCY | AMOUNT EXPENDED | BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES eg. Print/Electronic | EVENT Hosted/Promoted/Advertised |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|--|--|
| 8. Resource Factory Limited | 557,750.00 | Express, Newsday, Guardian, Mirror and Probe 181,587.10 Express, Newsday, Guardian 123,763.31 Express, Newsday, Guardian, Mirror and Probe 252,399.59 | Police Reform Legislation and the War against Crime. Public Education Campaign |
| 9. Advantage Advertising | 1,150.00 | FM 106 Stereo | HIV/AIDS Public Awareness |
| 10. AMPLE | 4,600.00 | Production Cost 4,000.00 Vat 600.00 | Prime Minister's Independence Day Greetings. |
| 11. Black Ice Studios | 121,650.00 | Video Production Services | Marketing the Five Year National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan |

Written Answer to Question

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January to December 2004

| ADVERTISING AGENCY | AMOUNT EXPENDED | BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES eg. Print/Electronic | EVENT Hosted/Promoted/Advertised |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--|--|
| 12. Resource Factory Limited | 50,943.85 | Corporate Cost 9,500.00 Media Cost Guardian 12,820.00 Express 11,635.00 Newsday 10,344.00 Vat 6,644.85 | Press Advertisement – Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago dedicated to the cause of Caribbean Integration – Prime Minister’s visit to the Bahamas and Jamaica. |
| 13. Advantage Advertising | 64,711.94 | Advertising Production Costs 25,242.50 Guardian 3,267.50 Daily Express 3,161.24 Sunday Express 4,117.00 Newsday 3,278.12 FM 93.5 Stereo 2,300.00 | AIDS Candlelight Memorial 2004 |

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January to December 2004

| ADVERTISING AGENCY | AMOUNT EXPENDED | BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES eg. Print/Electronic | EVENT Hosted/Promoted/Advertised |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| 13. Advantage Advertising | 64,711.94 | TBC Network FM 105, FM 106 5,375.00 FM 95.1 2,875.00 FM 101.1 1,725.00 FM 96.1 3,220.00 NBN Network FM 100, FM 91.1, FM 98.9, FM 100 3,780.00 Telemedia Network FM 97, FM 104, FM 90.5 2,535.75 FM 104 1,408.75 FM 90.5 2,426.08 | AIDS Candlelight Memorial 2004 |

Written Answer to Question

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January to October 2005

| ADVERTISING AGENCY | AMOUNT EXPENDED | BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES eg. Print/Electronic | EVENT Hosted/Promoted/Advertised |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Willow Works | 89,125.00 | Production Costs | Marketing the Five Year National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan |
| 2. Willow Works | 78,525.45 | Artwork 6,555.00 Photography 1,495.00 Production Costs for Booklet 10,304.00 Advertising Production Costs 3,967.50 Production and Management Costs 52,236.45 Advertising Production costs for brochure 3,967.50 | HIV/AIDS CEO Breakfast Meeting |

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January to October 2005

| ADVERTISING AGENCY | AMOUNT EXPENDED | BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES eg. Print/Electronic | EVENT Hosted/Promoted/Advertised |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|
| 3. Lonsdale Saatchi & Saatchi | 490,000.00 | Guardian 39,176.36 Newsday 6,213.45 Guardian 6,339.95 Vibe CT 105 2,299.89 Express 58,009.80 Sunday Punch 6,037.50 Showtime 6,037.50 Tobago News 4,568.49 Newsday 69,641.70 Sunday Express 10,798.50 TV6 67,457.50 Channel 5 7,437.12 Gayelle 21,735.00 | HIV/AIDS Awareness for Carnival 2005 |

Written Answer to Question

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January to October 2005

| ADVERTISING AGENCY | AMOUNT EXPENDED | BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES eg. Print/Electronic | EVENT Hosted/Promoted/Advertised |
|--|----------------------------|--|---|
| 3. Lonsdale Saatchi & Saatchi (cont'd) | 490,000.00 | NCC TV 36,800.00 Synergy TV 11,500.00 Radio Toco 4,657.50 Vibe CT 105 16,962.44 Radio 103 15,812.50 Masala 101 FM 9,660.00 Radio 96.1 35,420.00 Hott 93.1 19,320.00 Radio Tambrin 92.1 10,752.50 Trini Bashment 91.9 12,650.00 Wack 90.1 10,712.31 | HIV/AIDS Awareness for Carnival 2005 |

