

*Leave of Absence**Tuesday, April 17, 2007***SENATE***Tuesday, April 17, 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 Conrad Enill and Sen. Bro. Noble S. A. Khan who are out of the country; to Sen. Angela Cropper who is ill and Senator Prof. Ken Ramchand.

SENATORS' APPOINTMENT

Madam President: 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 Conrad Enill 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 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 17th April, 2007 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Conrad Enill.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 13th day of April, 2007.”

Senators' Appointment
[MADAM PRESIDENT]

Tuesday, April 17, 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

In exercise of the power vested in me by paragraph (b) of subsection (2) of section 40 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Leader of the Opposition, do hereby appoint you, GLENN RAMADHAR-SINGH, a Senator.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 16th day of April, 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. ROLPH BALGOBIN

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, ROLPH BALGOBIN, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with immediate effect and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Brother Noble Khan.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 16th day of April, 2007."

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Overand Padmore, Glenn Ramadhar-Singh, Rolph Balgobin.

PAPER LAID

Annual audited financial statements of Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the financial year ended March 31, 2006. [*The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Christine Sahadeo)*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

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 of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Resources (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, the hon. Minister is out of the country and will be back next week and I am asking that the question be deferred until next week.

Question, by leave, deferred.

Faculty of Law (Positions in)

35. Sen. Wade Mark asked the hon. Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education:

A. Could the Minister inform the Senate whether the position of Head of Faculty of Law and Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Law, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, is a full-time position?

- B. Could the Minister also inform the Senate who is the current Head of the Faculty of Law at this campus and how many hours per week is the Head of the Faculty expected to spend in his teaching and administrative duties?
- C. Could the Minister further provide the Senate with the remuneration package including perks and allowances of the Head of the Faculty of Law?

The Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (Sen. The Hon. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid): Madam President, I did undertake to have that answer ready by today. Unfortunately, I do not have it. I am pretty certain I will have it ready by next week.

Question, by leave, deferred.

**Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
(Law Firm Retained by)**

- 36. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:
- A. Could the Minister indicate to the Senate whether the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago has retained the services of the law firm, Alexander, Jeremie and Company to represent the authority in legal matters?
 - B. If the answer to (A) is in the affirmative, could the Minister inform the Senate:
 - (i) in what matters did the said law firm represent the Authority; and
 - (ii) provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the fees paid to the firm?

The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Resources (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, I was advised by the hon. Minister that the answer is not quite ready and I would ask that the matter be deferred for one week.

Question, by leave, deferred.

Sen. Mark: I am wondering whether I should stand, because I am sitting so fast.

**European Trade Mission
(Details of Contingent)**

52. Sen. Wade Mark asked the hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs:

With respect to the cultural contingent which accompanied the Trade Mission to Europe during the period September 06 to 22, 2006, could the Minister provide the Senate with:

- (i) the names of the countries visited by the cultural contingent;
- (ii) a detailed breakdown of the costs incurred;
- (iii) the names of the artistes and organizations that comprised the contingent;
- (iv) the amount of allowances/fees and other financial benefits received by each artiste and organization; and
- (v) the criteria employed for engaging the services of these artistes and organizations?

The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams): Madam President, I regret to say that I am unable to provide the answers for questions Nos. 52, 53 and 54 which are on the Order Paper today. You would appreciate that there are large numbers of questions coming to the Ministry, plus the fact that a larger number is coming under the Freedom of Information Act that it is taking quite a long time for the staff of the Ministry to get through. Therefore, it is really impossible for us to go through these answers as fast as the hon. Senators would like to have them.

In the circumstances, I ask that we be given a period of three weeks to provide the answers.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, I object and I think it is a very poor excuse for the Minister—these questions have been on the Order Paper for this Minister who has refused to answer questions, as you know, for the last four weeks, and for her to come and tell you and this Parliament about the Freedom of Information Act—I have questions before this Parliament—

Madam President: Yes, Senator—

Sen. Mark: Madam President, I am not in favour of any three-week postponement. I am prepared to allow a week for the Minister to put her house in order—get more staff. You are building a house for \$148 million, get more staff.

Madam President: If the Minister says that she cannot have the answer before three weeks, I do not think there is anything we can do, Sen. Mark, as you very well know.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, I object.

Madam President: All right, and we note your objection. I am also a bit concerned, but knowing the Minister as I do, I think she would try her best to get those answers. I do not think it is directly her fault if the answers are not ready. Please, could we be a little bit—

Sen. Mark: Madam President, I understand it is a deliberate policy on the part of the Minister and the Government not to answer questions that are put to them—

Madam President: Senator, this is not the time for speeches. All right?

Sen. Mark: Madam President, I object.

Madam President: I know that and I have noted it. That means that we move on then to question No. 53.

Question, by leave, deferred.

The following questions stood on the Order Paper in the name of Sen. Wade Mark:

**World Cup/Germany
(Details of Contingent)**

53. A. Could the hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs indicate to the Senate the total number of persons inclusive of public officials, cultural practitioners and technical staff that comprised the contingent which represented Trinidad and Tobago from June 07 to 22, 2006 during the World Cup in Germany?
- B. Could the Minister also provide the Senate with:
- (i) the names of the artistes and organizations that were selected; and
 - (ii) the criteria used in selecting the various artistes and organizations?

**German Contingent
(Details of)**

54. With respect to the contingent that went to Germany during the period June 07 to 22, 2006, could the hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs inform the Senate of:

- (i) the names of the cities that the contingent visited;
- (ii) the cost of accommodation and airfare for members of the contingent; and
- (iii) the amount of fees, allowances and benefits that each member of the group received?

Questions, by leave, deferred.

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

- 63. 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 Education (Sen. The Hon. Hazel Manning): Madam President, I am seeing an end to our data collection and analysis which hopefully we would be able to present maybe in the next week or two.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, we object to this disrespect and contempt that the hon. Minister of Education continues to demonstrate! We object to this behaviour!

Madam President: Yes, I know—[*Interruption*]

Senator, please. I would appeal to Dr. Saith to see if he could have some of these answers. Some of these questions have been postponed again and again and I can understand some of the wrath of the Senators when we do not get the answers. All I can do is appeal to the Ministers. Dr. Saith, if you can please ensure that some of these answers are brought—because some of these questions have been on the Order Paper for more than a month; in some cases even five and six weeks.

Question, by leave, deferred.

**Current Construction Activity
(Nature and Extent of)**

- 65. Sen. Basharat Ali** asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:
Could the Minister provide the Senate with the following information:
- A. The nature and extent of the construction activity currently being undertaken at a location some 250 metres North of the Maraval Water Treatment Plant on the west bank of the Maraval River?
 - B. What approvals have been granted by :
 - (a) Town and Country Planning Division
 - (b) The Environmental Management Authority
 - (c) Diego Martin Regional Corporation
 - (d) The Water and Sewerage Authority
 - (e) The Drainage Division
 - (f) The Highways Division; and
 - C. The conditions attached to any such approvals?

