

Leave of Absence

Tuesday, March 27, 2007

SENATE

Tuesday, March 27, 2007

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MADAM PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence from today's sitting to Sen. The Hon. Hazel Ann Marie Manning, Senators Dr. Tim Gopeesingh and Bro. Noble S. A. Khan, who are all out of the country. I have also granted leave of absence to Sen. The Hon. John Jeremie, Sen. The Hon. Christine Kangaloo and Sen. Basharat Ali, who are ill.

SENATORS' APPOINTMENT

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from His Excellency the President, Professor George Maxwell Richards, T.C., C.M.T., Ph.D.

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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

/s/ G. Richards
President.

TO: MR. OVERAND PADMORE

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

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, OVERAND PADMORE, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 27th March, 2007 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Hazel Manning.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 26th day of March, 2007.”

Senators' Appointment
[MADAM PRESIDENT]

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“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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

/s/ G. Richards
President.

TO: MRS. MAGNA WILLIAMS-SMITH

WHEREAS Senator Christine Kangaloo is incapable of performing her duties as a Senator by reason of illness:

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

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the
President of the Republic of Trinidad
and Tobago at the Office of the
President, St. Ann's, this 27th day of
March, 2007.”

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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

/s/ G. Richards
President.

TO: MS. ROSE JANNEIRE

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

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the

Senators' Appointment

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Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, ROSE JANNEIRE, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with immediate effect and continuing during the period of illness of the said Senator John Jeremie.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 27th day of March, 2007."

"THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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

/s/ G. Richards
President.

TO: DR. GLENN RAMADHAR-SINGH

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, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Leader of the Opposition, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, GLENN RAMADHAR-SINGH, 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 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 26th day of March, 2007."

"THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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

/s/ G. Richards
President.

Senators' Appointment
[MADAM PRESIDENT]

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TO: MS. ALTHEA ROCKE

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

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 40(2)(c) and section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, ALTHEA ROCKE, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 27th March, 2007 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 16th day of March, 2007."

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Overand Padmore, Magna Williams-Smith, Rose Janneire, Dr. Glenn Ramadhar-Singh, Althea Rocke.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Caribbean Airlines (Information Concerning)

26. Sen. Wade Mark asked the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance:

With respect to the new company known as Caribbean Airlines, could the Minister advise this Senate of:

- (i) the date of its incorporation;
- (ii) the names of the Chairman and Directors;
- (iii) the qualifications of the Chairman and Directors;
- (iv) the number of employees; and
- (v) the value of Government's capital injection into the new airline?

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Madam President, question No. 26 is now not available but would be in one week's time.

Madam President: I am sorry Minister, I did not hear you.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Madam President, the answer to question No. 26 is now not available but would be in one week's time.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, may I? My hon. Friend did indicate to you and this honourable Senate, when this question was posed, that he needed an additional week, which we granted. I would just hope that he would be true to his word and at the next sitting the answer would be forthcoming.

Madam President: So do I; I am sure it would be. Can we move on, Sen. Mark, question No. 31.

Question, by leave, deferred.

**BWIA, Caribbean Star and LIAT
(Negotiations)**

31. Sen. Wade Mark asked the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance:

Could the Minister inform the Senate what is the position with the negotiations between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in respect of the merger between the former BWIA, Caribbean Star and LIAT?

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Madam President, question No. 31 is now not available but would be in two weeks' time.

Sen. Mark: Madam President again, I would like to ask you to appeal to our hon. Ministers to stick to the deadline. I am not prepared to just be giving two weeks and one week. I would like you, Madam President, to appeal to the Minister to get the question within one week.

Madam President: Yes, I will do that. Shall we move on, Senator?

Sen. Mark: Madam President, one week.

Madam President: I will appeal to them. Shall we move on? I will deal with all at the end.

Sen. Mark: Okay.

Question, by leave, deferred.

Mr. Peter Davies
(Procedures and Employment Guidelines)

32. Sen. Wade Mark asked the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance:

Could the Minister inform the Senate what procedures and employment guidelines were utilized by the Government in securing the services of Mr. Peter Davies, Chief Executive Officer of Caribbean Airlines and his team of consultants?

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Madam President, I am happy to report that I have the answer for this question.

Madam President: I am happy too.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: The answer is as follows: The board of directors conducted a global search and after recommendations, including that from Prof. Rigas Doganis, an aviation expert in the United Kingdom, the CEO was interviewed and was considered to possess the relevant expertise and experience and was retained.

With respect to the other part of the question, Catalise plc were part of the team which led by Mr. Peter Davies restructured Sabena Airlines, now S.N. Brussels, a profitable European airline.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, the hon. Minister did not answer the question. The question is: What procedures and employment guidelines were utilized? Could he define for this honourable Senate what procedures and employment guidelines?

Madam President: Minister, you have anything to add?

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Madam President, that is the approved answer. I have nothing further to add on this particular question.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, could the hon. Minister indicate whether this particular position was advertised locally and internationally? And if it was advertised, could he provide us with evidential documentation? This is what the question is asking. We asked for procedures and guidelines. He has not provided those to us, Madam President.

Madam President: Mr. Minister?

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Madam President, as is the case with this level of recruitment, a global search was conducted; it was done consistent with what is required in the airline industry. It was in fact based on the particular mandate that

the board of directors was trying to accomplish, which was to basically restructure a particular airline and move an airline from where it was into a particular mode. That was the mandate.

A global search was done; an international consultant was in fact used as an individual who would assess the requirement of this particular level of expertise. On the basis of that, the board made a determination, then the particular individual was selected and he was retained. That is how it was done and that is what, in this case, happened.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, the Minister has indicated that an international consultant was recruited to conduct this global search. Could he share with you and the Senate, the name of this international consultant and the procedures that were employed by this particular consultant to carry out this thing.

Madam President: Do you have the name, Minister, of the consultant?

Sen. the Hon. C. Enill: Madam President, may I repeat the answer to the question. The board of directors conducted a global search and after recommendations, including that from Prof. Rigas Doganis, an aviation international expert, resident in the United Kingdom who does this kind of activity, the CEO was interviewed, considered to possess the relevant expertise and experience and was retained.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, may I ask, through you, was this Professor the internationally recruited consultant that the Minister referred to earlier?

Madam President: It would appear so. Minister is that—

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Yes, Madam President.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, one final question, if I may?

Madam President: One final question, please. One more, yes.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, could the hon. Minister indicate if he can supply this Parliament with the documentation surrounding the procedures and employment guidelines that govern this whole transaction or activity?

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Madam President, it is not normal for matters of this nature that deal with those types of issues to be within the domain that the Senator is seeking to put them in. Therefore, with regret, we will be unable to accede to that request.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, is the Minister trying to cover up something here?

Madam President: Come on, Senator.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, the question is very clear and he has not provided us with the procedures.

Madam President: I have allowed a number of supplementals on this question and I think the Minister has given the information that he has at hand, and he has tried to answer most of your questions. He is now saying that your last question, he is not in a position—and we have to accept that. Could we just move on, Senator, please? Can we move on to question No. 33.

Sen. Mark: I will seek to ask further questions.

Madam President: Yes, that might solve the problem.

Sen. Mark: —since the Minister is covering up.

Madam President: Shall we move on, Senator?

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Madam President, the Senator is basically imputing improper motives.

Sen. Mark: Well then answer my question.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Madam President, the Senator's imputing improper motives.

Madam President: Yes, Senator, that was improper. Please Senator, no speeches, no kind of comments like that. You said you would bring further questions; I think that is the way to go. All right? Let us move on, please.

Sen. Mark: Who is the Prime Minister here today, because I know there are many?

Hon. Member: Ask the question.

Madam President: Question No. 33.

Sen. Mark: Question No. 33, to the hon. Prime Minister. It could be three, four; I do not know.

Construction of Prime Minister's New Residence

33. Sen. Wade Mark asked the hon. Prime Minister:

With respect to the construction of a new residence for the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, could the Prime Minister inform the Senate:

- (a) what was the original estimate for the cost of the building;
- (b) the original projected completion date;
- (c) how much money from the original budget has been spent to date;
- (d) whether there have been any changes in the original cost and projected completion date, and if any, the revised cost and date of completion?

[*Sen. The Hon. H. Chin Lee rises*]

Sen. Mark: “My gawd! Oh gawd”! I bow, I bow, I bow! [*Desk thumping*] [*Laughter*] I bow to the hon. Prime Minister.

The Minister of Tourism (Sen. The Hon. Howard Chin Lee): As the Minister in the Ministry of Information, I wish to defer this answer for one week.

Question, by leave deferred.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, if you would allow me. Having regard to the new Prime Minister, I bow to the wishes of the Prime Minister. [*Laughter*]

Madam President: Good. Shall we move on to question No. 57, then?

Sen. Mark: Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh has asked me to pursue these questions, and I would like to present on his behalf question No. 57 to the hon. Minister of Finance.

Ministry of Finance (State Enterprises and Statutory Authorities)

57. Sen. Wade Mark on behalf of **Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh** asked the hon. Minister of Finance:

- A. Could the Minister provide the Senate with a list of all state enterprises and statutory authorities which fall under the purview of the Ministry of Finance; and

- B. Could the Minister also inform the Senate which Minister in the Ministry of Finance has responsibility for each state enterprise and/or statutory authority?

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Christine Sahadeo): Madam President, I kindly ask for a deferral of the response to this question for another week.

Madam President: For one more week?

Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo: Yes. Also question No. 59.

Madam President: Questions 57 and 59 deferred for one more week?

Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo: Thank you.

Question, by leave, deferred.

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh:

**State Enterprises and Statutory Authorities
(Breakdown of Financial Allocations)**

- 59.** A. Could the hon. Minister of Finance provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the annual financial allocations made to all state enterprises and statutory authorities for the period January 01, 2002 to December 31, 2006?
- B. Could the Minister also provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the profits/losses for these state enterprises and statutory authorities over the same period?

Question, by leave, deferred.

Madam President: You have another question from Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh again.

Sen. Mark: I want to know who is acting for the Minister of Education here, Madam President. Dr. Saith, could you tell me if anyone is acting?

Sen. Dr. Saith: [*Inaudible*] [*Crosstalk*]

**Early Childhood Education Centres
(Details of)**

63. Sen. Wade Mark on behalf of **Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh** asked the hon. Minister of Education:

- A. With respect to the construction of Early Childhood Education Centres and Schools, could the Minister inform the Senate:
 - (i) how many have been completed during the period January 01, 2002 to December 31, 2006;
 - (ii) in what areas have these schools been completed;
 - (iii) how many have been started but not yet completed; and
 - (iv) in what areas are these buildings yet to be completed?
- B. Could the Minister also provide the Senate with the names of all the contractors and their Board of Directors who were engaged by the Ministry for the construction of these schools?

The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, I beg to request that the answer to this question be deferred for one week.

Question, by leave, deferred.

Compensation for State Acquired Lands

64. Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie asked the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources:

- A. Could the Minister state, for the years 2002 to 2006, how many land owners received full compensation for lands acquired by the State?
- B. How many of these land owners reside or resided in Tobago?
- C. How many owners in Trinidad and Tobago whose lands have been used or acquired by the State, are still to be paid?
- D. What are the main reasons for the delay in effecting payment?
- E. What measures are being put in place to solve these problems?

The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Hon. Jarrette Narine): Thank you very much, Madam President. The reply to question 64:

- A. The records at the Lands and Surveys Division show that between 2002 and 2006, 218 landowners received full compensation for lands acquired by the State. That is not including the acquisition for the

Atlantic LNG pipeline, which was handled as a separate project with funds for payment provided by the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited.

- B. Our records show that payments to 23 landowners were in respect of lands acquired in Tobago.
- C. The division is currently processing approximately 20 acquisition matters for which claims have been received. There are also several acquisitions in process, in which claimants have not yet submitted their claims for compensation for various reasons.
- D. The main reasons for the delay in effecting payment are as follows:
 - (a) Payment is made based upon directions received from the Chief State Solicitor, stating the recipient who is legally entitled to compensation.
 - (b) Payment of 80 per cent of the assessed compensation as computed by the Commissioner of Valuations is due when section 4 Legal Notice is published. The remaining 20 per cent payment is due for payment after section 5 Legal Notice is published. The publication of this legal notice requires a survey showing the area to be acquired. If surveys are outstanding this process cannot be completed. The State is responsible for these surveys.

Due to staffing pressures within the Land and Surveys Division, these surveys have been contracted to private surveyors. However, the inadequacy of staff within the surveying division to monitor and check the surveyors and private surveys, has contributed to the delay in effecting payments.
 - (c) The Chief State Solicitor continues to deal with difficulties in determining land tenure issues, particularly in Tobago, where land, historically, has been passed on without documentation.
 - (d) Difficulties experienced in doing title searches.
 - (e) The large number of agencies involved in acquisition matters and the difficulties in coordination and communications have also contributed to delay in effecting payment.
 - (f) With respect to some matters, there has been no formal notification to the Office of the Commissioner of State Lands, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and other agencies which are engaged in the acquisition process.

- E. (a) Meetings are being held with the Commissioner of State Lands, the Registrar General and the Director of Surveys to resolve issues relating to title searches;
- (b) A request for additional staff for the Land Management Division headed by the Commissioner of State Lands is before Cabinet.
- (c) Meetings have been requested with the Chief State Solicitor, Ministry of the Attorney General to discuss the issue regarding proof of title in Tobago.

I thank you, Madam President.

Madam President: Members, I just want to remind Ministers to please try, we cannot force you, but we could cajole and we could try to get you—Some of these questions have been delayed again and again and again. So next week, Minister of Finance, we expect some answers. Thank you very much. All right, let us move on.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

Madam President: There is a written answer that has been circulated. You should have gotten your copy by now.

The following question was asked by Sen. Wade Mark:

Law Firm of Alexander, Jeremie and Company

41. A. Could the hon. Attorney General provide the Senate with a list of all the State Enterprises, Statutory Authorities, Municipal Corporations and Regional Health Authorities and any other state agencies that have retained the services of the law firm of Alexander, Jeremie and Company for legal advice and/or representation during the period May 27, 2004 to December 31, 2006?
- B. Could the Attorney General provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the various fees paid to the said law firm during this period?
- C. Could the Attorney General indicate whether he receives any fees and/or income from the firm of Alexander, Jeremie and Company, since his appointment as Attorney General?
- D. If the answer to (C) is in the affirmative, could the Attorney General provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the fees and/or income received?

Vide end of sitting for written answer.

**CRIME SITUATION IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
(GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING)**

[Third Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [January 30, 2007]:

Be it resolved that this Senate:

- (a) express its concern over Government's performance in handling crime;
- (b) call on the Government to explain to the Senate why the actions of the relevant agencies have so far consistently failed to produce the desired results; and
- (c) agree that the Government outline, with specific performance targets and mechanisms for accountability, what concrete measures it intends to take to deal effectively with the serious crime situation now facing the country so as to facilitate the pathway to national consensus and civil mobilization. [*Sen. Prof. R. Deosaran*]

Question again proposed.

Madam President: Those who spoke were Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran, mover of the Motion, Sen. Wade Mark, Sen. Overand Padmore, Sen. Dana Seetahal S.C. and former Sen. Mungalsingh.

2.00 p.m.

Sen. Dr. Glenn Ramadhar-Singh: Thank you very much, Madam President. [*Desk thumping*] It is a distinct honour and privilege to be given the opportunity to serve in this august Chamber. I now wish to speak on the Motion before us.