Written Answer to Question

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January to October 2005

| ADVERTISING AGENCY | AMOUNT EXPENDED | BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES eg. Print/Electronic | EVENT Hosted/Promoted/Advertised |
|--|------------------------|---|---|
| 4. - | 57,925.00 | Triniscene.com Carnival 2005 Website 14,725.00 Website Banner Advertising on Triniscene.com 43,200.00 | HIV/AIDS Awareness for Carnival 2005 |
| 5. Willow Works | 39,254.31 | Production costs 37,425.81 Banner Stands 793.50 Photography 1,035.00 | HIV/AIDS Life Histories Exhibitions |
| 6. (Direct Procurement with Supplier) | 5,000.00 | WAK 90.1 FM Radio Adverts | HIV/AIDS Awareness for Carnival 2005 |
| 7. (Direct Procurement with Supplier) | 28,750.00 | CCN TV6 Production for the Programme 'Can Condoms Kill' | HIV/AIDS Public Awareness |

Written Answer to Question

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January to October 2005

| ADVERTISING AGENCY | AMOUNT EXPENDED | BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES eg. Print/Electronic | EVENT Hosted/Promoted/Advertised |
|---|------------------------|--|--|
| 8. Desktop Designs | 12,035.90 | Artwork and Ad. Placement Services | OPM Public Statement on Freedom of Information Act. |
| 9. Creative Directions | 20,000.01 | Advert production costs | HIV/AIDS Awareness for Carnival 2005. |
| 10. Willow Works | 27,099.75 | Artwork Production Costs | AIDS Candlelight Memorial 2005 |
| 11. Willow Works | 56,812.30 | Planning of Activities for the Tobago Summer HIV/AIDS Awareness Campaign 1,727.30 Contact Time & Account Management 55,085.00 | HIV/AIDS Campaign Planning |
| 12. (Direct Procurement with Supplier) | 2,875.00 | Triniscene.com Design and Printing of Invitations | AIDS Candlelight Memorial 2005 |

Written Answer to Question

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January to October 2005

| ADVERTISING AGENCY | AMOUNT EXPENDED | BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES eg. Print/Electronic | EVENT Hosted/Promoted/Advertised |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---|---|
| 13. - | 6,210.00 | Radio Broadcasts Citadel Limited | State Visit by His Excellency Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President of Nigeria. |
| 14. AMPLE | 949,374.51 | NBN Network 24,363.90 CL Communications Network 36,512.00 Power 102 FM 18,457.50 96.1 FM 29,762.00 i95 FM 22,080.00 TBC Network 44,016.25 103 FM 16,514.00 Radio Shakti/Radio Massala Network 21,160.00 CCN TV6 349,945.00 T&T Television 170,234.50 | Police Reform Legislation and the War against Crime. Public Education Campaign. |

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Tuesday, June 13, 2006

January to October 2005

| ADVERTISING AGENCY | AMOUNT EXPENDED | BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES eg. Print/Electronic | EVENT Hosted/Promoted/Advertised |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| 14. AMPLE (cont'd) | 949,374.51 | Gayelle The Channel 107,910.25 Cable Company. of Trinidad and Tobago 92,736.00 Scripting, Directing, Sourcing Footage, Supervising Edit, Laising with Production Studio 4,410.60 External Costs Video Studio Facilities re laying down audio tracks Creating graphics Editing to final TV Production 9,639.95 Voicing Fee 1,632.56 | Police Reform Legislation and the War against Crime. Public Education Campaign. |

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| 15. - | 32,850.90 | Trinidad Broadcasting Radio Broadcasts | State Visit by His Excellency Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President of Nigeria. |
| 16. Willow Works | 4,140.00 | Advertising Production Costs | HIV/AIDS Triniscene.com Campaign |
| 17. Willow Works | 17,100.50 | Booth at Heroes Foundation 759.00 Audio Facilities Heroes Convention 6,037.50 Rental of Stands and Audio Visual Equipment 10,304.00 | HIV/AIDS Public Awareness at Heroes Foundation |
| 18. Willow Works | 35,774.02 | Photography for International Cycling 1,462.80 | HIV/AIDS Public Awareness |

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| 18. Willow Works (cont'd) | 35,774.02 | Photography for Annual report 4,025.00 Photography, Netball tournament, Media monitoring and radio dubs 8,970.00 VIBE 105 3,967.50 T&T TV 2,644.87 World Cup Qualifier 1,868.69 Radio 104 FM 1,507.65 Photography Services 575.00 Advert production Costs 1,552.50 Design for News Bulletins 9,200.00 | HIV/AIDS Public Awareness |

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| 19. Audio Works | 153,000.00 | Audio Works Equipment for Laser light shows | HIV/AIDS Awareness for Carnival 2005 |
| 20. - | 14,977.32 | Telemedia Limited. Radio Broadcasts Music Radio 97 FM | State Visit by His Excellency Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President of Nigeria. |
| 21. Resource Factory Limited | 56,149.91 | Newspaper Advertising Guardian 2,443.75 Express 2,688.13 Newsday 1,868.75 International Charges 6,095.00 External Charges for Ads. inserted in Express, Guardian and Newsday 43,054.28 | (a) Address delivered by the Prime Minister i.r.o. 26 th CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting in St. Lucia. (b) Emancipation Day Celebrations |