The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Resources (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, I am advised that the Minister did have some discussions with the hon. Senator and has agreed to a three-week deferral of this question.

Question, by leave, deferred.

**National Oncology Centre Project
(Details of)**

- 66. Sen. Basharat Ali** asked the hon. Minister of Health:
Could the Minister provide the Senate with the following information relating to the National Oncology Centre Project ('The Project'):
- A. The total budget cost of the project including the design, engineering, construction and construction management, procurement and installation of equipment, commissioning and start up of the project and the schedule with major milestones of the project implementation?

- B Whether the construction Management contract of US \$24.1 million with the Government as announced by EllisDon corporation of Canada is additional to the contract with Comprehensive Care International (CCI) of US \$10.365 million and Canadian \$23.223 million and, if so, what is the scope of services of the EllisDon contract?
- C The financial arrangements for execution of the project?

The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Resources (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, my information is that the answer to this question is not yet ready. As you know, I was out of the country. I believe, just speaking to a member of the committee, that the answer will be ready in two weeks.

Sen. Ali: That would be fine.

Question, by leave, deferred.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, may I ask, through you, did the hon. Minister of Education indicate to you when question No. 63 would be ready? Did she say one week?

Madam President: No, she said two to three weeks.

Sen. Manning: Madam President, this is about our tenth question for this session. The staff has quite a lot of work to do, gathering the data, doing the analysis—

Sen. Mark: Well go home if you tired!

Sen. Manning:—and making sure that the questions are accurately answered. This is our tenth question. I do not think the Members on the other side understand what we are talking about. The questions are asking us for a lot of details; we have to go into the—

Sen. Mark: Then you should resign and go home!

Madam President: All right, Senator, please!

Sen. Manning: Sometimes I wonder whether they are designed to slow us down. [*Desk thumping*] Madam President, they are asking us for four, five, six years of information—

Sen. Mark: I think you all should go home! The PNM is tired!

Madam President: Senators, we also have—

Sen. Mark: You should go home!

Madam President: Is anybody listening to me?

Sen. Mark: Yes, Ma'am.

Madam President: We also have the answer to question No. 7 which has been circulated.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

The following question was asked by Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh:

C.T. and M.R.I. Machines (Details of Award of Contract)

7. (a) Would the hon. Minister of Health please inform this Senate of the name of the company which was awarded a contract for the purchase and supply of C.T. and M.R.I. machines for use in the nation's hospital?
- (b) Would the Minister further inform this Senate of:
- (i) The names of the Directors of that company;
 - (ii) The number and names of the companies which submitted all bids;
 - (iii) The value of each bid submitted;
 - (iv) The value of the successful bidders' tender; and
 - (v) The names of the Specification Committee and the Evaluation Committee involved in the award of this contract?

Vide end of sitting for written reply.

HOMES FOR OLDER PERSONS BILL [Third Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [April 03, 2007]:

That the Bill be read a second time.

Question again proposed.

Madam President: Hon. Senators, you would remember that debate was taking place on the Bill to repeal the Homes for Older Persons Act, 2000 and provide for the licensing, regulation and control of homes for older persons when the Senate was adjourned on Wednesday, April 11, 2007. That will now be

resumed. The Senators who have spoken so far are: the Hon. Minister of Social Development, Hon. Anthony Roberts who presented the Bill; on Wednesday last, Sen. Dr. Jennifer Kernahan; Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie; Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh; Sen. The Hon. John Jeremie S.C. and Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand.

Sen. Raziah Ahmed: Madam President, as we resume the debate on this Bill in this honourable Senate, I wish to make the point that this is perhaps one of the most significant pieces of legislation that has come before this honourable Senate in several weeks, or several months for that matter, for the simple reason that this piece of legislation is about where we are going—all of us—if we do not die prematurely or before we get to old age. Therefore, I was very, very surprised to observe the kind of careless approach that is represented in the formulation of this Bill to repeal what existed before as at 2000, the Homes for Older Persons Act, 2000.

You see, it is instructive that we observe what is going on around us and in preparing to come to this debate I was forced to think about people that I know who have actually aged. I was very happy this morning to observe the numerous poui trees that are in blossom all over the country; beautiful, pink, resplendent gardens and carpets under the trees and knowing in my mind that tomorrow the poui flowers will be gone; they would have died, and remembering also the rebirth of the mahogany trees that dot our landscape and knowing, as an observer of the greenery, that the leaves have fallen and overnight they have been replaced; and thinking about my meeting with a journalist a few years ago by the name of Mitch Albom who wrote the book *Tuesdays with Morrie*. In that book he had recounted that this old university professor of his would sit by the window to observe how the small hibiscus plant shed its pink leaves.

His professor had grown old and was dying of Lou Gehrig's disease and *Tuesdays with Morrie* is one of those books that really captured in my mind, when I listened to the author speak about his experience of writing the book, what happens. So if I had to make any meaningful contribution to this debate, I had to go back and reference exactly what Mitch had said about his professor. This is an excerpt from what Prof. Morrie had said to him as he was dying by his window, looking every day at a small hibiscus plant. He said in his book that Morrie told him:

“So many people walk around with a meaningless life. They seem half-asleep, even when they're busy doing things they think are important. This is because they're chasing the wrong things. The way you get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning.”

If we are doing that, we cannot hope to bring this kind of legislation for the most respectable people in our community when this legislation reflects none of the learnings that we have had in the past five years with respect to what is happening in the developed world in the whole concept of ageing.

But having perused the Bill and seeing that it is so devoid of meaningful clauses for the people who are ageing, I had to go back to the Government's documents that were submitted to us some time ago to see exactly what it had inside there for this sector in our community. Surprisingly, there was nothing in the Government's documents that are geared towards the aged. They speak about housing, sport and youth affairs, culture and gender affairs and they have given their reports, but there is nothing about ageing. Therefore it was very clear that if they had nothing in their vision for the old people of this country, this is why this Bill is so backward and such a passive kind of legislation that is really more reactive than proactive and which represents planning for what they used to call an ageing society.

But that was five years ago. Now we are supposed to be preparing a society for all ages. That is in the recent literature and that what I had hoped, when the Government said it would bring a Bill to repeal the existing Act, that it would have dealt with the whole concept of a society for all ages. But when we go through the Bill, we find that there is really nothing inside here that is futuristic that is really going to deal with the situation that is going to present itself to us as a society.