Today I stand in support of the Motion, for crime has enslaved every single citizen in our beloved country. We now eat, sleep, walk and talk with fear every minute of every single day: fear of robbery, fear of being attacked, humiliated or killed at the next street corner; fear of death looms large for us all.

In short, Madam President, the Government has failed the people of Trinidad and Tobago. And because of this failure to deal with crime, our citizens now mourn the loss of their loved ones and nothing, nothing in this world can undo this. As a result of the horrific crimes perpetrated by criminals in the society, according to the calypsonian Penguin, "We living in jail". The fact is that many of our citizens have lost the right to be happy, safe and peaceful in their own land.

As the Motion says, the psychological consequences are disconcerting at the personal level, where normal hardworking, fair-minded citizens have seen their lives smashed to pieces. They live with hurt and the pain of humiliation, violation and the loss of loved ones.

While the personal consequences wickedly abound, as a body collective fear stalks the land. It penetrates through every strata of society and enslaves us all. A walk to the recreation ground, a trip for doubles and a casual visit to the mall are no longer routine activities, but risks that one takes under this inefficient and incapable regime. [*Interruption*]

What are the social consequences, Madam President? Implicit in a democratic society is the right of persons to pursue their interests freely and without obstruction. Today in sweet Trinidad and Tobago our citizens are afraid to pursue hobbies and interests for fear of losing life, limb or loved one. It is now a medically accepted fact that persons with strong social network fend off critical illnesses. Socialization is critical to the human condition for men and women to meet to exchange ideas, to build projects.

In my own community, the Rousillac Community Centre would have been buzzing with activity five years ago until 10.00 p.m. at night, planning sports and family day, running training courses, drama groups and learning to play musical instruments. Now, that centre is dead at 6.30 p.m. Since the intrusion of this Government, no longer are people comfortable to get out of their homes at night. They are equally aware that under the PNM, there is no safety at home either. The real story is that the ordinary taxpayer feels like putty in the hands of criminals, they have lost faith.

The time is coming for that faith to be restored with a team that has a proven track record in fighting crime. With the advent of the Internet it is no longer a secret that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has been soft, weak and ineffective in dealing with crime. [*Desk thumping*]

It is obvious to the traveller from Trinidad and Tobago and other countries when they go and meet migrants from this country they speak lovingly about missing the good "ole T&T". However, they stop short of expressing their excitement to come back having read of some of the gruesome murders and kidnappings of innocent persons. Some of them are so horrific and graphic that I do not feel moved to describe them here to this honourable Senate. Suffice it to say I will just make the point that a loving mother and wife agonized after being gang raped that her husband could not have her. She obviously feels dejected

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for a crime not of her making. Yet she is cut open, desecrated and rejected by a loved one due to the failure of the State to deal with security and protect its citizens.

The families have been traumatized by brutish kidnappers, hoodlums and burglars to the extent that they leave our shores, they take their wealth that they accrued from this society with them leaving us with losses in our economy. The spiralling crime rate is not a well-kept secret as the PNM think it is. *Todo el mundo*, all over the world they know, and I quote the travel advisory:

There is significant number of British travellers to Tobago, the Canadian advisory warned about increasing rape in Tobago and cautioned travellers to stay away from Laventille, Fort George and La Brea.

Madam Speaker—

Hon. Senator: President.

Sen. Dumas: No, next year, Glenn. [*Laughter*]

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: Madam President, it is no longer a secret [*Interruption*] that there is widespread crime, killing sprees, child abuse, attacks, sporadic and otherwise; robberies, burglaries, abductions and kidnappings in this country. With foreign investors and businessmen being guided by the Internet at these travel advisories, we lose money every second in this country. The truth is, these people do not come to invest in our shores because they are afraid that they may not see the fruits of their investments.

Madam President, I wish to speak now about the aspect of this Motion that deals with the resources being expended by the Government. This Government measures performance not on value for money, but simply on how much money they spend. They do not care about its correlation to value added services, neither do they seem to care about the result thereof. More than \$20 billion have been spent in the past five years, and I have the figures here. Between Prof. Mastrofski—

Sen. Padmore: He is the candidate for where?

Sen. Mark: Do not worry.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh:—the Scotland “Yardies” and the worthless blimp, crime has gotten worse and worse.

It is a statistical fact, Madam President, that the PNM Government has been increasing expenditure, pumping more taxpayers' money into national security and achieving less and less. From \$1.46 billion in 2002 when they first started to fail, they have now reached \$3.296 billion in 2007 and they continue to fail. Is this not a clueless administration? [*Desk thumping*]

Between 2004 and 2006, they increased the budget by \$1 billion in two years and crime continues to spiral. Instead of achieving results, 108 more persons died at the hands of murderers. Surely the time will come when the people will speak to this administration. Madam President, the UNC has excelled in the management of crime. *[Interruption]* It is said that by their works, ye shall know them.

Sen. Mark: Yes, yes. *[Desk thumping]*

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: The population will have to decide when enough is enough. *[Desk thumping]* *[Laughter]* There is one thing with spending money and murders keep rising, but the PNM are not to be outdone. They not only achieved no results but continue to spend money way over budget and experience worse results. Again I have that information here.

Today, the sad fact is that not only is crime rampant under this PNM regime, but if, by some mysterious stroke of luck, they do apprehend the criminal because of a complex comedy of errors PNM style, one out of every 1,000 murderers are brought to justice successfully as evidenced in this very detailed document in a rare and arbitrary feat. Madam President, this is certainly incompetence gone to a new level. It seems as it is incompetence gone HD. *[Laughter]* *[Interruption]*

In this Motion, the hon. Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran is asking the Government to outline specific performance targets. I would like to ask, why is he asking the Government to outline specific performance targets? Why? Why now, after 1,413 persons have been murdered under their watch? And for this year we have reached 55 and counting. Why now, in an election year, specific performance targets? They are not necessary; it is too late. The time has come for them to go! *[Desk thumping]* *[Laughter]*

The first specific performance target is to get rid of the PNM. *[Desk thumping]* *[Laughter]* That is the first step towards solving the crime problem.

Sen. Dr. Kernahan: Time up “boy”. *[Laughter]*

Hon. Senator: He is making good sense. Excellent sense! *[Crosstalk]*

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: This is a Government, Madam President, of “ole mas”, complete with costumes, powder and robber talk. *[Laughter]* The Prime Minister in his budget speech 2003—2004 says:

“The Government must and shall respond. Accordingly we now declare war on the criminal elements and shall do whatever is necessary, within the law, to return this nation to that state where people can conduct their lives in the full safety to which they are entitled.”

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I stand here as a representative of the voice of youth, and to this the youths will say, "Yeah right".

Hon. Senator: Yes. [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: We also remember the statement, "if you are into kidnapping, beware"! [*Interruption*] Since that menacing statement, five kidnappings have taken place and no kidnapper has been brought to justice. Sadly, I am moved to ask this august Senate, where is Vindra?

In his defence, he did say that they will be caught, and really, did not give a date. Maybe it will be in 100 years' time. On that note, I would really like, if anybody has an update about "Mr. Big"? [*Laughter*] I would like to find out what is the latest with "Mr. Big"? [*Laughter*]

Hon. Senator: He got bigger. [*Laughter*]

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: The Motion goes on, Madam President, to ask this Senate to agree that the Government outline mechanisms for accountability. Now that would be a word to irritate, anger and infuriate. When it comes to accountability and transparency, this Motion is regarded with contempt. For, in order to report proper public accountability, information has to be gained on a timely basis. This, for them is taboo, they would simply prefer not to answer or exempt any organization under question from the Freedom of Information Act, as demonstrated recently.

To engage in conjecture as to why this Government has failed the nation may not be necessary in an election year. [*Interruption*] However, for academic reasons let us throw up some suggestions: [*Interruption*] [*Desk thumping*]

1. Poor management;
2. Lack of monitoring policies;
3. Poor surveillance and measuring; and maybe
4. An unwillingness to face the reality that there is a crisis in this country and spiralling crime.

However, the Government does not need many critics. It is in fact a self-confessed failure of an administration. It also does not need to provide complex reasons why they do not succeed. Clearly, it is because they simply do not care.

Hon. Senator: True.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: Admissions of failure as the Minister of Education marches with students against crime, and then the San Fernando West MP bemoans the failure of the Government to deal with crime expeditiously, and I quote from MP Hinds, on January 27, 2007 in the *Trinidad Express*:

“Given Trinidad and Tobago’s current and constitutional and legal position, the criminals are beating us too often at every stage of the criminal justice system. That is our reality’,”

The long and short of it, Madam President, is that the Government’s policies will not reduce crime, because they are in direct conflict with crime reduction. Because this is a Government without a human face, it is only preoccupied with skyscrapers littering the capital city; factories and the like with serious environmental consequences spreading across the South Western Peninsula of the country and a naked attempt to silence their political opponents using hired bi-cipital and recto femoral muscle power [*Interruption*] to cower and intimidate legitimate supporters and voters of opposing parties. [*Interruption*]

It is for this reason that this Government is on a path to self-destruction. It is a Government enraptured in a self-indulgence and relying on a cushion of wealth brought to bear by the fiscal discipline of past administrations. [*Interruption*] As a result, there is no hesitance to fritter away the national patrimony without regard for the poor man; without regard for the air that he breathes, and how the smelter plant will affect that, his natural environment; without regard for the poor man’s freedom to live, his right to a safe country and his right to enjoy the land of his birth in peace.

Side by side, Madam President, haunting this Government, are the related features of poverty and crime. According to the 2005 Survey of Living Conditions, 17 per cent of persons in this country live in poverty.

Hon. Senator: What page are you on?

Sen. Mark: Do not disturb him. You do not worry with them; address the Chair. [*Laughter*]

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: How is it possible for 17 per cent to be poor in this country—

Sen. Mark: He is temporary.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh:—at a time when the economy is so buoyant? This is the product and the byproduct of the policies of the Government. Under their watch, according to economist Joala Rambaran in the *Business Guardian* on March 14, 2007:

“Food prices have increased by 20 per cent in the last year. This inflation—”

[*Interruption*] It is related.

Madam President: Senators, allow the Member.

Sen. Mark: Yes, thank you.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh:—“is a spin-off of poor financial management.

In many communities, persons cannot...eat a well nourished meal for the day in this time of great wealth and poverty is rampant...”

I note the article in the *Trinidad Guardian*, “Poor La Brea”.

Madam President: What date?

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: Thursday, March 08, 2007. Sharon Allen, 43 years, and she says:

I do not have any job, I charge \$30 a load to wash person’s clothes and they refuse to pay.

Allen does 10-days, but it is available only once a month. There is also a caption, “Poverty to Kill”.

The children of these poor persons will obviously be the victims of crime gangs and criminals, tempting them into criminal activities to furnish their needs. As a result, the youths are the victims of the Government’s inability to tackle crime, Government funded dependency and Government created inflation especially as it relates to food prices. The poor tend to become dependent. According to Clive Pantin, CEO of FEEL, on March 08, 2007 in the *Business Guardian* he says:

“Jobs which were being created were not necessarily sustainable and while they paid, they did not leave people better off. He said CEPEP and URP programmes should ideally have two hours of teaching—one hour for Math and one hour of English—to ensure that people in the programmes were literate and numerate, and could upgrade themselves. “That has never happened,” he observed. He continued:

“We are swimming in a sea of wealth with oil and gas and the Government’s social programmes are not addressing the issues,” he said. He explained that once poor people rely on handouts then they do not take it upon themselves to look for jobs. “The biggest problem with the poor is that they become dependent.”

To sum it up, Madam President, the Government does not have the political will to deal with crime. [*Desk thumping*] Their track record in this regard is poor, flagging and pathetic. Having flirted with known criminal elements and played with the demonic fire of criminality, they now lack the credibility in the eyes of a watchful and intelligent nation to deal with criminals, swiftly, [*Desk thumping*] severely and with a certainty of purpose. They have demonstrated a preoccupation with persecuting their political opponents using the coercive machinery of the State. The Government, instead of fighting crime, institutionalizes it—

Hon. Senator: True.

Sen. G. Ramadhar-Singh:—by keeping the poor poorer and opportunity-less. They keep the poor groping in a self-demeaning existence in blue coveralls without motivation and no hope for progress, painting stones and raking leaves in an economy where they cannot afford to buy food. They are unable to build a future or envision a better life. They are crying out for a saviour. They seek the intervention and the coming into being of a new dispensation. [*Interruption*]

The answer to curbing criminals involves going to the root of the problem; it involves the Government’s sacred responsibility focusing on the youth. Trinidad and Tobago has 257,516 young men and women between the ages of 15 and 24. That is a full 20 per cent of the population whom we consider youth. There is a further 25 per cent under the age of 15, as quoted in the *Review of the Economy, 2006*. It therefore means that 45 per cent or close to half of our population is under the age of 24. We cannot disregard half of our population. It is Aristotle, himself, who said that “All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of the empire depend on the education of youth.”

Therefore, the strategies needed to decrease crime will involve an all-embracing focus on the youth. We must engage the youth in national dialogue; have greater, broader, deeper and more aggressive community outreach; create programmes to uplift the morale and spirit of our youth. There must be education and retraining of our youth. They must not only learn to rely on manual labour and brawn to survive, but they must engage in literacy, multitalented and skills

development, leading them to flexible incomes so that they can combat the inflation. Provide soft or interest free loans for CEPEP workers and youths on the block to pursue secondary, tertiary and vocational education.

Sen. Dr. Saith: They are getting it free.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: Engender a win-win relationship with the private sector to create superior job training opportunities with a more respectable remuneration [*Interruption*] along with exposure to qualified and high quality motivational speakers; take them to the villages to expose them to leaders in law, finance, sports, medicine and technology.

And if I were to give one recommendation to a beleaguered crime ministry, it would be the implementation of a system similar to the 911 system in the US. When a victim of crime dials up a 3-digit number from a point of panic through the entire trajectory of the call from placement to call ended, response arrival of the police and resolution of the crime, everything is measured, assessed and continually improved. So there is no need to have police officers in a blimp, but we have well-trained people in well-managed offices trained to truly respond to an emergency.

In stark contradiction, Madam President, in other countries the youths are given prominence and support by their leaders. In fact Government policy is shaped around youth development which is considered critical to the future of the country. The youths are highly motivated as we would expect, they are the driving force, the propellants in arts, in culture, in sports, in music and in finance and the economy. In this country they are reduced and demeaned. Improperly supervised in schools and while in another country students have a computer on their desk with the latest technological gadgets, in La Romaine a young man gets a cutter, in La Horquetta a young lady gets a whacker. URP and CEPEP have become the ugly legacy of the PNM. [*Interruption*] It has characterized their Government and governance, and speaks volumes of their loathe for the poor man and his quest for upliftment. They inflict the psychological slavery on the small man and condemn him and his progeny yet unborn to an inescapable web of dependency and accepting handouts.

By the same token it also speaks to their endearment to big business interest and their brazen and unapologetic funnelling of state funds into the beaker of party funding which gently swirls and crystallizes and precipitates instant millionaires who happen to have close relations to bigwigs. [*Desk thumping*] It is nepotism gone mad and unqualified and excessive abuse of power in the context

of a wealthy economy. It is the age-old PNM exercise in squandermania; smelter plants at any cost; castles in the air and their courteous suggestion to the poor, “eat cake if you cannot find bread”.

The dissipation of a boom into thin air—another one, hopefully, not under their watch—a boom that could have been used to eliminate poverty, to decrease and manage crime, to feed the poor, to house children and to give facilities to a country worthy as a first class Caribbean nation, an oil and gas super house. It could have been used to transform Trinidad and Tobago into a knowledge-based society with a globally competitive, technologically-driven, diversified economy which would have sustained full employment, social cohesion, equal opportunities and growing opportunities and a secure way of life for all its citizens.