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| 22. Lonsdale Saatchi & Saatchi | 28,762.08 | Radio 103 3,079.13 The Probe 1,955.00 Newsday 11,356.25 Express 4,485.00 Radio 96.1 5,356.70 Radio 101 2,530.00 | HIV/AIDS Life Histories Exhibitions |
| 23. Black Ice Studios | 40,550.00 | Video Production Services | HIV/AIDS Public Awareness |
| 24. Colthrust Limited | 99,098.00 | Newspaper Advertising Newsday, Express, Guardian 89,898.00 Production 5,175.00 Design and Layout of Artwork 4,025.00 | State Visit by His Excellency Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President of Nigeria |

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| 25. O Leo Lo Kai | 8,159.00 | Production Costs of Programme 'A Closer Walk' | HIV/AIDS Public Awareness |
| 26. Sight Factory | 37,346.60 | Newspaper Ads 37,346.60 | Promotion of new OPM Website |
| | 8,000.00 | Website Maintenance 8,000.00 | |
| 27. Willow Works | 3,450.00 | Photography 2,300.00 | Publication of NGO HIV/AIDS Grants |
| | | Artwork 1,150.00 | |
| 28. Willow Works | 32,171.25 | Artwork Production Costs 30,791.25 | HIV/AIDS Awareness for Carnival 2005 |
| | | Photography 1,380.00 | |
| 29. Willow Works | 1,840.00 | Photography | World AIDS Day 2005 |

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| 30. Lonsdale Saatchi & Saatchi | 108,411.47 | Tobago News 9,323.90 Power 102.1 2,783.00 Heartbeat Radio 103.5 1,288.00 Radio 104 1,242.00 Radio 91.9 2,825.55 Radio 103 1,759.50 Radio Citadel 95.5 2,248.25 Radio 96.1 4,119.30 Guardian 26,290.15 Newsday 28,585.78 Express 27,946.04 | AIDS Candlelight Memorial 2005 |
| 31. Willow Works | 7,130.00 | Radio Advert Production Costs | HIV/AIDS Triniscene.com Campaign |

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|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--|---|-----------|----------|----------|-------------|----------|--------|----------|---------------|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|---------|----------|--------|----------|------------------------|
| 32. Willow Works | 18,400.00 | Coordinating and scripting of documentary | HIV/AIDS Awareness—Tobago Fest | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 33. - | 21,600.00 | Triniscene.com Website Banner Advertising on Triniscene.com | HIV/AIDS Public Awareness | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 34. Lonsdale Saatchi & Saatchi | 56,948.95 | <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Newsday</td> <td>10,806.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Guardian</td> <td>5,603.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tobago News</td> <td>2,586.08</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mirror</td> <td>3,598.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Daily Express</td> <td>2,379.87</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blast</td> <td>3,498.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Showtime</td> <td>3,598.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>96.1 FM</td> <td>4,320.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>103 FM</td> <td>4,500.00</td> </tr> </table> | Newsday | 10,806.00 | Guardian | 5,603.00 | Tobago News | 2,586.08 | Mirror | 3,598.00 | Daily Express | 2,379.87 | Blast | 3,498.00 | Showtime | 3,598.00 | 96.1 FM | 4,320.00 | 103 FM | 4,500.00 | 'Do the Test' Campaign |
| Newsday | 10,806.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Guardian | 5,603.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tobago News | 2,586.08 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mirror | 3,598.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Daily Express | 2,379.87 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Blast | 3,498.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Showtime | 3,598.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 96.1 FM | 4,320.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 103 FM | 4,500.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| 34. Lonsdale Saatchi & Saatchi (cont'd) | 56,948.95 | 104 FM | 1,700.00 | 'Do the Test' Campaign |
| | | I95.5 FM | 2,700.00 | |
| | | Masala 101 | 2,000.00 | |
| | | Tambrin Tobago | 3,060.00 | |
| | | 102 FM | 3,600.00 | |
| | | 91.9 FM | 3,000.00 | |
| 35. Lonsdale Saatchi & Saatchi | 60,861.25 | Express | 12,206.60 | Public Education Campaign on Sexual Behaviour |
| | | Newsday | 5,403.00 | |
| | | Tobago News | 5,172.04 | |
| | | Mirror | 3,598.00 | |
| | | Punch | 3,829.00 | |
| | | Showtime | 2,892.61 | |
| | | 96.1 FM | 3,600.00 | |

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|--|----------------------------|---|--|
| 35. Lonsdale Saatchi & Saatchi (cont'd) | 60,861.25 | 103 FM 3,000.00 Masala 100 2,000.00 I95 FM 6,240.00 Tambrin Tobago 6,120.00 91.9 FM 3,200.00 102 FM 3,600.00 | Public Education Campaign on Sexual Behaviour |
| 36. Lonsdale Saatchi & Saatchi | 74,750.00 | TV 6 20,000.00 Cable MTV 23,400.00 Cable Lifetime 21,600.00 VAT 9,750.00 | HIV/Aids Television Campaign |