Before I go to what the Minister said, let me take it in the reverse order. The last time that we were in this Senate, Sen. Prof. Ramchand indicated that he had some problems with the classification of the homes in the First Schedule, section 4. I want to go to that because that is where the carelessness begins; that is where we begin to see that there was really no serious thought put into this Bill. What they did, in fact, was just converted the old Act of 2000, put in some tables, some fees, and so on, and put in this classification, which really is a kind of backward piece of classification that is not in keeping with what is going on in the world; that is not in keeping with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, and I believe we are a state party to that United Nations action.

When we look at the classification of homes in this Bill, the first problem is Type I. Prof. Ramchand dealt with the whole idea of immediate or intermediate so I will not deal with that. I will take it a little earlier. This Bill defines a Type I home as:

“Any Home for Older Persons which provides care and housing for four or more healthy, able-bodied older persons...”

That is where the problem begins. At age 60, which is the age defined in the Bill as an older person—it defines an older person as somebody aged 60 and over—in this country a number of employers are telling people that “We are no longer desirous of your services and you are now required to retire.” We have put into our legislation that a person who is aged 60 in a Type I home is supposed to be able-bodied! Madam President, but 60-year-olds who are able-bodied do not go to homes. Therefore this classification of a home needs to be addressed. It was probably copied from somewhere else with no thought to the current reality and it does not speak to the fact that there are 60-year-olds who can function well enough to go on to hold other jobs—consultancy positions, et cetera.

Then we go on—and I just want to read from a definition of a home for the aged and to bring to the attention of this Government what is supposed to be in a definition of a home for the aged. I am reading from the Standards for the Tennessee Department of Health Board for Licensing Health Care Facilities. I went to that piece of literature because this is what this Bill tries to do; it tries to bring in a scheme of application and licensing and renewals and, therefore, we need to reference what is happening in the developed world if we are really serious about drawing from that and bringing our people up to that level in the immediate future. So in that piece of legislation it defines a home for the aged as a home represented and held out to the general public; as a home which primarily accepts aged persons for relatively permanent domiciled care with “primarily” being defined as 51 per cent or more of the population of the home for the aged.

2.00 p.m.

It provides room, board, and personal services to one or more non-related persons. The term “home” includes any building or part thereof which provides services as defined in these rules. This is as clear as day, exactly what that institution is about. When we, in this current information-age are constructing legislation and when we put this kind of cumbersome language into a definition of a Type I home—Sen. Prof. Ramchand went into the details of how cumbersome Type I homes—the Type I home is supposed to be the simplest one for the aged, and the language here is so foolish, it speaks about able-bodied persons. I am wondering which able-bodied person really goes into a home. It goes on to Type II, and Type II classifications are for those older persons who need dietary supervision or who need the administration of pharmaceuticals and so forth. I have no problem with Type II. Type III goes on to further classify those who require a registered nurse or physician.

Homes For Older Persons Bill
[SEN. AHMED]

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Madam President, nowhere in this legislation does it speak to the needs of the oldest old. And in the literature the oldest old are those persons over 80 years old, and there are people in this country who are over 80 years old who are not sick, but who are not able-bodied and who need merely assistance in the preparation of their meals, supervision in their daily baths and in keeping their homes clean and so forth. Nowhere in this Bill does it speak to that category of people. It is dangerous that the definitions are typed in such a way that these people can be excluded especially when earlier in the legislation one sees for a home that is licensed under a Type I or II to move out of that licensing arena or to progress upwards or because of its increasing population size or because of the aging of its clients who have been institutionalized in those places, but who are not really sick because there is no diabetes, high blood pressure or arthritis, but who are simply a little bit challenged with respect to memory, and with respect to their ability to light a stove, to turn off the gas, to make sure that their doors are shut at nights, this Bill does not speak to them at all. And these are the people who are really required to live in institutions where they can be supervised.

So when we have this type of classification, the language first of all is not very clear. It is a kind of—one has to sit and figure it out phrase by phrase, comma after comma and back and forward to see whether this is dietary, okay, this is a registered nurse or a physician. So there is a problem with the backwardness of the classification of these types of homes and that is why I say this piece of legislation is really a kind of reactive thing: somebody has to meet some deadline, somebody has to do something to satisfy somebody else, so let us bring it forward, let us repeal the old Act, and let us put this in, let us type-out the homes. That is what it does, but it does not do so in any credible and in any real-time manner; and that is the first thing that is horrible about this piece of legislation that is coming to us in 2007, when we are talking about developed country status.

Madam President, when the hon. Attorney General in his contribution spoke in this debate, he said he was very proud that the PNM Government was doing well by senior citizens in this country. If one looks at the CSO statistics retrieved March 2007, just last month from the CSO's website, one will see that 26.29 per cent of households in this country are headed by people who are over 60 years old and do you know what is the difficult thing, Madam President? The CSO statistics reveals that the gross monthly income for such households is a mere \$3,076.01. So when we are talking about "doing well" by our senior citizens, how on earth, when the average income of these people, more than one quarter of the

households surveyed by the CSO are earning less than \$3,000? Madam President, sit and tally your phone bill, light bill, water bill, land and building taxes and food bill and one cannot buy medicine—and you have to buy medicine in spite of CDAP.

Madam President, it is not about being able to say we are doing well by our senior citizens, when, in fact, the Minister said there were 130,000 senior citizens in this country. If one quarter of our households are headed by those persons who are over 60 years, then what about the current statistics? It was pointed out earlier that those statistics are relevant to, perhaps, 2004.

Madam President, in the last budget we were told that a Survey of Living Conditions would have been completed and finalized in the year 2006. We were anxious to see the report from that survey of living conditions. Instead, the Minister comes to the debate with only a few statistics that he throws out and I am wondering if it is statistical conman-ship. The Survey of Living Conditions should have been published and made available so that we could deal in a more meaningful manner with this piece of legislation that is before us. As it is, we do not know what the preliminary reports are on that survey, we have not seen it and we would like to see it, hon. Minister, through you, Madam President.

So in order to deal with the matters and the fact that international publications are telling us that the percentage of older persons is going to surpass the percentage of younger persons in the society by the year 2050—in fact, this report on the Second World Assembly on Aging, 2002, by the United Nations speaks about life expectancy, and it is saying by the year 2050 we would live an average of 30 years more than we were expected to live. It says in the report that the average life expectancy at birth has increased by 20 years since 1950 to 66 years, and it is expected to extend a further 10 years by 2050. Further, it says that this increase will be greatest and most rapid in developing countries where the older population is expected to quadruple during the next 15 years.

And you know that for a fact. Modern medicine is keeping people alive. It does not cure the diabetes or the high blood pressure; it replaces the kidney but it also replaces all of their savings; it replaces the valves in the heart, but most of the savings go through simultaneously. Therefore, if modern medicine is going to keep people alive, we know they are going to live longer and, therefore, we need to really bring meaningful legislation before this Senate. Legislation that is not just a copy of what was there before with a few tables and some classifications but legislation that understands what is happening in the world.