2.30 p.m.

The wanton disregard for proper and wise management does not go unnoticed. A restless and anxious population is waiting to exhale and, Madam President, if this pressure continues to mount and they continue in this vein, something has got to give.

This country took youth potential to a kinetic high on one of the largest stages in the world, the World Cup. Madam President, you remember, no idle boast, small country, great passion. The Soca Warriors’ journey of pride tells the story of hard work, leadership and determination. Jack, Dwight and Russell taught us that impossible is nothing. [*Desk thumping*] As we defeated Bahrain, so too we must summon the energy to eliminate mismanagement; eliminate the abuse of state resources, and inefficient management of our state resources; to shed the clothes of old and begin anew.

This country is calling out for renewal; it is calling out for rejuvenation; oh my, it is calling for a renaissance. It is time to look after the poor, the destitute and the youths. It is time to take up the hammer of security and justice and nail up those criminals, nail up those kidnappers, nail up those bandits, nail up those murderers, nail up the Sean Luke perpetrators, and nail up anybody who stands in the way of our citizens’ right to property, happiness and life and if you cannot do it, give it to the UNC and we will nail them up. [*Desk thumping*] [*Laughter*]

The winds of change are blowing. [*Crosstalk*]

Madam President: You are finished?

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: No.

Madam President: Let us show the courtesy we normally do. [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: Madam President, the winds of change are blowing; the voice in the wind is calling us. As the Surinamese national anthem says, "*Oppo kundre oppo kundre man o enoopo*", "Wake up people, wake up and see what is happening around us". This nation begs for a new government, it begs for a government to pick up the mantle; a new dispensation to deliver with wise and stealthy management skills buffered by a strong track record of delivery, performance and results. The alternative government stands ready, willing and able to carry Trinidad and Tobago into the bright future of hope and prosperity.

I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President: Let me congratulate you on your maiden speech, but let me warn you, that whereas you found you had a very quiet opposition today, I cannot promise you the same thing the next time that you speak. [*Laughter*]

Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie: Thank you very much, Madam President, and let me on behalf of those of us on the Independent Bench welcome our temporary Senator, Dr. Glenn Ramadhar-Singh. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President, this is actually the third time that we have been debating a private motion on crime, be it with a few adjustments here and there. I think that because of the fact that we have it as a problem in the country, a debate on crime will always be relevant and so I would like to congratulate Sen. Prof. Deosaran for keeping crime on the front burner so to speak.

Madam President, almost everyone has spoken at some time or other on the Motion, as I said, amended as the Motion has been over time. I am sure much of what we would have to say must have been said by someone at sometime in the past. But let me just take a brief look at the Motion as it stands: "Whereas the fears and concerns of law-abiding citizens have increased..." and as crime has increased, I am sure the Motion is in fact stating that the fears and concerns of all of us have increased. We are all very concerned, and it is not just people who are opposed to the Government, all citizens of this country, all law-abiding citizens. In fact, I have heard that even some of the criminals are afraid of the other criminals. So it seems as though it is big "fraid" and little "fraid" as we say in Tobago.

"...the worsening crime situation..." we all know is quite true, "...resulting in severe psychological, social and economic consequence", and this is where I think that the crime situation extends beyond the Ministry of National Security. Here we cannot confine it to the Minister and the Ministry of National Security because if we have psychological, social and economic consequences, it means that all of us have to be concerned regardless of the ministries that these Ministers control.

From my experience as a Community Development Officer, I want to say what the former speaker spoke about. Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams, I am certain would have had some concerns where village groups; the village councils; the women's groups that would have been meeting over years in the night, leaving their children at home, because most of these groups are supported by women, and going off to the community centre, to the churches and carrying on their meetings very, very casually and happily, no longer can we depend on that type of confidence that everything would be well.

So in truth and in fact, Sen. Prof. Deosaran has actually stated a fact and that is why I say, the areas of government in different fields like Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs, they have to be very much concerned as to what is happening to their non-governmental organizations functioning as they should and helping the Government because of the crime situation.

I am certain Sen. The Hon. Christine Sahadeo and Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill and those in the Ministry of Finance would have also been concerned about the economic situation and where we have been hearing of businesses packing up, businesses closing early. In Tobago, some of the fuel stations actually close early, they close at different times just not to have something that they could be targeted because they know when you are going to close. So in truth and in fact, Sen. Prof. Deosaran has actually hit the nail on the head.

Yes, we know that the Government has expended vast sums of money for fighting crime and on foreign expertise, but, we are saying that we have no visible effects and this is because despite all the expenditure, we as ordinary citizens think that we are not seeing a reduction in crime as fast as we would like to see it. From the statistics we have been given in the last few weeks, we are actually seeing where the situation in crime, the murders, kidnappings, et cetera, the statistics show that they have been reduced. But a reduction is not what we are looking for, we are actually looking for what is impossible at times, a total elimination and we know that this is not possible; we know that this is not reasonable; but that is the only thing that would satisfy people. One crime is just too many; we do not want to see any crime at all. So we have to look at that.

Then we come to the resolution and the Senate, the whole Senate is asked to express its concern over Government's performance and we have all been doing that. In fact, even Members on the Government side have been expressing their concern about the climbing crime rate. We have heard from temporary Senator, Mr. Overand Padmore the last time we debated this Motion and may I congratulate you, Sir, on your spirited support of the Government. We heard from

you some of the barriers towards the elimination and reduction of crime, the barriers in the drug situation and so on and we understand. Even though many of us were not totally convinced, we still admired your spirit and the verve with which you presented your debate. So let me say at this stage, congratulations, you actually made us realize that probably in your very much younger days, you were very, very much someone to be reckoned with.

Madam President, we have had everyone expressing some concerns. But Sen. Prof. Deosaran has asked the Government to explain to the Senate why the actions have so far failed to produce the desired results. When I listened to the hon. Minister of National Security within the last two weeks, I think that he has begun to respond to the Motion. I have listened to him on the radio, on the television, I have read some of the clippings of what he had to say and I actually realized what he is saying to us, we are expecting results immediately that they implement a move and we should probably wait. And he is actually explaining that over time we have begun to see a reduction and we shall continue to see a reduction. So, I think he has begun to give us some sort of explanation and I am sure that Sen. Prof. Deosaran's Motion would have prompted him to explain to the population what has been happening; what are the types of results they have been getting; and why the delay in seeing the results that they expect.

Sen. Prof. Deosaran has asked the Senate to agree that the Government should outline with the targets, the mechanisms for accountability, et cetera, and I think that the hon. Minister of National Security has begun to do that, but not in the Senate. He has begun to do that, but not in the Senate and I think this is the place for it. I think this is the place for it. We have had this Motion and this is the third time that we are debating this very Motion. We started on January 30, we continued on February 27 and today we are here, and I think he had ample time to tell us here before telling the population outside. This is one of the things that I think we need to pay a lot of heed to, that we as parliamentarians need to know and the place to break the news is here once we have the opportunity.

Madam President, I want to just bring a few thoughts of my own to the debate. Some years ago in this very place, there was an attempt to categorize the punishment for murders, and in so doing, we would have had to categorize the types of murders and the types of homicides that we have. In other words, we had the domestic violence type, the robbery type and that type of murder. I am saying, that to be very fair and honest to myself and to everybody, not every murder could anybody do anything about, except the murderer himself, because there are certain types of murders, especially those in domestic violence—I looked at the

one that we had just recently where a security guard having his gun for his job, goes into the place where his spouse is, shoots her and then kills himself. I do not know which policeman could have prevented that, and that is what I am talking about. We had another one in Tobago which they have not been able to solve about a domestic affair. The man got angry and killed the woman, so it is alleged, and I wonder what anybody could have done about that. Therefore, my recommendation is that we have to be very proactive in some of the situations, and I want to quote one situation.

Madam President, last month we had an instance where it was reported in the newspapers and on the news that a mentally ill relative looked at his relative lying on a couch and chopped off his head. Then it came out in the news that the relative said he was an outpatient of the St. Ann's Hospital. When they noticed that he was beginning to act up, they went and reported it to the police—now I am not sure if this happened—and said: "Listen, he has begun to act up, he could be violent." I would like to know whether we cannot have a policy, Mr. Minister of National Security, that when or if there is such a report in the police station that something could be done. Probably at this stage when there is no policy in place of what do you do. He has not committed a crime; he has not done anything, but because of his mental state there is the possibility that he could do, what do we do? Whom do we call? I think that you need to look at that Minister and that is a different kind of remedy that you would have to use as against somebody who commits a crime in another way. So, I am saying we need to look at that. This is not the only case; we have had cases before where they told you that the person was mentally ill.

It brings me also to the point where we have seen mentally ill people have actually attacked the police, so even the policemen do not know how to handle a situation like this. If you shoot and kill him, the population is against you, and I think you need to look at this especially when we have mental health week. Bring in your mental health personnel with the policemen who have to deal with that type of situation and see what policy could be put in place. That is one of my suggestions. Stop waiting for something to happen, let us act before it happens.

I want to suggest too, that we have some anonymous complaint boxes, whether in the police station or wherever, that people could go into the police station and drop an anonymous letter or an anonymous note about something because people still do not trust the police, because sometimes when you tell them something and you hear it after, you do not know and you are very scared. So, probably a little anonymous box somewhere, where you could put it.

Madam President, I must say that I have noted a decrease in the overexposure of Government's actions. For example, the last time I spoke, I said that the policemen were talking too much about the strategies that they had and they were actually giving some clues to the criminals. I must say I have been monitoring the situation and I have seen a decrease in that type of activity. I must say, Minister, I do not know whether it was you or the policemen who heard it, but somebody listened and they are not exposing their strategies in detail as they had been doing in the past. Probably that is one of the reasons, added to the other matters, ways where you implemented other actions that could have done so.

Madam President, I have also noted the proposal which we did not know that I read in the papers, by the hon. Minister of National Security, about the introduction of the military aspect of training for the young people. I want to commend the Government on that. I think some years ago, long before I came to this place, we had a discussion on it under the NAR Government, I think—it was not called by this name but it was something like a national service plan—and I want to commend the Government for bringing this on board in whatever modifications you would have because these are different times. I noted your model police areas and all the support; and I think the point I made about the mental health situation would come into play in that. Again, I wrote this before I heard you, so I did not want to adjust it.

I want to still emphasize my point that I think these mobile model police areas would take care of this and that is where on a constituency basis, on a police station service area, you have your individual police areas being responsible for their areas just as you have your constituencies. This is one of the points I made and I see this seems to be taking care of this.

Madam President, I noted also that the hon. Minister spoke about the evaluation by the foreign experts. I want to suggest that you include local policemen and protective services people when the evaluation is done so that they will learn the tricks of the trade. So when your foreign man leaves we could carry on and not have to bring him back again. I had a supervisor who always said to me, "Eastlyn, your work is to ensure that you do not have a job doing the same thing; it is to work yourself out of the job." That is what she always said to this.

I also wanted to say, I have seen action and I am going to beat the Minister over his head all the time in what I am saying because he has answered much of what I have said, but he should have said it here first. While we try to stem the growth of crime, let us step up and spread out our measures to prevent or minimize the growth and development of criminals. That is what you are saying

you intend to do and you have actually begun to do. Let us rehabilitate, from our prisoners, and I have heard about the repeat offenders and all that you are doing. Let us rehabilitate; let us redirect their energies as you are saying with the military thing; and let us rescue. We need to rescue. I want to suggest to you, Madam President, that the hon. Minister look specifically and work really closely with the Ministry of Sport. I will give you something from my own experience.

A sport group from one of the villages that I came from approached an international organization for some funds and the theme was "Reducing Poverty Through Sport". They took a chance and gave it to them—it is a voluntary programme for some of us. People were coming in to play basketball, netball, and football especially, but the programme entailed sessions with the police coming in and talking on crime and when you are bad what happens to you because these are young children ages 8 to 17. We had a police element and they had videos and so on. Then we had the nutrition element, we had the education aspect and every day after a certain hour we had them and then we had the sport where they actually played, so all the disciplines impacted on that.

In the last six months we have seen such a drastic change in the behaviour of these young men. Their self-esteem went up; their good manners began to show; they were disciplined; they were punctual; and they were eager. It was a tremendous transformation and I am saying to the hon. Minister, work with the Ministry of Sport; get them to train coaches and send them out because many times I am out there alone with a whistle and I do not know head or tail what I am doing; I cannot get a coach. You want somebody to do it, but never mind that is part of the discipline. If I do not know the game, when I blow the whistle you obey me, that is part of the discipline. Although they would say, "Miss, that is a wrong thing you know", but it does not matter. I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, I know that you all are doing it; do it more. Do more of it please, I beg you. Then again, I want you to do it in other areas with your division of culture: your dancers, your musicians and your choirs; do it with the hon. Minister of Education; your brownies; your guides; your cadets and your boy scouts; do it with them; the discipline stays with them. I can tell you that.

Madam President, we are very concerned as the public with the spread of crime, not only to areas hitherto crime free. For example, 10 years ago when we heard of two murders in Tobago, that was big news. Let us look at that, but also let us look at the people who are being targeted, old people—men, women, pensioners—they cuffing you and taking away your pension. Young boys, young girls, we have young criminals holding up little school boys and taking away their sneakers and money.

So, we have to look at that. And I am saying that they are attacking politicians, the churches, the schools and the police because I think we are—I do not want to call it rear, but it really sounds so animalistic that I want to say—rearing some real beasts who do not have a heart; do not have the heart of human beings to really, really do something. They have no consciences, life means nothing, human lives mean nothing, and therefore, it means that we have to look at doing something about this from the cradle. We cannot just leave it and try to solve the crime when it has been committed; we have to try to stop breeding criminals. We have to try and stop that and that is why I said it cannot be the work of the police alone.

Madam President, my final point is this, let us put ourselves in the shoes of the hon. Minister. Hon. Minister, you are drawing the people for your protective services from the societal pool; you are drawing your policemen, whoever they are, your security guards, all members of the protective services, and therefore, you must expect that you will have—just as there are bad eggs in the society—one or two bad eggs coming into it.

I note the effort that the Ministry of National Security is making of publishing the names and pictures of prospective policemen, fire service and coast guard people so that the public has a chance—and that is where the anonymous box comes in—and you are saying if you know anything about this person say it, because these persons sometimes come with recommendations.

Sen. Joseph: Thank you very much, Senator, for giving way. We have been getting positive responses. We do not need anonymous boxes, they literally write in. In some instances people may be afraid of identifying themselves, others openly identify themselves. This was a deliberate decision made by the Ministry of National Security to ensure that in the recruitment process, persons who may know that some of these people are not suitable to be part of the protective services, that information is provided and it is vetted and double checked, et cetera; so it is being done without the need for them to be anonymous even though sometimes that may be the case.

3.00 p.m.

Sen. Dr. E. Mc Kenzie: Thank you very much. What I want to say further is this: You have people who have come in and you have screened them et cetera and somewhere along the line you have picked up that 10 of these men are not suited, what do you do with them? That is my point. You just do not discard them back into the society just as they were. I think you have a duty now to try to

rehabilitate them and probably give them an incentive to change because you would have had a few who would have slipped through the cracks. I am asking after that, what next? Do you just dismiss them, or do you try to rehabilitate them?

Madam President, I want to give you one example of a situation from my experience as a Community Development Extension Officer. We were running a programme for young people, and there were a number of them who could not read or write but we never called it a literacy programme. From the time you say you have a literacy programme, you are telling everybody the people who come to that programme cannot read or write, so we never did it like that.

When they came in, we realized that some of the tutors had to be teaching them c-u-p and so on. No problem. I now had to hand-pick the tutors to suit the situation and not to embarrass them; these are adults with whom you are dealing. However, when it came to the practical they were bright as bulbs. You could not beat them with what they were doing. If they were making pastries, they were good at it.

Then came the time for on-the-job training, we are sending them out but they cannot read or write. One or two were picking up, but still could read or write. We sent two young ladies to one of our hotels. I knew the owner, we went to training college together and he said to me: "Eastlyn, you sent me some girls, when it came to making the beds and serving and so forth, nobody beat them." They were the best. "But in my hotel we don't give verbal instructions, we have a roster and they have to read it to know when they have to work, what they have to do and which cottage they have to go to and so forth." He told me he would not send them away; he would give them an incentive. He told them he realized they cannot read the roster but are excellent persons who could serve, therefore they had a job but they had to promise him that in so many months they would be able to read and write. He did not fire the two young ladies, he sent them back to the programme and they were able to write the School Leaving Examination.

What I am saying, when you find them not up-to-scratch, try to rehabilitate some of them. Do not discard them and send them away and just probably out of the batch, you may find those who can be redeemed and instead of setting them loose, there is where your counselling and rehabilitation can come in. You can tell them if they measure up to this standard, promise them if they cannot fit into this batch, they will fit into the next.

Madam President, I know much of what I have said has been said before, I do not know what has not been said before on crime. The mover of the Motion has taken us through this on three occasions, Senators have supported and given their ideas, but I just thought I should give a few pointers of my own to add to all that have been given before. I also wanted the hon. Minister to know that I have been listening, I have been reading, I have been monitoring, and I want him to know that I saw movement in a positive way, but I also know we have much more to do.

I want to end by saying to you, Madam President, to the hon. Minister and all those who supported, let us look towards building our own indigenous resource to fight our battles. Let us look towards it, let us strengthen them, expose them, encourage them and I am always happy that you always encourage your officers no matter how bad. I believe when you get in a meeting with them you pelt blows and cuffs and so forth, but in public you encourage them and I think this is necessary because when you do that, you are saying to them: "I am standing up for you, don't let me down."

Let me again say to Sen. Prof. Deosaran, thanks for the opportunity he has provided us to speak on this Motion on crime, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to be able to talk in this debate and probably to offer one little suggestion which the hon. Minister and his technocrats could put into practice.

Thank you very much.

The Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (Sen. The Hon. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid): Thank you very much, Madam President. I would like to start my contribution by welcoming and congratulating our new Sen. Dr. Glenn Ramadhar-Singh for his contribution he made today.

It was quite interesting to look at him, this being his first, I listened very carefully to his content and diction and observed his antics, his body language, intonation, and his gestures, and it was clear to me perhaps he might be modelling himself after some of our well-known politicians. [*Laughter*]

It seemed to me that he was modelling himself—and perhaps he had been working on it for a long time—on Panday. The only trouble I was having was trying to figure out which Panday. I could not tell whether it was Basdeo Panday or Subhas Panday and at times, I could not tell whether it was Mikela Panday or Oma Panday, but in any event I want to wish him well. He seems very well fit and set for a long career in Opposition and I indeed would like to wish him well. [*Laughter*]

I want to warn him as he looks around at those political birds—and in many parts of his contribution he used some Spanish; *todo el mundo*. He used it badly, it was an incorrect translation. What he should have said was: *Por todas partes del mundo* and not *todo el mundo*. It means throughout the world. [Desk thumping] I want to warn him because he must be very excited about his prospects of taking that seat. The warning is—as Sen. Mark will know—it is not the quality of his contribution that will determine whether he gets that seat or not, but the quantity of your contribution. [Laughter] That being a seat that has been sold on more than one occasion but, Madam President, this debate will go down in history as the debate that led to the demise of the last Senator, Sen. Harry Mungalsingh and I would like to get to some of the issues that Sen. Dr. Ramadhar-Singh raised about poverty alleviation and education.

I have really been troubled for the last month because the last person to speak in this Senate was Sen. Mungalsingh, as we recall and his comments led to his departure from the Senate, and I would not like his departure to be in vain because there are major lessons to be learnt in some of his comments. I regard his comments as very serious, very dangerous, which carry perilous implications for our society and I do not for one minute buy the argument that that was the view of a single person on that side.

In spite of what they may say, I do not accept that, and what has troubled me all this time, I think that Sen. Mungalsingh's comments really hide the horrors that exist in the hearts of some of the people who seek political power, and that is what would have troubled me for all this time because it is a very dangerous and frightening prospect for our country.

As a consequence, I would like to make sure because those comments would have shaken this country; they would certainly have shaken the Senate and I would like to see that this Senate and this debate deal with that issue and the comments made by Sen. Mungalsingh and I would like to start, being the person to speak immediately after him.

Madam President, I took the liberty of obtaining a copy of the *Hansard* and Sen. Mungalsingh very early in his contribution said: "The UNC solved crime for six solid and consecutive years." And for that he got a resounding desk thumping. They were all one at that stage on the first page; the thumping of the desk celebrates their unity and harmony of views.

On the second page, Sen. Mungalsingh said: "We on this side support point one of this Motion. We too express our deep concern over Government's performance." Again "We" reflecting the oneness of view, so that in my view causes me to

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distrust, and that ought to be a warning as well to our young Senator because with all the desk thumping, at the end of the contribution, they were quite happy to spit him out as the case might be. So let not this love that you see—believe not everything that you see, Sir.

He said:

“Crime is causing much fear; cold-blooded execution style murders in 16 PNM controlled communities along the East-West Corridor, Central and South Trinidad; and kidnapping of primarily Indians in Central Trinidad...”

Understand what he is saying and the context within which he is putting the statement that he wants to make shortly thereafter.

“...We need a comprehensive statistical analysis of the present prison population and that is where we start to search for truth in this aspect... and a four-week analysis of those in all the court docks right across the nation. This will tell you the nation's bad business and who is doing what, when and where by race, religion, sex, age, education level, crime-producing communities, and family structure.”

The order in which he listed those variables to me, is very significant.

“As far as I know 83 per cent of the prison population come from specific communities which predicates the need for a strong and distinct—Sen. Padmore—national development plan accepted by the entire society for these specific 16 communities and you know what communities they are.”

He has called for a research, not prepared to wait for it, but has already identified 16 communities. He called for a comprehensive research but has done the analysis himself. He knows what he is looking for. He thinks he knows what is in the docks in the courts, so already in his mind he has an image of what he is likely to find there because he has already identified it, he is not prepared to wait for the research.

“Such a plan must include the churches.”

So he sticks the churches in to pour some milk in the poison.

“A change in abortion laws; strong family planning services with cash incentives for voluntary sterilization re-education—”

Somebody shouted out.

“...exposure to drama, art and classical music; and counselling... Only a new government will be able to lead these communities—

Sen. Dumas: Genocide—”

Sen. Dumas shouted genocide, he recognized immediately what the Senator was implying. Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams asked for clarification and do you know what happened? He was told to hush.

Hon. Senator: “They told him doh go there.”

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: They recognized what he had said as well, but I want to hold that point because it is connected to what we observed in the newspapers on the following day. There were three newspaper articles that I took the liberty to read and they were the responses of the party from which Sen. Mungalsingh came. The *Trinidad Guardian* Friday, March 02 said:

“‘The comments made by Senator Mungalsingh are not the solution to the problem and do not represent United National Congress party policy,’ said Basdeo Panday, the interim political leader...”

The *Daily Express* of Friday, March 02 says:

“Panday admitted in a statement issued to the media that he understand how frustrated Mungalsingh was with the issue of the country’s worsening crime situation...”

He understood his frustration. He said:

“‘I know that crime is a very emotive issue in this country and that people are very upset at the inability of the PNM government to deal with it. In fact, this government has become complacent about the levels of crime in our country and the fact that our citizens are living with constant daily fear. However, that does not excuse the comments he made.’”

There were similar comments coming from the *Newsday*.

Madam President, you sometimes know people not from what they say, but from what they do not say. What we did not have happening here is a clear and categorical condemnation of the statements made by the United National Congress. [*Desk thumping*]

We heard words that seemed to suggest that they understood his frustration; we heard words that seemed to suggest that it was not excusable. [*Interruption*] Even former Sen. Augustus called for some stronger actions. What we did not hear was clear condemnation which was required. Anybody who would make a statement as damning as that statement was, any party that seriously wanted to disassociate itself from that would have to condemn that statement. In fact, Sen. Mark had two opportunities to condemn the statement right here in the Parliament and he failed on both occasions to do so. [*Interruption*]

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When Sen. Dumas and Sen. The Hon. Yuille-Williams invited Sen. Mungalsingh to clarify, he failed. They had every opportunity to make a clear and categorical condemnation.

Sen. Mark: He failed to reach the airport, you know.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: Madam President, I suspect and fear—
[*Crosstalk*]

Madam President: Sen. Mark!

Sen. Mark: Sorry, Ma'am.

Madam President: Not only are you imputing improper motives, but you are disturbing and I cannot hear what the Minister is saying.

Please continue Minister.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: Madam President, I fear that this former Senator was dismissed not for what he said, but for the fact that he said it. [*Desk thumping*] I fear he was dismissed for selling family secrets because I have seen no evidence that they have any objection to his prescriptions. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President, when you add that statement to the other statement which is calling for sterilization to another statement that says that politics has a morality of its own, then you understand the danger that this country is likely to face, the risk this country would run should the people on that side who aspire to office ever come near. [*Interruption*]

Madam President, I would like to find out—[*Crosstalk*] You know, Madam President, the Senator is talking, but we all know that that seat was sold. Sen. Mungalsingh himself said that he intended to spend \$1.8 million for having acquired that—and he had in fact spent \$600,000. So we know that is how they treat the Parliament; it is a place where we come and sell seats, and I know they were quite happy to fire him because it gives them an opportunity to sell the same seat a second time.

Madam President: Please return to the Motion. [*Interruption*] Minister, continue, I was just telling you to return to the debate.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: Madam President, all that is part of the debate.

Madam President: All right.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: Madam President, as I move on. Another person who spoke on that day, Sen. Overand Padmore, and in contrast to Sen. Mungalsingh's contribution, we all know that Sen. Padmore really brought what I thought to be a touch of class to the debate to the Parliament. [*Desk thumping*] A touch of class is the only way I could describe it.

While he was not trying to deal comprehensively with all the factors that contribute to crime, he in fact seemed to have been focusing on particular issues; that of the drug trade and drugs as they relate to the international nature of crime and I thought he did that in a manner that reflected the highest standards of Parliament, and he was calling upon the Parliament as a consequence of what he knew to be a reality to be responsible in context of the Motion.

Madam President, the Motion was tabled by Sen. Prof. Deosaran who we all know has a tremendous reputation in the academic world particularly in the area of sociology and later, the study of crime. As we talk about sociology, we know that there is a multiplicity of theories, of deviants, and factors responsible for crime. There are a number of perspectives the different theories would advance.

Some of us who may have had the privilege of doing sociology at university may remember from our early days the function list theory. There were others; the interactionists, Marxists, neo-Marxists. There are some I did not know back then, but I have come to know since. Phenomenological perspective; there is something called left realism, right realism; some people even look to globalization and other issues using inequality maybe as being factors responsible for crime; different theories of deviants and crime.

The social theorists, and there are a number of them who advance very different factors which might be responsible. Some speak about the breakdown in the family life which some relate back to slavery, and to a lesser extent, indentureship. There are some who look at crime in the context of the modernization process, they connect crime and some of the increases we have been having to the advent of wage labour as the society and the economy evolve. Some say that there are factors responsible for the new kinds of crimes and conditions which create crime, some speak of our value system saying particularly in the West we have become too materialistic, too greedy and we have become less spiritual, some people look to alcohol and drug abuse as the cause for crime.

Many argue that it is some combination of the above, others look at parenting, and some speak of employment and unemployment. All of these are factors that may all contribute to crime and we find different people to blame. Some blame

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parents, some teachers, some blame politicians, some blame the police, some blame the young people saying they are not taking the leadership, some blame the old people saying they are not providing the leadership, but we can blame anybody any time. We all have to share in the responsibility and it is something we all must pay attention to; that there is no single reason or individual, or single group who might be responsible for a set of circumstances that lead to crime in any part of the world, and the social theorists have addressed their minds to that already.

There are different people who have very different views, different philosophies, different constructs and it is to our benefit to look at what they all have to say and see how best we can understand our own situation, and as a consequence of that, develop our own solutions. I want to say that prevention indeed is clear and all the theorists will agree that prevention is better than cure. As a consequence of that, every 10 cents, every 5 cents, every single cent invested in education is a 5 cent, a 10 cent, a cent invested in the fight against crime.

Madam President, that is where I would like to point out the Government's strength in combating the situation of crime and I would like to refer to some of the points made by Sen. Dr. Ramadhar-Singh. In the first half of the '90s, there was a group of people who were described by the last government as being unemployable and the sense we had was that they did not know what to do with them. These were some of the citizens when we did our walkabouts, who were found on the blocks, sitting under trees, on the corners, wherever they may be and they complained that they did not have any skills and nowhere to turn to get a skill.

Madam President, we developed a particular training programme with these young people in mind. We recognized that there was a growing demand for labour in the construction sector in particular, and also in the tourism and hospitality sector and we developed a programme called the Multi-sector Skill Training Programme (MuST) where we offered our citizens a variety of skills.

It is a very unique model. The way it works is that any citizen of this country, all these people who may be referred to as high-risk groups, who may in fact move on to some kind of negative behaviour—We decided that the best way to avoid that—prevention being better than cure—was to embrace these citizens and bring them into a training programme and ensure they are outfitted with the skills necessary to lead a constructive life.

Madam President, we took these citizens, and over the last two and a half years, and moreso in the last year, we have not only been advertising on the television, radio, and the newspapers, we have actually been going out and

knocking on door to door in various communities asking: Is there anyone here who would like to be in the MuST Programme? And we have done it in North, South and Central Trinidad recognizing that some of the people for whom this programme is intended may not necessarily be reading the newspapers, watching television, or listening to the radio, as the case might be, and may not pick it up. Some may not even believe they would get on to the programme because sometimes a programme is advertised and people feel there is a distance between you and the programme so we have been going into the communities and getting them to come.

We have hired training instructors and to each we assigned 16 trainees; we kept the ratio 16:1 which we think is a very reasonable one which would allow for the kind of attention the individuals need. We sent the instructor along with the trainees on a live construction site in the case of the construction arm of the MuST Programme. If it is the tourism and hospitality, the instructor would go with the trainees into a hotel/restaurant as the case may be and that is where the training will take place on a live construction site or in a functioning active hotel.

The principle is that the trainees would work alongside the experienced and skilled workers acquiring the skills as they go along; working alongside experienced bricklayers, tile layers and electricians, learning how to install ceilings and a number of different skills associated with the construction sector; a six-month period allowing them exposure to a wide range of skills and if there is a particular skill in which any trainee is interested, he may decide that is the area he wants to go.

3.30 p.m.