Madam President, the same report by the United Nations on the Second World Assembly estimates that in Latin America older persons will increase from 8 per cent of the population which it was in 1988 to 15 per cent of the population by the year 2025. So when one looks at the actual array of clauses let us go to the meat of the matter which is the need to license these operations.

Madam President, clause 7(3)(b) states the licence shall be for a period of two years, and the Bill goes on to indicate at the end of that two-year period—in fact, in clause 11(1):

“A licensee wishing to renew a licence which is due to expire, shall at least one month before such expiry, apply to the Minister for such licence to be renewed.”

Therein is another serious flaw in the legislation. When these homes apply in the first instance for a licence under clause 6—in clause 7(2):

“The Facility Review Team shall report to the Minister within sixty days or such other extended period as the Minister may direct.”

So in the first instance the Facility Review Team needs at least two months to go and check out the facility. Two years later when the licence is up for renewal this legislation is saying that same Facility Review Team that is ongoing, recognizing—

Sen. Abdul-Hamid: On what authority?

Sen. R. Ahmed: The same Facility Review Team that still has the ongoing checks and balances to perform site inspections, licences, applications renewals in clause 11 of this legislation, the homes are being told that they can wait for the last month to apply for a renewal of the licence. I believe that one month cannot be a sufficient time for the Facility Review Team to go in and inspect, and approve an existing institution for another renewal of licence. It is important when we set time frames and lead times in the legislation—we recognize that we have to set lead times—that we give people deadlines that are realistic. In the first instance, the team needs two months and for the renewal—the renewal is important. In order to renew a licence it is imperative that the institution be inspected thoroughly, which brings us to other gaps in the legislation. Of course, many things in the way we do business in this Parliament are covered under the umbrella of “regulations the Minister will bring.” I think it was Sen. Prof. Ramchand who spoke before and who also pointed out the need for the regulations. Why can we not also have the regulations?

Madam President, the kind of things that we need to speak to when we are talking about developed-country status and which is totally absent in this legislation, are things like disciplinary procedures, things like how we admit, how we discharge and transfer people who reside in these homes. It speaks about personal services and the authority; it speaks about powers of attorney; it speaks about building standards in which we would house our ageing society; it speaks about safety measures; it speaks about fire escapes; it speaks about fire extinguishers, and about muster points; about infectious and hazardous waste disposals; it speaks about records and reports; it speaks about the rights of residents of the institutions; it speaks about policies and procedures to health care decision making, and it speaks to disaster preparedness and none of that is evident in this Bill.

So this is a piece of legislation from long, long time ago that has come back to this Senate in 2007 at the peak of the information age and we have not started to think of these respectable citizens of our country in terms of their true needs. We do not know what the reality is and I had to reflect on the beautiful Poui flowers this morning as I sat and listened to the incompetence and the inability of Senators to answer the questions on the Order Paper.

The Order Paper is getting to be about 10 pages long with questions that are unanswered, and I am wondering what are we doing in this country and who listens. Is this piece of legislation really to mamaguy the voting public or should it be addressing itself to the needs of our parents and to our own needs 30, 40 or 50 years from today? It does not do that. It is a kind of stopgap, slipshod, another piece of half-hearted legislation that is colossally removed from the reality that one must address if one is going to seek to deal with the true needs of a retiring population.

In addition, there has to be in the legislation things to deal with international—"do not resuscitate" orders. It has to deal with these things that are pertinent and relevant to people who are old, people who might be hooked up to machines; it has to do with the ability of these people who are residents in the homes to allocate or delegate authority to others. What about the fact that in today's world we have to be very careful about who sends whom to an institution? Do we have in this legislation provision for somebody to actually sign and say yes, I agree to take up residence in this home and I agree that you will administer my medication? Are we not exposing ourselves to litigation as we are an informed and educated society of older people? Are we not being short-sighted and are we not being facetious in trying to bring this kind of legislation that really

does not speak to the needs of the population? And if we insist that we are going to have this one-month period for renewals, we are going to have a huge backlog of licences not being renewed and according to the legislation if the legislation is, in fact enforced, a number of homes will not be visited by the Facility Review Team and will have to cease operations. Can you imagine the disaster, Madam President, if the time has passed and a licence has not been renewed and it is an offence according to this legislation to continue to hold up your licence on display when it is not valid? These homes have to be closed for weeks because this one month has passed. And if it were a month like Easter month, all the holidays—that has to be changed. Clause 11(1) cannot be left as one month. You have to give the licensee a longer period of time that they can use as the minimum time.

In clause 14, it speaks about a licensee or a manager who has been convicted of an offence under this Act. It says here that the licence may be revoked. Madam President, can you imagine 30 or 40 older persons overnight, in a facility where the manager had not made adequate succession planning provisions, if a licence has to be revoked for whatever the manager or the licensees should have done—There has to be something in the legislation that says there has to be some kind of succession planning so that we do not displace 30, 40 older persons overnight. And if there is nothing in there, then where do we get this cadre of people who can move into these institutions and transition these institutions until such time as another licensee or manager could be found for the institution? The legislation is equally short-sighted in that respect.

In clause 17, it speaks in the last few lines about the granting of “a licence to an applicant for a period not exceeding six months at a time and subject to such terms and conditions as are prescribed under this Act.”

Six months, Madam President, is a prescription under these circumstances in clause 17 for poor upkeep and no maintenance in these homes because if there is a threat that the persons who assume that they will inherit or continue to manage these homes, that they cannot get the licence then in six months an institution such as a home for the aged can be allowed to degenerate and fall into disrepair.

In clause 19 the legislation speaks about the keeping of the Register and that:

- “(2) The Division shall cause to be removed from the Register of Homes for Older Persons, any entry which has been incorrectly or fraudulently made.
- (3) The Register of Homes for Older Persons shall at all reasonable times be open for public inspection at the office of the Division.”

But it does not speak to the remedy. It does not give any indication if an offence is committed, how do we resolve the situation without punishing the resident of the institution.

The more that I look at the legislation, the more problems I am finding with gaping holes in the system. It is not a holistic planning process, it is not a futuristic planning process, it is haphazard, put together to meet some kind—I do not know, maybe some kind of State deadline, as somebody else said, and an election gimmick.

Also, in clause 22, Part III, the Register of Residence, it says that under 22(2) (h):

“A register under subsection (1), shall contain in respect of each older person at the Home—

(h) the date and particulars of death;”.