We have been doing that over the last two and a half years in the Multi-Sector Skills Training Programme (MuST). Some of the trainees said: "Look, it is difficult for me to participate in this programme because I do not have any proper clothing to wear; any proper shoes for a construction site." We provide them with the overalls; we provide them with steel-tipped boots, at Government's expense. All their basic tools: hammer, trowel, saw; whatever they need is provided by the Government. We give them insurance in the event that they get injured. More than that, even as they learn—even as this is their learning experience; a training programme for them—we recognize that at 18, 19, 20 and beyond; 22, 25, they have personal expenses to meet. They must buy lunch, food, some clothing; they must maintain themselves. So we are providing every MuST trainee with a \$60-a-day stipend; a phenomenal inclusion for a country like this.

The MuST programme has been working so well that more than 65 per cent of our graduates of the MuST Programme are moving on to stable jobs in the construction sector. That is something of which we are very proud. I am happy to announce to this honourable Senate that in the two and a half years that the MuST Programme has been in existence, we have been able to extend this training programme and our citizens have been able to benefit. A total of 10,095 citizens have been able to benefit from the MuST programme. So successful the programme has been that the trainees have been asking for more training, because some of them desire to go on to, what we call level two. So we have developed a level two training programme which will see them move from semi-skilled to fully-skilled, able to operate as an independent skilled worker on any construction site. We started that programme only very recently and the stipend for that is, of course, a little more. We offer to them a \$90 stipend because it involves a little more work—blueprint reading. They have to have a wider range of skills. There are some technical and classroom skills to which they would have to subject themselves, but only in the last few months we have been able to put in place the level two programme and we have a total of 528 persons who would have moved from level one on to level two. [*Desk thumping*]

That 10,095 persons who would have benefited from the MuST programme is just the beginning. We have a second programme called the Retraining Programme, which is a very useful programme in that it is mobile and flexible; we could go into communities. For the MuST programme to work, we need to have a construction site and it is the construction site that will be the place of training, but the Retraining Programme is a much more flexible and mobile programme. We can go into various communities. If we go into a community, as I did—went into Talparo—there is a community centre there and the residents of the area were able to come and say: “Look, we have discussed it among ourselves and we would like you to offer a tailoring course in our area.” Fifteen ladies came and said: “We want to learn to sew and we prefer to do this tailoring course.” So we were able to take that tailoring course into the community.

In Piparo, there was an interest in “grow-box”. They were interested in learning how to plant and grow their crops so we were able to offer a training programme in Piparo in “grow-box”. There are a number of different skills: computer repairs, television and video production, woodworking. Garment construction we were able to do in Patna Village in the community centre; cake baking and decoration, auto air conditioning, welding, agro-processing; a number of different skills. What we have added recently is a major one called heavy equipment operations. We are training, within this programme, our citizens to

operate heavy equipment; how to drive tractors and backhoes and how to operate cranes. It is a very expensive proposition but we are prepared to do it simply because the demand is there in the construction sector and we have our citizens willing to undertake the training programme.

There are a few new ones we have added. I am sorry Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh is not here. There is one here called—in which he would be interested—lingerie and sleep wear. But he is not here so maybe someone could convey that to him. We have camera operations, plant propagation; a wide range of skills training. So far in this particular programme we have been able to offer skills training over the last five years in all these wide range of skills to 5,710 citizens in this programme. That is an achievement of which we are very, very proud and we are projecting by the end of this year, that number will go up to just over 7,300. Within that programme there is a particular one that will interest this honourable Senate and it will, in fact, interest, I think, Sen. Prof. Deosaran because he did, in fact, along with Ian Ramdhanny some years ago, produce a document on recidivism and I think there was a statistic in there that reported somewhere around 55—56 per cent recidivism was the reality in Trinidad and Tobago at that time. That was more than five years ago.

We recognize that and we recognize that one of the ways to try to deal with that was to get some skills training programmes within the prison service. We developed a programme as a subset of the retraining programme called Rehabilitating Inmates Through Training and Retraining. We identified a number of skills and we went into the prisons and offered these skills. We sourced the training providers; we collaborated with the prisons authority and we went into the prisons and we offered these skills to the prisoners. We were trying to target prisoners who were scheduled to leave the prison under one year's time. What it is, really, the closer to the prison exit you are, we need to get you trained before you leave.

We identified a number of areas. At the maximum security prison we did welding, upholstery and furniture design, plumbing and joinery. A total of 36 inmates were trained in those areas. At Golden Grove Prison: electrical installation, carpentry and masonry—19; at the Golden Grove Women's Prison: electrical installation; we did eight. At the Youth Training Centre (YTC): electrical installation, carpentry and masonry; we did 16. The total number of inmates trained was 80 at four institutions. We ran six courses.

In addition to that—there is something I want to come on to a little later—we taught them life skills. We taught them how to use computers and so on because we thought that that would have a positive impact on their self-esteem. But there is a unique feature to this programme. Normally outside of the prisons we offer a

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stipend and we wanted to offer a stipend to the prisoners as well, so what we did, we offered less in terms of the amount of money. Whereas outside the retraining stipend is \$45, we offered \$25. But we did not give them the stipend every day, every week or every month; what we are doing is holding the stipend for them in trust so that when they leave the prison they would collect their stipend. So they may find that they are collecting a stipend of \$2,000—\$3,000, depending on their attendance, and so on. What that means is, you have 80 prisoners who would be leaving within the next year with a skill and a small amount of money to help him to get that start, so he could rent a room for a month—whatever the situation might be—while he is able to source a job; and leaving, as well, with a certificate saying that he is skilled in a particular area. That is something of which we are very proud and we move forward.

Again, referring to the second-to-last Senator's contribution, speaking about skills training, there are two companies: Metal Industries Company and the National Energy Skills Company. They offer a wide range of skills training. Between them we have centres in Mayaro, Point Lisas, Macoya, La Brea and there is the Laventille Technology Centre. We have in total just around 12 centres. We are at present doing a comprehensive review of the governance structure of these institutions; we are proposing to merge them into a single institution. All of that will be brought to the Parliament in due course, but we are working on that right now. But between the two institutions we offer a far and wide range of skills: electronics, auto transmission; welding technology, air conditioning and refrigeration, plastic technology, journeyman, master craftsman, fluid power and controls, process plant operator, building construction technology, physical education, literacy, numeracy—as was pointed out—psychosocial development and music, instrumentation, pipe fitting, pipe construction, instrument fitting. Some of these skills are associated with the construction sector; some with the energy sector; a wide range of skills leading to very stable jobs in the energy and non-energy sectors. Between these two institutions, MIC and NESC, with the HYPE (Helping You Prepare for Employment) programme and others—the HYPE programme being the construction programme—in the last five years we have been able to offer to the citizens of this country—regular citizens—without reference to race, religion, sex, age, education level, crime producing communities and family structure; without reference to any of that, we have been able to offer in the MIC and NESC, opportunities to a total of 11,383 citizens of this country. [*Desk thumping*]

YTEPP is a company which is well known. The advantage of the YTEPP model is that they are spread throughout the country. There are centres in secondary schools. They use the secondary school system and there are other centres that

they have constructed. What it allows is a wide geographical spread and that is the strength of that particular programme. They, too, offer a wide range of skills training opportunities: beauty culture, welding fabricating, garment construction, culinary arts, geriatric and child care, auto maintenance, aquaculture, electronics.

The training programme within YTEPP runs for six to nine months depending on the programme in which you are enrolled; that, too, as a consequence of Government's investment. You remember I said every cent invested in education is an investment in the fight against crime as well as the development of the people. The numbers may startle you but in the last five years we have invested so much in this single institution that 33,848 citizens—I see the shock on your face, but that is a real number—have been able to benefit from various training programmes as part of the YTEPP. That is a five-year statistic. We have been providing skills training and providing it in different formula to ensure that anyone, wherever he or she might be, will find a convenient opportunity so that he or she can avail himself or herself of the opportunity.

When we came into office as well, we recognized that there was some frustration on the part of young people who were leaving secondary schools with some qualifications—two or three; four or five O'levels; sometimes some would have A'levels; some even had degrees—and were having some difficulty in getting a job because, largely, when they went to employers, the employers complained that: "Look, I cannot spend time to train you and you have no experience so I cannot give you the job. I am looking for someone who may have more experience than you do." We saw in there that there was a need and an opportunity for Government to step in. What we did was develop a programme called the On-the-Job Training Programme where we, as Government, would find a training opportunity for that graduate of the secondary school or the A'level graduate or the university graduate, or even persons with skills. If you came out of John S. Donaldson Technical Institute and you had certain kinds of skills, we would assist in finding a job for you.

What we do is a six-month training programme and we are thinking about extending that period. The Government finds the job for you, as I mentioned. If you come into the programme with O levels, we would find a job for you and you would receive a \$1,600 a month stipend. If you have A levels, the stipend goes up to \$2,500; if you have a degree, the stipend we will offer is \$4,000 and if you have post graduate degree, we will offer a \$5,000 stipend. The numbers of persons coming out of that programme have been admirable; they have benefited. Sometimes we do our interviews with them to get a sense of what their views are.

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They all appreciate the value and many of them would have gone on to permanent jobs in different companies. Again, the On-the-Job Training Programme, the remarkable success that it was, we have so far been able to provide opportunities for 29,396 young people of this country. [*Desk thumping*] And we have room for more. We are inviting our young persons out there to come and participate in the programme.

One of the very interesting components of all these programmes I have mentioned is that they all contain a life skills component, because we recognize in the education system that, yes, there may be some failings, some shortcomings on the part of some of the other institutions in the society and the education system has to step up and play an important role. Within the life skills—and this exists within every single training programme that I have mentioned—we help our young people to deal with some of their social issues; their intra-personal issues; their issues of self-esteem and self-improvement; their, what they call, values clarification; their personal issues like goal-setting and time management. Sometimes, even, it is necessary to teach our citizens about basic things like hygiene, in some cases; fitness; how to stay away from drugs, and a number of other basic skills of human survival and human existence.

We also deal with interpersonal relationships, teaching parenting skills within these programmes; teaching them how to get along with other people; what are the basic values of good citizenship; leadership skills; how to communicate with persons. We teach them how to manage their money; how to save, and we teach them certain skills associated with entrepreneurship. We also teach them employability skills; how to look for a job; how to go about the job search exercise; ethics in the workplace; how to conduct yourself in an interview. It is a thorough and comprehensive programme of life skills, trying to touch on all the areas where our citizens may find that there might be some deficiencies. The life skills component has been extremely effective in making a lot of our young persons who may have had negative views about life—negative views generally—we have been able to work with them and help them to develop more positive attitudes.

I must also speak on the tertiary education sector because so far I have been talking generally about what has been happening in skills training, and all of the skills training, once we check our numbers, we are going to see that there are tens of thousands of young people who, had it not been for the intervention on the part of this Government, may have found themselves in a situation less advantageous than that in which they now find themselves, because we are talking of

approximately 60,000 citizens who have been able to benefit from those five skills training programmes that I mentioned; are able now to face the job market and face the world with more confidence and more certainty and with the skills necessary to allow them a successful journey through life. The tertiary education sector we have invested considerably and we are determined to ensure—

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

Motion made, That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Hon. Dr. L. Saith*]

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: Thank you very much, Madam President. When we came into office there was the system of fees at the tertiary level so that citizens who desired to go on to pursue a tertiary education had to find fees. The effect of that—since we have been talking about psychological and similar kinds of effects—is that you have young people who come from poorer families, from as early as 12, 13, 14 or 15 years old, they are conscious that once they get to 18 or 19 where they would normally pursue tertiary education they would have to find fees. So they are discouraged very early from aspiring to tertiary education because they think that once they get to that stage the fees would provide an obstacle. So their hopes are dampened from very early.

What the policy of free tertiary education has done is that it has opened the minds of all our citizens from a very young age to the possibility and probability that they will, in fact, move on to a higher education. That is a major psychological advantage that the young secondary students of today have over those who would have been contemplating tertiary education in the 1990s. The fee structure was introduced in 1988, as we would recall, and this Government would be the one to come on January 01, 2006, to completely eliminate the need for fees. That is as a consequence of the Government's philosophy that no citizens would be left behind and no citizen must be denied an education as a consequence of inability to pay. It is a solid philosophical perspective that distinguishes us, clearly, from any other political party anywhere on the political horizon. [*Desk thumping*]

More than making the tertiary education affordable—and while I am on “affordable”, we also recognize further that even if tuition fees are paid—great as that is—there are still citizens who may be unable to access a tertiary education because there are other costs associated with pursuing a tertiary education which

they may not be able to afford. We have the cost of transportation, the cost of accommodation, the cost of personal maintenance. We are talking about young adults; they need to buy clothing, food, all the general maintenance costs. You have the cost of books, the cost of registration in some cases. These are all significant costs associated with the pursuit of a tertiary education.

What we decided to do, which does not exist anywhere else in the Caribbean and which exists in few other parts of the world, is to introduce a soft loan programme to assist students with those needs. This programme is called the Higher Education Loan Programme. It came on stream in July 2006. For any citizen enrolled in a tertiary education programme, you are eligible to participate in the Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP). If you are studying in Trinidad and Tobago, you would be able to access up to \$25,000; if you are studying in the Caribbean—in Caricom—you would be able to access up to \$75,000. We recognize the difference in exchange rates and so on.

The Government will provide 100 per cent guarantee on the loan, so you need not have collateral. If you come from a poor family, you would be able to access the loan just as well as anyone. For the period of time that you are studying—that you are in your university—you will not be required to pay any interest. The Government will pay the interest on your behalf. The effect of that, contrary to the loan that was put in place in 1988, is that six months after you graduate when the loan becomes repayable, you will only be faced with the amount of money you actually borrowed. That would be the size of your debt. You will not be required to pay that debt, plus interest accrued over the previous three years, because the Government would have been making those interest payments on your behalf. It is a soft loan facility.

Even beyond the six months when the loan becomes repayable, as I said, we will still provide you with a discounted interest rate, four percentage points less than the market rate. All of these measures we are putting in place to make education, and tertiary education in particular, accessible to all the citizens of this country without reference to race, religion, sex, age, education level, crime-producing communities and family structure. Because on this side, when we look out, we see citizens of Trinidad and Tobago and we see all our citizens as being entitled to any benefit that this Government, by its policies, may be able to offer. But we recognize as well, with the GATE and with the HELP, that we must also have capacity at the tertiary level, because we have said that we would like 60 per cent of our graduates moving on to higher education by 2015. It is an integral part of our Vision 2020 objectives. Sixty per cent must move on to some form of higher education.

All of this is the development of a people, an investment in education; a fight against crime. When we came into office the University of the West Indies enrolled—and this is post-2001; we are talking about opportunities that Sen. Dr. Ramadhar-Singh referred to—a total of 7,800 students. That enrolment was recognized to be under-used; it was less than maximizing the capacity of the size of the plant. We worked with the university in creating some very flexible mechanisms to allow the university to maximize the use of its plant, in addition to which, our subventions to the university have been steadily increasing to allow the university to meet its additional responsibilities as the numbers have been growing.

Over the last five years the numbers at the University of the West Indies have moved from just where it was—just about 8,000—to 15,700 citizens of this country enrolled at the University of the West Indies. We have almost doubled the capacity and the effect of that is that we provide a quality tertiary education opportunity for citizens of this country who, in 2001, in spite of what they say now, would not have had that opportunity to pursue that education. But 15,700 is simply not enough, given our development objectives.