Madam President, there are residents in homes who die and have to be buried by the home and there are residents who will be taken by their family and all of the paperwork will be done outside. The matter is in building the regulations, for example, in the other clause, Part IV, it speaks about housing a large percentage of our population in institutions and with respect to the rights of the residents of these institutions, I am suggesting that we have to move beyond the concept of just a house where people are kept to a home where older people are allowed to live and die in dignity. And, therefore, having come five years from the previous legislation, it is now necessary in an informed and in an enlightened age, where there is global movement of labour, that there is nothing in the legislation that says that a home, such as is addressed in the Bill, should provide a place for prayer, and that is so important.

Sen. Yuille-Williams: Which type?

Sen. R. Ahmed: All three. Including Type IV which you did not put into the legislation as yet, for the oldest old who are not able-bodied, who do not need medication and who do not need a doctor, but who just need somebody to help them prepare a meal and to make sure that they are clean. The regulations for these buildings, we need to see something concrete. I do not mean you have to have a concrete building but you must have a place that reflects their rites of religious practice, you must have a common room where they can assemble and meet their guests; you must have a reading room. This is especially important in the information age. You must have a room where people who want to read as I

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had referenced, Professor Morrie, a reading room. These things are necessary in an enlightened society and you must have a proper dinning facility. These are the kinds of things that we need to know, these are the kinds of things that people who are serious about doing positive things, who are bringing about positive change in the society, these are the things—we will not ridicule the idea of a prayer room, we will not ridicule the idea of a reading room as we are seeing now—Alzheimer’s is a disease, but we hope, if we can give them reading facilities, we are going to save them from that—because I do not want to see any of them fall into—That is why these kinds of progressive ideas must of necessity be brought into the legislation and not be pushed under what one might call “regulations”, because these are not regulations. These are necessities. We need to reference what is happening in the developed world and we need to stop hiding behind—let me show you something else.

Madam President, in the Fourth Schedule, the Homes for Older Persons Bill, 2007, Licence to operate a Home for Older Persons does not even have the issue or the expiry dates. You wanted to talk about grow-box technology. [*Crosstalk*] Madam President, he is really disturbing me. I happen to like the fellow but he is really disturbing me.

The Fourth Schedule does not have the issue date, and it does not have the expiry date.

Madam President: Minister, please let the Senator continue with her contribution.

Sen. Abdul-Hamid: Madam President, just to let her know, I am not 60 years as yet.

Madam President: I think we all recognize that.

Sen. R. Ahmed: Madam President, I think the Minister misunderstood me once more. He is really taking it in the wrong light. Remember what I read and I read it purposefully that way, to get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others. And it is because I love the people of this country—[*Interruption*] this reference is about Morrie and aging.

The Homes for Older Persons Act—there is no issue date there, there is no expiry date in the Schedule, and if you are bringing a Schedule, bring the thing properly and at least let us see when this licence will be issued and let us see when it will expire—especially when it speaks to one’s incompetence, does it not?

2.30 p.m.

Madam President, in a February 2007 report by the United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs Population Division, there are some statistics. *[Interruption]* Madam President, I continue to be disturbed by the elements down there.

Madam President: Talk to me and do not listen! Talk to me!

Sen. R. Ahmed: It should not be happening.

Madam President: Senator, just go ahead with your contribution, please!

Sen. R. Ahmed: So what should I do when they continue?

Madam President: Ignore them. I cannot stop them altogether.

Sen. R. Ahmed: I am very glad to hear that decision. From here on you are ignored.

Madam President: When he gets out of hand, I will pull him up. Do not worry!

Sen. R. Ahmed: The United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs Population Division, in a survey of living arrangements of persons, by major areas, indicated, for Latin America and the Caribbean—*[Interruption]* When we get into these kinds of technical and research-oriented data, it is irrelevant to them. They are not interested in the literature of the scholars. All they are interested in is “picong” and “ole talk”.

The living arrangements of persons by major areas, according to a study of the United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs Population Division released in February 2007, showed that in Latin America and the Caribbean—I would really like to see the Survey of Living Conditions Report for Trinidad and Tobago to reference how Trinidad and Tobago is positioned in the statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean. Since that is not available, I have to reference the international data. It says that, based on the population in households, persons age 60 years who live with children or grandchildren constitute 62 per cent of all households.

Madam President: 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: Thank you, Madam President. In the statistics published by the Department of Economics, 62 per cent of all households in Latin America and the Caribbean have persons 60 years old as residents. It is instructive to note as well that 14 per cent of households in Latin America and the Caribbean also have persons age 60 years and over living with other relatives and non-relatives. That accounts for 76 per cent of all households in Latin America and the Caribbean where older persons live with children, grandchildren, other relatives and non-relatives. That is an indicator of the fact that we must prepare ourselves to be a society for all ages and we will have to repeal this legislation—it will probably be passed today—in the short term. We have to get rid of it very quickly—I suppose that will happen when the UNC is in government—and come back with meaningful legislation so that people would know how dignified they are and get the respect due to them, and not this piece of thing that types their homes and forgets the oldest in society who are not able-bodied, and who are neither Type I, II nor III.

The statistics are telling us that some 76 per cent of households in Latin America and the Caribbean have persons 60 years and we anxiously await the Survey of Living Conditions Report to see what is really happening.

I recall Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie making a point about people who want to live in their own homes. That is a very important and serious statement in that there are a number of old people who do not need to be institutionalized. That is what the statistics speak to. Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie also made the point that provision and supervision must be extended in law to include situations where there is a parent or grandparent residing in an annex. Sometimes it is not part of the home. We used to have the nuclear family and the extended family, now we have a situation where the person is moving back into a nuclear family situation and it is once more an extended family, but it is not like it was 40 years ago where people just grew up and continued to live in the same house.

We have had the nuclear family syndrome and we now have persons moving back into the homes of their children and sometimes they are placed in an annex. The law should include some kind of supervision for such cases. Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie spoke about some geriatric caregivers. We need to ensure that persons living in such situations should still be subject to the law that regulates the care and maintenance of old persons in this country. Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie made the point that this is where the majority of abuse takes place.

In addition to putting into the legislation protection against abuse in the institutions—Type I, Type II, Type III and Type IV—we also want to see something that allows, whether it is the Facility Review Team or the geriatric

trained workers, the right of access to these homes to ensure that the provision for the older person living with a family is adequate—that there is adequate supervision, hygiene and food. Something should be done to recognize that in dealing with older persons, there are some who live in homes with families who need the protection of the law.

One of ways we can do that is to develop a register of adults who provide care for older persons in their homes. Where there is a couple with their family who are providing care for an older person in their home, we need perhaps a register so that the Facility Review Team or the Ministry knows that these people exist and that they are living with a family. They should have an address and a phone number so that they could do checks and balances to ensure that the kind of abuse we know is common and has been spoken to by at least two previous contributors, is addressed.