So although they hate the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), although they attack UTT—I cannot understand for the life of me how on the one hand they can call for expansion of education and on the other hand, criticize and attack UTT in the most violent and aggressive way in which they have. Not that they have criticized it constructively, but they dispute the very existence of the University of Trinidad and Tobago, a university which, by the way, I am absolutely confident in five years' time the graduates of engineering of the University of Trinidad and Tobago will be in higher demand than the graduates of any university in any part of the Caribbean—[*Desk thumping*] There are a number of things we are doing in there which speak to the quality of the education that we are offering; the partnerships that we are making with international universities and the on-the-job training component that is built into the diploma programmes and built into the degree programmes where students, reading for a degree in UTT will have, as part of their degree programme, a module where they will work in a live company in the energy sector and the non-energy sector in positions that are generally associated with the degree programme that they pursued. These companies will be eager to absorb these graduates of UTT, preferring them, perhaps, to those who may be more academically inclined, or exclusively academically inclined. Other universities had better take note and make the kinds of adjustments they need to make to ensure that they are competitive in the next few years after UTT is able to provide the kinds of graduates to our industry.

4.00 p.m.

Madam President, when UTT's main campus is completed in 2008 together with the campus that is under construction in Point Lisas, together with what we propose to do in Chaguaramas and in San Fernando, we will have as you can see national geographical coverage. We have covered East, we have covered North, Central and South, UTT being a multi-campus institution offering opportunities, full diploma and degree programmes at various locations throughout the country, making it more convenient and more accessible. By 2008, when we have completed this phase of construction, we expect UTT to provide an additional number of places. We estimate that number to be just around 10,000 quality tertiary education places.

Madam President, Cabinet has also agreed to a new system of community colleges. What we have now existing as COSTATT, I will come to the Parliament with new legislation, an Act to establish the Community College of Trinidad and Tobago, where we will repeal the COSTATT Act and introduce new legislation to govern the new institution as designed.

We are proposing three campuses. Cabinet has agreed to three campuses, in the North, South and Tobago. The current population of COSTATT is 4,986. We expect with these three campuses to make educational opportunities available to a population of between 8,000 and 10,000 in the North, 8,000 and 10,000 in the South and just around 2,000 in Tobago, a total thereabout of 20,000 citizens.

The advantage of the community college system is that it allows our citizens graduating out of the secondary school system—whereas traditionally one would have to do A'levels to access a university degree, you now can access a Bachelor's degree programme via the route of the Associate Degree in a wide range of skills.

Madam President, we have also committed to spending \$58 million on a three-year development programme at the Trinidad and Tobago Hotel and Tourism Institute. That will offer training to citizens in the tourism and hospitality sector. We have the capacity, but we are also ensuring that the programmes are relevant to the national development objectives. As the Ministry of Trade forms its different companies, as we look forward to our development goals, the education sector is responding by designing programmes that are customized and tailor-made to meet the needs of the specific industrial circumstances that obtain in Trinidad and Tobago. One thing we have done that has allowed us to move forward and make great strides, is that we have been able to embrace the work being done by the private tertiary institutions.

Madam President, it may surprise you to know—and this, I am sure, exists in few other parts of the world— that there are 15,000 citizens of this country who are participating, enrolled and reading for degree programmes in private tertiary institutions. We have signed a Memorandum of Agreement with 33 institutions and all 15,000 students' tuition fees are being paid for under the GATE programme, while they pursue a degree programme at a private institution and they are all eligible for the Higher Education Loan Programme.

Madam President, I thought I would take the time—they opened the debate, they spoke about education. Every cent invested in education is a cent invested in the fight against crime, the development of the people. This Government has an astounding record in investment in education. It is there. No one can compare and we are very happy, we are very proud of it and we move forward, as they say, confident that our investment will reap the rewards and give us the dividends that we look forward to.

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

Sen. Raziah Ahmed: Madam President, the previous speaker spoke for a very long time. In the last third of his contribution he spoke about the aspirants to tertiary education. He spoke about the exclusively academically inclined and he even said that 60 per cent of the young people were moving on to higher education. I want to remind the hon. Senator that “it is not dem we talking bout”. It is not the 60 per cent who are moving on to higher education. This is about crime. This is about the criminal element, people who fail to get into tertiary education institutions. Aspirants to tertiary education institutions, hon. Senator, do not fall into crime; they simply move on to other types of useful work.

In the middle part of his contribution he spoke a lot about construction projects and about shovels, boots that were being provided and about grow-box technology and that is really a long way, away from the Motion. In the first third of his contribution he used some kind of lopsided logic to argue something that, to me—as I occupy the seat of a Senator in this honourable House, I occupy the seat as a woman, and I would like to think that I represent the views of every ordinary woman of this country and whatever logic he was trying to put into the *Hansard* of this honourable House, my response to him would be the response of every ordinary young woman in this country, “Mister, to the left, to the left.” That is how I respond to his argument about our position about those basic and fundamental truths that are honourable to women in this society.

Hon. Senator: [*Inaudible*]

Sen. R. Ahmed: To the left, to the left. And so you have to be young to understand to the left, to the left. Even as the Senator was speaking I had to keep [*Interruption*] to the left still—referencing exactly what this Motion was and this Motion to express our levels of apprehension, distress and concern over the Government's handling of crime. It was to get an explanation from the Government why its agencies for handling crime have persistently failed to have the desired effects. It was for the Government to set specific targets for accountability and to outline a new plan for the unprecedented high volume of violent crime exposure that the law abiding citizen and the country as a whole know to be the bleak reality of living in Trinidad and Tobago today.

In every dilemma, there is a two-pronged question: Who is doing right and who is doing wrong? I want to begin by giving tribute to those people who are trying very hard to do what is right. The first interface that all of us would have when it comes to the criminal element is the police. And I believe the police as a group is the player in this scenario who is trying to do what is right. Our police wear the badge to protect and serve and they are extraordinary and remarkable men and women. They are not cowards or weaklings who hide behind titles, who hide behind four and five security personnel with motor vehicle engines that are constantly revving; these are our police who really have the heart of vikings and the simple faith that honest people must be protected. And for every day that they don their uniforms, they commit to risk their lives, limbs and their sanity in the protection and interest of the common citizen. In the main, they are doing what is right. So who is doing what is wrong?

When things go wrong decent-minded people always know where the problem is and in this case of crime there is a consensus of opinion among critical thinkers in this country that the real dilemma lies in the contention between doing the thing right and doing the right thing. And good service is the essential dilemma between management and leadership. Because what we do not have is good leadership and what we have is a lot of managers. And the police as a group are really good managers.

I feel safe when I see the police squad cars and when I see the pedestrian police, but I put forward a thesis today that the apple cart has capsized, as my father used to say, and that the leadership is weak and the leadership is where the buck stops. The thesis is really that the Government is being called upon to stop acting as managers in the crime battle but to display the qualities of real leadership. So far, they have failed blatantly to display leadership so necessary.

We listen each time to the Minister of National Security belabouring the constraints under which he works. Almost every piece of legislation that has come to this Chamber from the Bail Bill to the ICC Bill, is about constraints in the exercise of the law that have to be removed. But the fact is that managers are driven by constraints while leaders are driven by goals.

We have heard so much about the programmes that are being initiated, all kinds of grow-box technology and so forth. That is management. We do not hear much about the ongoing process.

In a paper by Holly Dershem, Washington State University entitled *Community Crime Prevention: A Review Essay On Programme Evaluations and Policy Implications* the writer makes the point that:

“Evaluation research in this area tends to suggest that the apparent failures of crime prevention programs do not result from inappropriate conceptualization, but rather stem from inadequate program implementation and subsequent monitoring.”

So all of the programmes we heard about failed, and that is the section in the Motion that speaks to why the actions of the relevant agencies have so far consistently failed. It is because of inadequate programme implementation and subsequent monitoring.

Madam President, we hear so much about developing programmes, but we do not hear much about developing the people who perpetrate crimes. We have heard a whole lot about developing tertiary education in the last 25 minutes. We hear so much about what to do. That is management. We hear very little about how to do, and that is leadership. The powers that be focus on power and they have really forgotten about leadership. They have run away from the roles of leadership and have taken shelter under the umbrella of power. So what is power? Power is really the ability to control the behaviour of other people with or without their consent. And if the PNM had the kind of power in Government that they boast to have they would have demonstrated control over the society. The fact is, crime is out of control because the PNM has no real control in the country. [*Desk thumping*] No control over what is happening and they have lost control of the rowdy elements in the population. But they are holding on to the purse, and, therefore, what we need is change. Is it not so, Madam President? We need change because the people, because the population is demanding quality and

better levels of service from the Government in the face of uncertain economic conditions, scarcity and diminishing natural resources, and higher levels of personal security and in the face of doubt and fear. This is what the population is crying out for and by extension, what this Motion is seeking, is a new fresh breeze.

When Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie spoke about standing in the shoes of the hon. Minister, I want to say it is not about putting our feet in his shoes, rather it is about putting our shoes in the Chair. That is the change that we need in this country. *[Interruption]* Leadership is my concern and leadership failure is reflected in unparalleled amounts of drugs in the country, the leadership has failed to recognize that illicit drugs are a source of crime and the reason why there are so many crimes and illegal guns in the country. The leadership has failed to recognize that they need to bring measures to stop the number of illegal guns in the country and they need to bring policy that would rebalance the scales of justice with respect to the number of guns and also with respect to the gangs. To date, there is no concise policy to deal with understanding the psychology of gang warfare and no programmes that are gang-related or no programmes that are motivated to eliminate and to understand the work and the operations of gangs.

So the leadership has failed to recognize its responsibility with respect to the amount of drugs in the country, the number of guns and the mushrooming of gangs in the country. Not only that, but the imbalance of the scales of justice is a new thing. It is emerging in the psyche of the individuals that there is something wrong with the justice system and, in fact, it was only in an article quoted in the *Newsday* March 24, which quoted a respected former Senator of this Senate and Senior Counsel, who called for the resignation of certain persons in key positions and that is an attempt to regain a semblance of balance in the justice system. But I do not want to offend anybody here today, Madam President, and I will not go on to quote what the Senior Counsel said in the *Newsday* of March 24. But he is calling for the resignation of key persons in high office because the scales of justice appear to be so imbalanced.

Madam President, with respect to drugs. The International Narcotic Control Strategy Report indicated that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago estimates that 60 per cent of the country's crime is related to narcotics. Sixty per cent of the problem is related to narcotics.

There is nothing in the programmes that the previous speaker presented that treats with the problem; the vast majority of the problem is related to narcotics. Absolutely nothing related in that respect. Further, with respect to the question of poverty as a cause for crime, Madam President, in a report by the New England School of Law, Harvard Law School from Harvard College in a paper by Ronald

Chester called the Perceived Relative Deprivation as a Cause of Property Crime, he makes the point that poverty is really the root cause of crime against property and that while it is a significant thing in our reality, it is not the major problem that we are scared about.

Let us see what are the major things that we are scared about. In a February 20, 2007 Reuters report from World Wide Web, reporter Stuart Grudgings has this to say:

“Energy riches have vaulted Trinidad and Tobago up the economic rankings, making it a rare Caribbean country that does not depend on tourism, but the good times are being soured by a surge in murders and gun violence.

Not far from gleaming shopping malls and towering cranes that testify to a sizzling economy, rough parts of the capital Port of Spain are home to gangs with names like G-Unit and the Crock Gang that are thriving on an influx of South American cocaine and cheap guns.

A tripling of murders in five years and a rash of kidnappings has strained the twin-island state's ethnic relations and prompted some to propose radical solutions.

‘There is a criminal insurgency in this country. Too much democracy corrupts!’ shouted a man in historic Woodford Square across from the country's Parliament as he argued with friends.”

Madam President, this debate is echoed in the newspapers and in letters to the newspapers and on the radio talk shows and all kinds of discussions throughout the country. There were just under 400 murders in this country in each of the past two years and do you know where else there are so many murders, in the State of New Jersey with a population seven times more than our own population.

One of our newspapers carried a report and the newspaper is reporting that one of our activists Stephen Cadiz had to say, with respect to the crime situation, “It's getting a bit scary.” “What we're seeing is a knee-jerk reaction... the perception in Trinidad is that there is a death squad operating.” Perception, Madam President, or reality?

In a report by the www.caribbeannetnews.com website base, we were told since February 20, 2004 that the Federal Bureau of Investigations Attaché is now in the twin island Republic of Trinidad setting up a permanent base to investigate the possibilities of terrorists residing in the country. In that same report carried on the World Wide Web it says:

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“For the moment, (and that was in 2004) the Minister of National Security Martin Joseph and the Commissioner of Police Trevor Paul have denied having any knowledge whatsoever of the FBI’s presence;”

But these are the kinds of news and reports that contribute to the kind of anxiety in the country when we hear about Yardees coming and about FBI setting up. In that same article from Caribbeannetnews.com, Commissioner Trevor Paul is quoted as saying that one of the ways that he could improve what he was doing was to have more resources available to him. So these are the kinds of things that people in the police service have been asking for and to date, they have not been getting the responses.

Madam President, it is also instructive to go to the website of the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce to see that from as far back as April 30, 2004, they had this to say, and this is reading direct from the Chamber of Commerce web page. It says:

“We take no pleasure in warning the former Minister of National Security, now of Tourism, Howard Chin Lee, that with the increasing rate of crime in Tobago and now the attempted murder of Canadian professor karateka, Robert McDonald, there is the likelihood of more negative travel advisories by foreign governments advising their citizens against travelling here. We trust that the Minister of Foreign Affairs will not simply go hurrying and scurrying to find capitals to manage damage and loss control...”

2004, same thing; 2005 same thing; 2006, same thing; 2007, same thing.

I went to a certain place on my travels recently and there was an expression that they used: “Same, same, all the time, no change.” Further, the website goes on to talk about the fact that we continue to be waiting and waiting on reports, investigations and enquiries; we continue to have unexplained gun killings; we continue to have unexplained leaks even within the police service itself where people can actually use guns that belong under the umbrella of the Ministry of National Security, and even recently under the umbrella of the security services to perpetrate crimes against people like their wives and their spouses.

This, Madam President, is an extremely dangerous and an extremely difficult and bothersome thing especially when there seems to be an agenda in this country to make innocent law-abiding citizens feel that they are somehow guilty, that they are somehow responsible.

I get very, very apprehensive when I see little clips and little pieces of electronic recording telling me to fix me if I want to fix the crime, and I was very disheartened to read in the *Saturday Express* of March 24, 2007 that even a distinguished Ambassador to this country is quoted by Giselle Ramjohn as saying that:

“Austin suggested that citizens take an active approach to limiting crime instead of waiting for Government and the police to do it.”

Madam President: Senator, I will let you continue after the tea break. You have spoken for 25 minutes and you will have a further 20 minutes. We shall now suspend for tea and return at 5.00 p.m.

4.30p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Sen. R. Ahmed: Thank you, Madam President. Just before the break, I referenced an article from the *Saturday Express* dated March 24 where the message from the ambassador, according to the reporter, is that we as ordinary law-abiding citizens are being called upon to take an active approach to limiting crime instead of waiting for Government and the police to do it.

I have difficulty in accepting the philosophy that is being let out in little blimps on the radar of the consciousness of the people of this country that somehow the innocent law-abiding citizens—some 80 per cent of people who are involved in no type of crime: blue collar, white collar; none whatsoever—have to take responsibility. I believe that this is a subtle attempt to remove responsibility from where it really lies. Having read that, I felt that I needed to do a thorough literature review of what has been said about the Caribbean and Latin America, with a view to bringing some kind of intelligence to the kind of measures we need to take and the accountability we need to bring as Members of this honourable Senate.

So, in a paper by Alessandra Hienemann and Dorte Vernerl, entitled *Crime and Violence as a Development Problem*, they say that the development literature began exploring the effects of crime and violence on development in the mid-1990s and since then a number of scholars have convincingly argued that crime and violence are among the key obstacles to development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The evidence shows that violence consistently undermines the development efforts at various levels and that it drives the depreciation of all forms of capital—physical, human and social and, most importantly, violence disproportionately affects the poor and erodes their livelihood and assets.