We really need to overhaul this legislation in a holistic way and demonstrate that we understand what is happening with the population dynamics. We understand that the older people will live longer and need to be protected by the law. They need a forward-thinking government, one that is not about "mamaguy". I think, therefore, that the older people of this country will really see the light when there is a UNC government in power.

Thank you.

Sen. Basharat Ali: Thank you, Madam President. My contribution will address the basic purpose of the Bill to repeal Act No. 38 of 2000 and to provide for licensing regulations and control of homes for older persons. My contribution, therefore, will tackle the question: To repeal or not to repeal.

I would like to speak a bit to the statistics provided by the hon. Minister with respect to older persons. I would like to address the question of public assistance for older persons and the homes in which they might be living. Finally, I would look at certain aspects of the Bill, which I think may need to be redone and which may require a little bit more than the committee stage to do so.

In preparation for the Bill, I did go through Act No. 38 of 2000 and the first thing that struck me was that it provided for a 12-member board—chairman, deputy chairman and 10 high-powered persons. Act No. 38 was very long on providing procedures for this board, but very short on function.

If you go to section 4A of that Act, which I believe was never implemented, we will find that there are two functions for this board—advisory to the Minister and guiding and assisting the Division of Ageing in the implementation of the

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Act. That is all the board was required to do. Even with all these high-powered people who would have been on the board, it would have been difficult to get a quorum at any time.

I am in total agreement with the new Bill that the board be scrapped. I firmly believe that the new Bill can provide a more flexible arrangement for homes and the terms for the provision of care are more precise. I do agree with Sen Raziah Ahmed that some of the classifications are not as clear as they should be. I found the same difficulty when I read the classification and I looked at Type I for people who are healthy and able-bodied. I wondered who they might be and I came to the conclusion that maybe they were homeless people. There can be homeless people who are healthy and able-bodied. Type I was very strange. It needs to be clarified.

In Type III, when we get down to the crux, they provide for accommodation, care and housing for people who require supervision. I do not know why accommodation has now been included. Previously it was care and housing. Suddenly in Type III there is accommodation, care and housing, so definitions of these classifications need to be examined. I do not know how that happened. I feel that there is the basis of an Act here, but there is more work to be done. I will come back to a few of the inconsistencies, which I found when I read the Bill.

The hon. Minister, in piloting the Bill provided some statistics of which I am a part as I am over 60 years old—and so are many of our distinguished Senators. So I have to ask myself the question, being part of the statistics: Do we need to declare our interest in this matter? We may one day find ourselves in a position of having to access this kind of care. In our Bench, we may have a two-thirds majority, although I want to remind this House and the public that we do not caucus, so the two-thirds majority of older persons on this Bench will not really matter.

In giving the statistics, the Minister gave the figure as approximately 130,000 senior citizens and that is 10 per cent of the current population. He went on to say that 6 per cent of these persons resides in about 103 senior citizens' homes. My calculation says that 6 per cent of 130,000 is 7,800 citizens. If I take the average over 103 homes, I get 76 per home. I am asking where the figure came from because, in my view, that sounds a very high figure. An average of 76 needs to be explained to me.

Will the Minister provide a breakdown of these identified 103 homes? Are the homes owned and controlled by the State, included in these figure, for example, the senior citizens' centres in St. James and Maloney? Those were

referenced in the 2006/7 budget statement. I would ask also whether the two additional centres that “would open shortly” in Chaguanas and Rio Claro are now open. If not, will the hon. Minister say when we can expect them to be opened?

Quality care requires a higher quality of caregiver in terms of qualification, experience and dedication. Care providers probably will need to be remunerated better. That means a higher cost for the provision of the services. On the other hand, the recipients, by and large, are hard put to meet these higher costs. There seems to be a strong case for the State to provide financial support for the homes themselves. What level of grants/subventions is provided for institutions which undertake such a task? Checking through recurrent expenditure estimates for fiscal 2007, Head 56: Ministry of Social Development, under non-profit institutions, current transfers and subsidies are \$26 million, which may be a block vote because there was a motley of organizations listed there, from St. Vincent de Paul to the Red Cross for disabled persons, et cetera. I saw a list there, but there was no listing in the budget. Some 40 institutions are probably receiving something under the budgetary figure of \$26 million. Are these grants made to NGOs that cater to the needs of the elderly?

Separate and apart from the 2007 budgetary provision of \$1.18 billion, which is the Senior Citizens’ Grant, increased to \$1,150 per month in this current budget, I made some enquiries with a couple of organizations which run homes for the aged. Two of them I will identify. One is the Living Water Community and most of us know the work done there. They provide palliative care facilities for cancer patients in one l’hospice and care for AIDS patients in another. From my discussions with them, they say that the AIDS programme is funded adequately—although they have difficulty in accessing the funds—whereas the l’hospice receives a partial subsidy for providing that kind of care and that does not cover their cost.

The second institution that I contacted and one I visited before is the Gordon Home for the Elderly, which is an undertaking of the Anglican Parish of All Saints. This home, to my understanding, has more than 20 residents each paying a monthly fee based on the level of care provided. There are already levels of care there for those who can walk around and those who cannot walk around and have to be moved up and down by a little elevator.

The fee, as I understand it, is double the Senior Citizens’ Grant. It is the lowest fee of which I have heard. I dare say that many of the pensioners who are government retirees will be hard put to find money for payment of the monthly fees to this home. When they cannot do it, their relatives have to come up to the plate and provide them the assistance.

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The home itself receives no state assistance. Occasionally, when there are funerals and the families ask for collections in the name of the home, they receive those and put it into the pool. Of course, they receive donations in the form of supplies, food and disposables, from private and corporate citizens. This is really a philanthropic, non-profit organization, but still always struggling to find the money to provide the kind of care required by the residents of this home.

I would like to make a special plea for generous assistance to homes for the elderly, many of whom have made a substantial contribution in the service of their country, as acknowledged in the hon. Minister's piloting of the Bill. Let us recognize their need. When we think now, we think of heritage funds for our future generation, but let us recognize the need to provide for the passing generation.

Allow me to quote from the presentation of the hon. Minister in piloting the Bill. He said:

"The policy of this Government is to ensure that our senior citizens are treated as important resources of Trinidad and Tobago. They must never be made to feel that they are a burden to this society, but rather an asset to the nation. Our seniors have walked this road before; we must be able to tap their wealth of experience, that institutional memory, as we make decisions to move our beautiful Trinidad and Tobago forward to developed nation status."