This is important to recognize in this debate because, in financial planning, if a household is able to accumulate assets, it becomes less vulnerable to violence and abuse. In fact, children who are affected by violence, whether domestic or that perpetrated in the streets against their parents, brothers, sisters or peers, are least likely to get out of the spiral of poverty if they come from a poor environment.

The report goes on to say that the accumulation of youths' human capital assets is severely restricted when violence limits their access to education and health care because the fewer assets an individual has, the more likely he is to turn to alternative means of survival, which often include violence, thereby perpetuating violence and the erosion of assets in the household and in the communities.

In a 1996 study by London and Guerrero, London estimates that over the past 15 years the net accumulation of human capital in Latin America and in the Caribbean has been cut in half due to an increase in crime and violence. Madam President, the fact is that the socio-economic costs to non-violence are extremely great. It is one thing to talk about why the relevant agencies have failed and the measures we need to put in place, but it is important that we do this in the context of understanding the extent of the socio-economic costs.

There is a typology developed in the study of the cost effect in terms of direct monetary costs, non-monetary costs, the economic multiplier and the social multiplier. While we are able to determine exactly, in millions of dollars, how much we have spent on goods and services for the police, the criminal justice system, medical treatment and for psychological counselling; and while we can estimate for insurance claims and so on the damage to infrastructure, housing, motorcars, et cetera, as direct monetary costs in this equation, there are also non-monetary costs in terms of the amount of pain and suffering, the increase in morbidity and mortality as a result of homicide and suicide as a result of violence in the country. *[Interruption]*

In addition, there is an abuse of alcohol and drugs as a result of the drug problem and the depressive disorders that result. *[Interruption]* Madam President, there are some uncanny elements with which I need some assistance.

Madam President: I cannot hear what the speaker is saying.

Sen. R. Ahmed: With respect to the economic multiplier, the macro-economic defects, the labour market and the intergenerational productivity effects, what happens when you have unprecedented levels of crime in the society

is that you have reduced labour market participation, reduced productivity on the job in the victims and in the families of the victims of crime. You have lower earnings being a net result, increased absenteeism in the workplace and intergenerational productivity impacts grade repetition, having to repeat classes in school, and lower educational attainment of children who are the families of the victims.

In addition to this, in these poor families and in the families of victims that are suffering, that have depression, emotional and psychological problems, when the educational attainment is reduced, the ability to invest, save and earn is reduced. On the other side of the coin you have capital flight.

I observed a very beautiful house being constructed in a certain place, saw the family move in and was very happy for the young family, only to observe since January of this year that this beautiful, well-constructed house on a large piece of land was abandoned. When I asked why, I was told that the couple were victims of a hideous crime and have packed up and left. They have abandoned their property to the hands of a real estate agent who would sell it. They have just packed up and gone. These are the effects we are having: capital flight, decreased tourism, decreased government revenue because so much revenue is being wasted and the impact on policy making by distorting government spending.

Then there is the social multiplier—the impact on inter-personal relations and the quality of life; the inter-generational transmission of violence; the erosion of human and social capital and the social fabric; the reduced quality of life; the erosion of the State's credibility and the reduced participation in the democratic process. These are important factors because this is happening. This is reported in a paper by Buvinic, Morrison and Shifter, 2003.

In addition to these direct costs, crime and violence have a significant multiplier effect and, over time, violence and its costs can become merely self-filling with violence leading to a deteriorating economy. I will quote some statistics.

In a study of Colombia by Rubio, 1996, it comes to the conclusion that the cumulative effect of lost growth is the result of crime and violence in that country. The country would today have a per capita income of 32 per cent higher than it currently has. Schneidman, 1998, estimates the reduction in average annual growth in Colombia at 2 per cent over the past decade.

There are several studies, in Brazil, for example, where estimates of the total cost of violence as completed for the city of Rio de Janeiro was projected for 1993 at US \$1 billion; for Colombia, the estimates vary. Some workers said it was

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in the vicinity of 18.5 per cent. Those were workers in the National Planning Department, but there were more conservative studies that had an estimate of 8.4 per cent of GDP. That is the total cost of violence in cities in Latin America.

Those authors, London and Guerrero, also estimated that the figures were similarly high for Brazil, El Salvador, Mexico and Peru and that violence also has an impact on policymaking since it exacerbates the difficulties of collecting government revenue and distorts public spending.

What is important, Madam President, is for us to recognize that the causes and determinants of crime have been researched and there is empirical evidence to suggest that, for example, among the typologies that they have put forward, one is the public health approach. In the public health approach, they have characterized violence in categories, which are sub-directed, inter-personal or collective. Other workers have added a fourth division, which is political. Others have spoken about delinquency and inter-personal violence, in addition to the criminal and social violence.

So, Madam President, what we have done, unconsciously, is blame innocent law-abiding citizens. In the Pareto principle, the 20:80 rule where 20 per cent of the people seem to be getting it right all the time, we blame the errors of the 20 per cent on the 80 per cent. We have set ourselves up in a position where we will never be able to fight crime because we have removed the blame from the 20 per cent to the innocent 80 per cent. With that mindset, with that sociology that is being attempted, with that attempt at socializing the consciousness of the people, we are going down the wrong path to development and Vision 2020 will prove itself to be blind as a bat because you cannot blame the good 80 per cent for the evil of the 20 per cent or less in the society.

The researchers say that violent behaviour is learned. It is not something that people do because it is a choice of action. It is not proactive. Violent behaviour is learned. When children see violence being condoned; when they see it as a means of getting those things they cannot legitimately earn, they resort to that. One of the reasons put forward by the workers in the field is that the whole concept of income inequality is more a significant factor than the inability to earn a decent income; the whole perception that there is income inequality rather than an inability to earn an income.

So, some of the psychologists have said that the learning of violence is in the minds of the young people and the mind of the child is affected by biological and environmental factors alike and there is a significant relationship between exposure to violence or victimization as a child and the later propensity for violent conduct.

We need to understand exactly what causes the violence and not try to shift the blame to those people who have never displayed any kind of criminal activity or violence in their daily lives. That is a wrong that is being perpetuated in the society and we need to stop it immediately.

In developing a working model for treating with violence as it affects us, the researchers have said that we need to work on the four levels of influence. These levels are individual factors, such as the biological and demographic factors, educational attainment and substance abuse. Those are the individual factors at one level. At another level, in trying to find concrete measures to deal with the situation, we need to understand the relationship factors, that is, relationship with peers, family, partners, what is going down in the community, what is being sold behind doors, in front of doors or under the stairwells in the context of the social relationships embedded in the minds of the children, especially in the schools and neighbourhood. At the fourth level are the societal factors such as the cultural norms and morés that have formed part of what we accept to be truth. These are what the psychologists think that offer good explanations why we have this unprecedented level of spiralling crime.

The economists have another view where they put everything in terms of expected benefits versus expected punishment and there is a cost factor. The economists say that early work has focused on the incentive of potential criminals, concluding that the higher the return of criminal versus legal activity and the lower the probability of apprehension and incarceration, the higher the individual's propensity to crime.

Empirical studies show violent responses to changes in expected punishment and that the variable is thus—

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. R. Ahmed: Madam President, I thank you.

In a 2002 study by Fajnzylber, Lederman and Loayza, they found that income inequality and not income was among the key factors motivating crime in Latin American and Caribbean counties. It was found that greater inequality was associated with higher intentional homicide and robbery rates and that the level of

income per capita was not a significant determinant of the national crime rates. They found that crime tends to decline as the poorest quintile receives higher shares of the national income. Data suggests that changes in income distribution rather than changes in absolute levels of poverty are associated with changes in violent crime levels.

In Latin America, it was found that economic growth in the region had extended to exclusive rather than inclusive, preventing the poor from taking advantage of the most abundant asset, their labour. There are several studies that go on to deal with Venezuela, which is a little different from the rest of the Caribbean countries and Brazil.

I want, in response to the hon. Minister, to point to a 1998 study by Fajnzylber, Lederman and Loyza which said that, regarding the effect of education, studies find that average years of schooling do not have a conclusive impact on crime and violence rates. You see, it is not about providing the schools; it is about the subtle messages we send to our children. It is not about giving them things and telling them things; it is about showing them an example.

If we have failed to lead, but merely managed to manage, then we have failed to understand the essential need of the 21st Century. It used to be when the workers in management—who were the workers in management—the workers who pioneered the management concept 40 or 50 years ago—Taylor et al, they put forward the whole management theory. That was good for a time because it helped with mechanization and industrialization. Now society demands a higher level of delivery. Now it has gone beyond mechanization. We are in an age of innovation. We are in an age where we can get wireless communication from almost any place; where you send messages and talk to people all over the world; when you can actually see the motor cars on a street in Washington D.C. sitting in front of your computer. We are in that place and, therefore, the old models of management are not enough. We have gone past that and we now need leaders with integrity whose vision has been converted into a mission with a passion for the people and country, who are willing to stop hiding, who feel no fear when they walk the streets, who do not need to have their vehicle engines constantly revving because they have to fly or flee somewhere and who do not have to walk around with four or five security guards. We cannot continue to live in a country under those conditions. We cannot continue to live under duress. [*Interruption*] I have a conspiracy to love all my people.

Madam President: Speak to me, Senator. You like to speak to that Minister, you know.

Sen. R. Ahmed: Madam President, the only conspiracy I am involved in is to love all the people of this country with all of my heart. [*Desk thumping*] There shall be no bloodshed; there shall be no high murder rates; no unprecedented levels of crime under the leadership of people on this side.

I thank you.

Sen. Althea Rocke: Madam President, fellow Senators, I thank you for this opportunity to make a contribution today. As a temporary Senator, it is on a very rare occasion that we can get up and speak, so this is particularly special for me. I felt compelled to stand in support of the Motion on crime brought by Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran.

I am not going to talk about statistics or all that has gone before. Many speakers have spoken on those things. I would like to take more of a personal approach in my contribution today.

Crime continues to plague our every waking moment. As we sip our morning coffee and read the headlines of our morning paper, the violence and mayhem of the last 24 hours are brought into our homes and we have not even read our papers as yet. You find yourself, on a daily basis, looking over your shoulder, afraid someone might snatch your purse as you walk down Frederick Street, or your cellphone. It is very possible someone may run up and grab it. Sometimes it is not so much the cost of the phone because there are cheap ones around, but really it is the personal information contained on them which is now available to a total stranger. It is almost a violation of your right to information.

Madam President, it is sad to see the total disregard of life, limb and property that some of us have one for the other. The extremely tender age of many of the perpetrators of crime, as well, is of grave concern. That our young people feel that the only recourse they have in resolving an issue is to carry out a violent act that may end in death and it seems that they do not care.

I was at the home of a person last week and there was a bit of commotion outside the door and when I looked out there was a young girl in uniform—I will not call the school—being held by police officers. Someone was close by bleeding. I asked what was the problem and I was told that this young girl had been harassed by a group of other girls on a number of occasions and that she was fed up. She decided that evening she was not taking it; she was going home, get a knife and come back to deal with them. She proceeded to stab one of her harassers. Luckily, this did not end in death, but this is not always the case. This scenario is all too common.

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What values are we teaching our children that allow them to define themselves by the material things they have and how “bad ass” they can be? What about the value of loving and caring for our brothers and sisters that we were taught? We as parents must take a certain portion of the blame for the cavalier attitude of our children and young people to the sanctity of life, limb and property. It is not only the Government that has to do so; we as a nation have to take our fair share of blame.

There are so many facets of the today crime situation that it can make one's head spin, with most of us burying our heads in the sand or sinking into a state of apathy. Once it is not we or “we” family, we “doh” want to know.

5.30 p.m.

Notwithstanding, it must be acknowledged that the Government is doing its best to address the escalating crime situation in Trinidad and Tobago.

However, I am not hearing and seeing enough action that we need to take as a nation in correcting the root causes of crime, to name a few: poverty, low educational achievement, perpetuation of a culture of materialism and fads. Of course, this is by no means an exhaustive list.

At this point, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Sen. The Hon. Abdul-Hamid on Government's delivery of relevant skills to those who need such and increased access of all citizens to tertiary level education. I applaud the Government on these initiatives. One thing I would like to see and hear more about is the effectiveness of these programmes. What tracking and monitoring mechanisms for graduates have been put in place? How many of these graduates are enjoying long-term successful careers in the areas in which they have been trained? What is the success rate of each of these programmes to date? I think this information is important because a lot of money is being spent on these programmes and a lot of financial support is being provided to these students. So, we need to know how successful it really is. Are we getting value for money? Are these people becoming better contributing members of the nation?

There is much more that needs to be done to address the root causes of crime. I, therefore, humbly wish to urge that the Government develop and present a comprehensive and integrated action plan, with time-bound initiatives and specific goals in correcting these many root causes. It may require the establishment of a committee comprising members, not only with relevant skills but a commitment to action. Of course, the goal is a two-pronged action attack on crime, at the end and at the beginning together. Enough with the talk, on to action.

Madam President, I thank you.

Adjournment

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ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams): Thank you, Madam President. I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, April 03, 2007 at 1.30 p.m. On Tuesday, April 03, 2007 we will attempt to do the following Bills: a Bill to repeal the Homes for Older Persons Act, 2000 and provide for the licensing, regulation and control of homes for older persons; a Bill to amend the Legal Profession Act, 1986 and a Bill to amend the Copyright Act, 2007.

Madam President: Hon. Senators, before we take the adjournment, leave has been granted for a matter to be raised on the adjournment by Sen. Wade Mark.

**Absorption of Special Reserve Police Officers
into Trinidad and Tobago Police Service**

Sen. Wade Mark: Thank you very much, Madam President. It has been brought to my attention that there exist some inconsistencies in the absorption of 240 Special Reserve Police Officers (SRPs), inclusive of drivers, into the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, as regular police constables.

In recent times, the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Trevor Paul, indicated that 172 SRPs and 79 Special Reserve Police drivers were to be absorbed into the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Based on qualifications, five CXC or GCE passes, and a valid driver's permit. In light of the fact that qualifications have never been a criterion before for SRPs to enter the service, this decision was rescinded by the police commissioner and the absorption was postponed indefinitely.

Cabinet Minute No. 1279, of which I have a copy, of July 12, 2000 waived the academic qualifications and directed, at that time, that a fitness exercise be conducted, as determined by a medical examination, which should include a psychological evaluation. I have a copy of the Minute of that period.

In spite of the actual Cabinet Minute of 2000, which addressed the 969 members who were SRPs at the time, we have a situation in which seniors in the police service have advised the special reserve police officers that they would be required to do evaluations just for protocol purposes. Reluctantly, I have been informed that they all proceeded to some centres namely: ADB and Elders Associates Limited, where a scientific test was administered. The administrators of this evaluation indicated that it was not a pass or fail evaluation. It was only being done to determine the officer's mental capability and opinions. They were

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clearly deceived by these so-called administrators. The results of their evaluations have been submitted to the Commissioner of Police and quite a number—I have the names of them here—of them, 53 officers, spanning a period of service between three to four years and seven to eight years, have not been recommended for absorption into the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, without any reason being advanced. This development has had an obvious traumatic impact on these officers and has led to a collapse of morale in the police service.