Beautiful words! I was struck by the words "institutional memory" because they are words I often use in public debate and private discussion. I have spoken in Parliament, in the 2005 budget debate, where I was bemoaning the fact that we have lost institutional memory in a very important part of our resource management, with respect to the collection of taxation in the petroleum sector. I said then: "I wonder where our institutional memory has gone. Is it lost? Has it gone out of the grasp of the Government unto the other side?" We have not tapped it and I challenge anybody today to say, in terms of the ability of our Government and the ministries. The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries is here. The Minister in the Ministry of Finance is here, but do we still have that capability? Are we really looking at the people who might still be able to contribute?

This Government, I think, has turned that way a little in that previously politicians were just left behind. In the present period of this Government, I have noted that certain very senior politicians have been taken aboard by the Government in an advisory capacity. I would like to recognize one of those with

us today, Sen. Overand Padmore, a person for whom I have great regard. I had the honour to be on a team to the People's Republic of China in June 1975, an oil mission. The hon. Senator was the head of that team. There was a young parliamentarian who was also on that team. The hon. Minister of Education would know about that young parliamentarian. She is not here today.

The other members who have that institutional memory, as politicians, will be people like Mr. Cuthbert Joseph, who has also a wide array of experience to provide to us. Of course, within our Senate, there is Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith, who has both political and technical background and experience to provide to us in this country.

I am saying that the Government needs to tap those resources to a much greater extent. Try to get back what we have lost; not only the technical, but also the arts and humanities and everything else! I would like to say that in certain respects our population does not think so much about it and sometimes we tend to be a little lazy, even the technocrats.

Madam President, you may be aware that the Prime Minister, in the British Gas luncheon meeting, spoke of the new integrated energy entity which was being examined. On April 04, the energy correspondent for the *Business Express* had an article headed, "Energy Mega Merger: An Old Story". It is an old story indeed, but it is a very superficial commentary and the only thing that he could figure out as active consideration of any kind of mega merger was Trintoc, Trintopec and NGC forming an exploration and production joint venture in Trintomar to develop the ill-fated Pelican Field.

3.00 p.m.

But that is the only thing.

Madam President: We are not straying, are we?

Sen. B. Ali: No, I am speaking to the hon. Minister's "institutional memory."

Madam President: Let us come back to the Homes for Older Persons Bill.
[*Interruption*]

Sen. B. Ali: He is not so old. Okay, that is not the full story. Some people need to do the research in order to get the story. I can do it from my memory. I did it from my memory, the background to the National Energy Corporation, which is one of the companies that is listed as a possible part of this thing—the position of the National Energy Corporation in this whole deal. I will not spend too long on that. I might be straying but I think the hon. Minister opened the door to that.

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When I speak of institutional memory, I am appalled that we seem to forget. Right now we are looking at these government-to-government arrangements but we had that same sort of thing in the first oil boom. Many of those—whether it is the French who built Mount Hope Medical Complex, the British who built the Hall of Justice and the financial centres, or the Germans who were supposed to do the secondary roads developments. I do not know what happened to that. Today we have the Canadian doing the National Oncology Centre and the Chinese building tall buildings everywhere. There are many, many others.

Let us look back at the institutional memory provided by the *Ballah Report*. The report was very, very critical of government-to-government arrangements. I think one should dig it up and look and see. I am concerned. I often speak *déjà vu* but what I see happening today, happened before. I am really concerned about the lack of accountability and transparency in many of these projects. I am not saying that there is any corruption, but we have to be better able to assess that kind of situation by going back to see what happened in that period and what we are now encountering in this present period.

Madam President, I have cut short my contribution on the subject of institutional memory because I do not want to delve in that too much.

Madam President: I appreciate that.

Sen. B. Ali: I would like, briefly, to go to the Bill before us.

Madam President: Thank you.

Sen. B. Ali: Because there are a few items, some inconsistencies, and it starts from the beginning. When I look at the section 2, which has the definition for “Home for Older Persons.” It states:

“‘Home for Older Persons’ or ‘Home’ means a house or other premises used for the care and housing of more than four older persons whether for reward or not;”

Everywhere else I read in this document, it speaks about four persons. The definition states more than four persons. It does not seem much but the whole basis of the Schedule is for four persons. I would expect that would be looked at and corrected as necessary.

I made some comments already on the classes of older persons. I do not think we have classes of older persons. There are different classes of home care. The Second Schedule speaks of classes of older persons, which is a matter which we can correct at a later date.

The Third Schedule is very confusing. Once again, because it is a Schedule, I do not want to bring it up in the committee stage. Maybe the drafters can look at it before we get into the committee stage. There is a column for the number of residents, which states four to 10 and the second is 10 and over. You have to make up your mind which is it, four to 10 and over 10? That refers to the fees that are payable. I bring it to the attention of the hon. Minister. Perhaps, it is a small correction that may be needed there to bring that in line.

The question of levels, I do not know what level of care is provided. Is it level 1, level 2 or level 3? I did not encounter the word "level" anywhere else except here. I do not know where that originated from.

Clause 4 referred to the Fourth Schedule. I believe Sen. Ahmed mentioned the licence. I am not a lawyer, but I find it very strange that licence to operate says: "I so and so have met the requirements under the home, et cetera." I would have expected a licence to be issued by an authority, not the person, except for a bar which needs no authority for a licence to operate with spirituous liquor. I ask that we have a look at the Fourth Schedule. I think Sen. Ahmed raised the question of there being no expiry date or no place for a signature. If this is the form of the Schedule, then something is not quite correct about it.

In relation to the licence also, I have noted that there is a penalty, if you display an expired licence in a premise. But there is no requirement to display a licence. If you do not display a licence you are okay, nobody can do you anything, but if you display the licence and it expires then you have committed an offence. Please, this is something to be looked at. If you wish to put down the licence in a particular form and it must be displayed, then we must say that it should be displayed.

Clause 27 referred to the Facility Review Team. I found it very strange for a few reasons. One is that, to me, a team has to have a captain but this is a headless team. There is nobody. There is a list of people who will qualify to be on the review team, but there is nobody who is head of that team, who is coordinating that team and to whom the team reports. I found that a rather strange arrangement.

Then it goes on to say that the committee shall consist of three or more persons from among eight persons. If you choose a team of a fire officer, an accountant and a senior planning officer from the Town and Country Planning Division, is that an adequate team to conduct an assessment? Basically, the law is saying that you can have a team of three persons chosen out of people with those

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disciplines. I think we need to look at it again and make it tighter, so that the Facility Review Team has someone in charge who is at the head and who will be able to call on the resources available to him.

I note also that the Minister can choose more than one team. Out of those eight persons we may have more than one review team, which is a fairly good idea because you may have one review team here, one in south or one in Tobago and you utilize the people who are there to do it. I would leave that to be handled as we go along.