The evaluation leaves a lot to be desired for the following reasons:

- The evaluation was a scientific test and there was no interaction with any medical psychologist who would be most qualified to determine a person's mental capability.
- The evaluation was conducted by a number of persons, which would mean that no two perceptions of any individual would be the same and, in light of this, everyone would have had different experiences with their administrators.
- In some cases, the administrators had no idea of what the job entailed, leaving the officers with the duty of explaining their portfolios, which means that they were not familiar with the structure or routines of the police service.
- Some persons were called back on several occasions to complete parts of the evaluation that were left out in error by these administrators.
- The administrators indicated that some persons were not recommended because they were not present for the evaluation and there was no record of the results. However, all officers have proof of being present for these evaluations.
- The evaluations consisted of an extreme amount of reading and writing. However, some of the persons who were successful, I was made to understand, are even functionally illiterate.

It is important to note that the special police officers to be absorbed in the service have services ranging from three to seven years and they have all worked on a full-time basis.

The officers have been performing the duties of regular police constables without the same benefits such as salaries, housing, medical and clothing allowance among others, and have also been trained in law enforcement and the use of firearms.

Several SRPs have received excellent performance appraisal reports. Several SRPs have profound dedication and a genuine passion for their job. These attributes are being totally ignored and the officers are now being told that it has been recommended to the Commissioner of Police that those officers who have not been recommended would be given the option of accepting part-time employment for their services or should be terminated. In the midst of all these developments, officers are still performing full-time duties with the added stress of not being able to know what is going to happen with their lives and their future.

It has been indicated to these officers that as of March 30, 2007, all those who were not successful would be taken off the payroll. However, they have not received anything official in writing. This is blatantly unfair. It is cruel. It is unjust and contrary to the Cabinet decision that I have outlined to you and this Senate.

Presently the SRPs are awaiting word on their position, which raises concern as to—in fact the police service and the Minister should take account of the fact that these 240 SRPs have children, mortgage commitments, bills to be paid, they are engaged in extra-curricular studies as well with other commitments.

The UNC is of the view that this is unfair for the 240 SRPs to be subjected to this type of unfair treatment after performing their duties and giving such high standards for all those years. What is even more important is that they are without any disciplinary charges of any sort. They are now being told that they are not fit to be regular police officers, but they are fit to be part-time SRPs, which only varies in terms of their numbers, salaries and benefits.

It is our view that the SRPs are deeply concerned about their future and the Minister has a duty and a responsibility to intervene very urgently, to have this matter immediately rectified. It must be rectified in the interest of those 240 SRPs.

As a former Cabinet Member, on July 12, 2000 to be specific, the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago agreed to absorb 969 members of the SRP section of the police service. Those were people who were serving in excess of two years. We said that clearly and we set out the criteria, which are:

- fitness for service, as determined by a medical examination, which will include a psychological evaluation;

That is a normal arrangement, not what is being imposed on them today.

- a successful drug test and a satisfactory record of good conduct and performance;

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We waived the academic qualifications, physical and age requirements for entry into the police service, to facilitate the appointment of these SRPs.

Therefore, we find it strange that in 2007, we can have a repetition of this situation and have 240 officers who do not know what their future is going to look like in the morning.

I call on the hon. Minister to make a categorical statement this afternoon concerning these SPRs, 179 who served as constables and the rest who served as drivers. We need to absorb them into the police service and we need to follow the guidelines, as established by the Cabinet of 2000. I hope that the Minister will take the necessary steps to ensure that these SRPs are duly and properly absorbed into the police service, without any further headache, difficulties, challenges or problems.

I thank you very much, Madam President.

The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Martin Joseph): Madam President, Chap. 15:01 of the Laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago makes provision for the establishment of a supplemental body of police referred to as the Special Reserve Police or SRP. The SRP was established to serve as a reserve to be drawn upon when contingencies created a temporary need for police officers, in excess of the sanctioned strength of the police service.

The intention was that members of the SRP would be called out on a part-time or full-time basis, as the need arose. In the case of full-time service, that would be for a specified, limited period. Because of the part-time, temporary nature of the duties originally envisaged for members of the SRP, there were no provisions for vacation, sick or maternity leave or retirement benefits.

However, over the years, as a result of increasing demand for manpower within the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, and with no corresponding increase in that organization's sanctioned strength, there was an increased reliance on the services of the SRPs.

In April 2000, to address the plight of the SRP in terms of terminal benefits and other conditions of service, and in view of the need to strengthen the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, Cabinet agreed to the absorption of members of the SRP, who were continuously employed on a full-time basis for periods in excess of two years, into the regular service, as Sen. Mark indicated.

Cabinet also advised, on that occasion, that the practice of utilizing the services of members of the SRP for extended periods, on a full-time basis, should be discontinued with immediate effect, such persons to be employed on call-out duty only.

Notwithstanding that decision, in 2004, Cabinet, having considered the dire need to increase police visibility, in light of the escalating crime problem, approved the implementation of a project entitled: SRP 1000, the genesis of which was under a Ken Gordon Committee. The Ken Gordon Committee, my colleague Sen. Prof. Deosaran was also part of that committee, recommended SRP 1000. This project entailed the engagement, on contract, of 1,000 SRP officers to bolster the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

Eventually, of that 1,000, 498 SRPs were engaged, 419 of whom are to be absorbed into the mainstream of the police service, upon expiration of their five-year contracts once they meet the stipulated criteria. That group of officers represents the second absorption of SRPs into the police service.

The third occasion in which SRPs were to be absorbed into regular service involved the group of SRPs to which Sen. Mark made reference.

Subsequent to the SRP 1000 Project, the Commissioner of Police advised that, in contravention of Cabinet's directive, 270 SRP officers had been enlisted, including 79 drivers. These officers were functioning on a full-time basis for periods from one year to eight months.

Madam President, when the situation involving these individuals was brought to the fore, the Ministry took the decision to approach Cabinet to have the situation regularized. That process entailed a number of submissions to Cabinet, with Cabinet's last decision on the matter taken in May 2006. In effect, Cabinet agreed that the 270 SRPs be absorbed into the police service, as follows:

1. That the 79 SRPs who were enlisted in 2000 as drivers be absorbed into the police service, subject to such persons meeting the undermentioned requirements:
 - fitness for service, as determined by a medical examination, including a psychological evaluation;
 - a successful drug test; and
 - a satisfactory record of good conduct and performance.

Additionally, Cabinet agreed to the waivering of the academic qualifications, physical and age requirements for entry into the police service, to facilitate the appointment of the 79 SRP drivers.

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2. That the 191 SRPs, enlisted outside the SRP 1000 Project, who were continuously employed on a full-time basis from as early as 1999, be absorbed into the police service, subject to such persons meeting the following requirements:
 - satisfactory evaluation of their performance and conduct;
 - a successful drug test;
 - fitness for service as determined by a medical examination including a psychological examination; and
 - the waivering of the academic qualifications, physical and age requirements for entry into the police service.
3. A corresponding increase in the sanctioned strength of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to accommodate the candidates identified at (2) and (3) above, who met the specified criteria.

Between August 2006 and February 2007, the necessary examinations and evaluations were conducted. Information from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service has revealed that of the 270 officers, 200 have successfully met the criteria, having undergone the required examinations and evaluations. These officers are to be absorbed into the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

In order to complete the process, however, a Legal Notice is required, to enable the waivering of academic qualification, physical and age requirements for entry into the police service. That matter is actively being pursued by the Ministry of the Attorney General.

With respect to the other 70 officers, 58 have not been recommended for absorption, based on the findings of their psychological evaluation, and in one case, also the medical examination. These officers will no longer be employed on a full-time basis, effective April 01, 2007.

However, the option of part-time employment will be made available to them. Two have abandoned their posts; one officer has resigned; one officer has retired; three officers are on suspension; three officers are yet to complete the psychological evaluation; one officer has refused to complete the psychological evaluation; and one officer is on extended sick leave, effective February 2006.

Madam President, I can say with confidence, having been given the assurance by the Commissioner of Police, that this process was conducted in a fair and transparent manner, in keeping with Cabinet's stipulated guidelines.

I am also satisfied that the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is prepared to take the next step, which is to effect the absorption, upon receipt of the Legal Notice from the Ministry of the Attorney General.

I hope that I have adequately clarified the issue for Sen. Mark and for hon. Senators.

In closing, I want to assure you that the Ministry of National Security will continue to treat with this issue with the professionalism and diligence that we all know it deserves.

I thank you.

Shouter Baptist Liberation Day Greetings

Sen. Wade Mark: I think it would be remiss of us if we were not—I am sure my colleagues would agree with me seeing that Shouter Baptist Liberation Day is on Friday. I think it is our duty to put on the record of the Parliament, our position on that occasion.

If you allow me, on behalf of the UNC, the alternative government of Trinidad and Tobago, we would like to extend our solidarity and warmest congratulations to the Shouter Baptist community on the occasion of Shouter Baptist Liberation Day, which is scheduled to take place on Friday, March 30, 2007.

This year would mark the 12th anniversary of this major event in our country. It was the UNC which declared March 30 as Shouter Baptist Liberation Day. It was the UNC government that provided the Baptists with lands to establish an African Spiritual Park, among other things, to establish schools for their people and to remove all semblance of oppressive legislation which prohibited and inhibited their advancement, from the statute books of our country. Therefore, on the occasion of Shouter Baptist Liberation Day, we in the UNC wish to extend our warmest and heartfelt congratulations to the Shouter Baptist community, in particular and the national community in general.

Madam President, I thank you.

Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie: Madam President, let me, on behalf of all of us on the Independent Bench, extend our greetings to the Shouter Baptist community of Trinidad and Tobago.

We in Tobago have a very close relationship with the Shouter Baptist community. As I heard Sen. Mark lauding the activities of the former government, let me also add that those of us in Tobago, I can speak for the Vice-President of the Senate, myself and others, we have been part of the celebrations of the Shouter Baptist community all the years, since they have been having their Shouter Baptist day.

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May I also add that we in Tobago are very proud to say that the THA has actually lived up to a promise it made at one of the sessions of the Shouter Baptist that I chaired on one of their graduation ceremonies in Tobago. They have actually lived up to their promise and donated the land. They are going to have the first Shouter Baptist Liberation Day celebration on Friday on that new piece of land.

Whether Tobago has followed Trinidad, or whatever, we have, in Tobago, recognized them. We have been a part of them. Many of our teachers and leaders are Shouter Baptists and are participating in the activities very happily and freely and we would all go and have a learning experience from the experiences of the Shouter Baptists.

Come Friday, many of us will be on their piece of land at Signal Hill, where they will have their ground-breaking ceremony and they are going to have all their celebrations there.

I must add too that the former principal of the Scarborough Secondary School, Mr. Noel Sosa, and after him, others, gave permission for the Shouter Baptists of the Herman Parris Theology School in La Brea, the south land, to use the school every weekend when the tutors come to Tobago and have their theology school branch operating out of the Scarborough Secondary School.

I think that, all in all, Trinidad, Tobago, PNM, UNC, NAR, NJAC, whatever you want to call them, we have all sympathized with the plight of the Shouter Baptists and we have all added our twopenny worth.

Thank you. Greetings to the Spiritual Baptists.

The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams): Madam President, in the absence of my colleague, on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, I too wish to extend our sincerest congratulations to the Shouter Baptists on the occasion of the celebration of Liberation Day.

As we would realize, this Government has always supported the Baptists in Trinidad and Tobago, financially and otherwise. Each year as with all other celebrations, we contribute substantially to the celebrations.

Last week Saturday, we began with the celebrations in San Fernando and we would continue to support them as we go through the rest of the week. Last night, the Government had the privilege of hosting all the major Shouter Baptists at a celebration at the Hilton. I think they were quite honoured as they were part of another celebration we had. At that occasion, financial contributions for this year's celebration were handed out.

In addition, we have, over the last three years, contributed to some of our Shouter Baptist brothers and sisters. A contingent would usually go to London to join with those across there in the celebrations. We have done that.

Last year, unfortunately, we lost one of our brothers as he went to that celebration, as you can quite imagine. Sen. Mark I know is well aware of the work that we have been doing with the Shouter Baptists over the years. We have not only worked with them financially, in terms of contributing to the celebration, but we have made all our resources available to them. Therefore, if you move around Trinidad and Tobago, you would see a large number of their institutions and churches looking quite well at this time because we have been able to help them with their construction activities. In fact, there are 29 churches that we have assisted for this year already and we intend to contribute in the same way.

We feel a sense of pride and pleasure as we join with our brothers and sisters. We know of the work they have been doing. As we said before, last Saturday evening, one of the Archbishops from Grenada spoke to them and told them to use the assistance which has been given to them to move them from one place from being buyers into sellers. We are also going to assist them as they try to move from one stage into the other. This is time for freedom. They are liberated. They have come forward. We want to thank them for the work they have been doing with our children.

One of the requests I made of them is that they move out into the communities. I look forward to the day when we have unity among the Shouter Baptists.

Let me, again, on behalf of the Government, extend our sincerest congratulations to the Shouter Baptist community and we hope that they will continue to do the work that they can do in the community.

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I would like to take this opportunity to join with other Senators in wishing the Baptist community a happy and blessed day on Friday.

We join in celebrating their liberation and their freedom of worship in this blessed country of ours. I have no doubt that they will go from strength to strength.

On behalf of myself and my family and the Parliament staff, I wish them a very blessed day and the most sincere greetings that they will, indeed, have a good day.

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Thanks to all of you for giving your greetings and I am hoping that the Baptist community is listening to us and more so to see that from government to government to government, they have continued to benefit.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 6.07 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

The following question was asked by Sen. Wade Mark:

Law Firm of Alexander, Jeremie and Company

41. A. Could the Attorney General provide the Senate with a list of all the State Enterprises, Statutory Authorities, Municipal Corporations and Regional Health Authorities and any other State Agencies that have retained the services of the law firm of Alexander, Jeremie and Company for legal advice and/or representation during the period May 27, 2004 to December 31, 2006?
- B. Could the Attorney General provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the various fees paid to the said law firm during this period?
- C. Could the Attorney General indicate whether he receives any fees and/or income from the firm of Alexander, Jeremie and Company, since his appointment as Attorney General?
- D. If the answer to (C) is in the affirmative, could the Attorney General provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the fees and/or income received?

The Honourable Attorney General (Sen. The Hon. John Jeremie S.C.):

- A. The question seeks a response of the Attorney General in relation to Regional Health Authorities, Municipal Corporations, State Enterprises and Statutory Authorities of which there are over one thousand. These several entities fall near the purview of over twenty Ministries. Some do not fall under the purview of any Minister. The Attorney General has responsibility for certain statutory entities which fall under the Ministry's purview, these include the Law Reform Commission, the Hugh Wooding Law School and the Tax Appeal

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Board. Records indicate that the services of the law firm of Alexander, Jeremie and Company were not retained by any of the above mentioned entities during the period in question, May 27, 2004 to December 31, 2006. Since Mr. John Jeremie's appointment as Attorney General on 10th November, 2003, the services of Alexander, Jeremie and Company were not retained by any of the bodies falling under the ambit of the Ministry of the Attorney General to date.

- B. Since the Ministry of the Attorney General has no record of any services provided by the law firm of Alexander, Jeremie & Company to any of the entities falling under its purview, a response to B. is not relevant.
- C. The Attorney General has not received any fees and/or income from the firm of Alexander, Jeremie and Company since his appointment as Attorney General. It should be noted that the Attorney General ceased to be a partner in the firm Alexander, Jeremie and Company upon his appointment as Attorney General, and in so doing disposed of his interest in the firm. A return was duly filed with the Registrar of Companies notifying the Registrar of the change in ownership of the firm.
- D. Since the answer to C. is in the negative, a response to D. is not relevant.