Clauses 28 and 29 of the Bill provide for the powers of the Facility Review Team and the duties of the team. When we go to clause 37(1), which is where the Minister can make regulations, under that clause, the Minister has the power to prescribe the powers and duties of the Facility Review Team. The main Act has that already. Is that not inconsistent, that you have it in two places? The Minister may make rules for the team, which is not in consonance with the Bill. I believe it needs to be examined and brought in line.

I believe that is as far as I would like to go. I have a few which can be handled in the committee stage. They are editorial matters, but these are what I consider substantive elements which need to be corrected.

Finally, I would like, once again, to stress the need to provide assistance, while we can do it, to people who have to be put in homes. Nobody likes to put their parents or elderly ones in a home but circumstances sometimes dictate it and in some cases, certainly for our public servants who are retirees and pensioners, they really cannot afford it.

Finally, Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh did speak to the judges' pension requirement plea. I recall that early in 2006, the Retired Judges Association asked to have a meeting with the Independent Bench. I recall Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie, Sen. Prof. Ramchand and I did attend that meeting. They provided data for us and we did speak, at least Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie, to the people concerned. The Attorney General was listening at the time and we provided some specific data on those judges who are seriously ill and some who are recently deceased and had left financial burdens behind them.

I did get a reply some time, which said that the law has to be changed. We recognize that the Judges Salaries and Pensions Act does not provide for it, but is there not a way around? For example, we can do a proper assessment of those people and where necessary give them some ex gratia payment until we can get the law amended. I am saying that because I do not see the law being amended in any short period of time and these people continue to suffer. I would like to make a plea on their behalf.

That is as much as I would like to say on the Bill. I will support the Bill provided we can get the necessary amendments done. I think it is a step in the right direction, although I think it is only a work in progress.

Thank you.

The Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (Sen. The Hon. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid): Thank you very much, Madam President. We are here to consider an Act to repeal the Homes for Older Persons Act, No. 38 of 2000. The operative word I am using is “repeal” not amend “repeal”. We are faced with the prospect of having to repeal this Act, not necessarily amend. The amended legislation might be redeemable but this legislation was deemed to be so bad that it had to be repealed.

We are not the ones saying so. It is not a government decision or a political decision to repeal this Act, in that sense. The decision to repeal this Act is as a consequence of the advice of experts in the field of law and other technical areas, including those persons from the Ministry of Social Development, who would have considered this very, very carefully and the legal draftsmen.

It was felt that this Act could not be salvaged, perhaps, because it was very, very poorly constructed and assembled and at the end of the day, it represented what one might call miserable and horrible legislation. What is worse is that this Act did not stand alone in that regard. As you would recall, in 2000, a number of pieces of legislation came to the Parliament. Many of those pieces of legislation have presented themselves before the court. Even judges have ruled that not only were they bad legislation, but in many cases were deemed to be unconstitutional. As a consequence we have been faced with the situation of having to go over and redo a number of the pieces of legislation that would have been brought in 2000. This is just one example of a number of pieces of deplorable, miserable and unworkable legislation. Sometimes when we listen to the hon. Senators opposite when they speak about the carelessness on the part of the Government, I do not know what they were thinking and reading when they read their own legislation.

Perhaps, it was their inexperience in government. They had been in government for five years by 2000. But I have heard it said that you can have five years experience or you can have one year experience five times. I do not know what their conditions might have been. But, certainly by 2000 they were in no position to present reasonable legislation to this Parliament. Nobody expects legislation to be perfect and that is why there are provisions where we can amend

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and improve as we go along, but the degree to which these pieces of legislation were bad, to the extent that we have been faced, as we are today, with a situation where we must repeal and reconstruct new legislation, this is what we have done.

The Homes for Older Persons Act, together with the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act, the Children's Authority Act, the Children's Community Residences, Foster Homes and Nurseries Act and the Equal Opportunity Act in particular as was referred to last week, were deemed to be unconstitutional. The Mediation Act is one of which the Parliament and the country must be reminded. That was an Act that was also challenged as being unconstitutional because it gave power to the court that rightfully belonged to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

If you would recall, as criminal matters came to the court, the Mediation Act allowed the magistrate to refer those matters to mediation centres and based on the report of the mediators at the mediations, the magistrate could then dismiss the case and say that the case had gone to mediation, without reference to the Director of Public Prosecutions, where the DPP, by law, is the only authority and must be involved in any decision to discontinue a criminal matter. That is way past carelessness. That is irresponsibility and ignorance on the part of those who would have constructed that piece of legislation. Similarly with this legislation, there are fundamental flaws, creating a situation where we must repeal, not amend, and introduce new legislation.

Part of the problem, as I was alluding to earlier, had to do with their inexperience in government. They do not understand the sequence of events that must take place if you are to produce legislation. The normal sequence is that you would have whatever matter you must deal with, but you must have consultations with the people. You cannot arrive at positions on the basis— especially important matters such as an Act to address the situation of homes for older persons or a situation which deals with a large section of the community as the members of the society that constitute the older persons or younger persons. We have a youth policy. With respect to the older persons, we have dealt with it by way of consultations. Having done those consultations, you put yourself in a position to develop a proper policy because a government ought not to think that it alone has all the knowledge and expertise inside and within its own borders. All governments must understand that the people out there who work on a daily basis have valuable information, insight and perspective which must be taken into account as you design and develop your policy.

Over the five years that Sen. Dr. Kernahan mentioned, we have done extensive consultations, as they relate to older persons in the development of a policy. On October 01, 2002—she went through a number of different years—it took us one year to do a particular clause and another year and eight months to do the second clause. I want to give her a sense of what had been happening. They are inexperienced in government and they do not know how government uses its time. On October 01, 2002, we had a consultation in Port of Spain. That was our first consultation on the basis of our draft policy on aging. We did a draft insight and on the basis of that draft, we then consulted with the people to hear what they had to say.

We did another one in San Fernando at the Naparima Bowl. I attended that one in November of that year.

We did a third consultation in Macoya. We also did one in Tobago. At the end of those sector consultations we brought everything together and amended the document to reflect what was presented at the various sector consultations. We completed a new document, which we made available to the public and we hosted national consultation. We brought everybody back together to hear what they had to say, based on the revisions that we would have undertaken.

We did one in Trinidad and we went back and did one in Tobago to ensure that people had available to them the opportunity to express what they needed to express because a policy document is an extremely important document and we must ensure that we take every care to get it right.

We do not, in May of 2002, start to work on a piece of legislation and by June or July 2002 have legislation before the Parliament. There is a sequence of events that must take place to ensure that we have it right. We have gone through that entire process and we have produced a policy on aging which we have laid before this Parliament.

I made a statement in this Parliament when that was laid. The Government made a statement in laying that. Even if you did not want to read the document, we were in a position—we articulated some of the major elements of that particular document.

Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie is absolutely right when she said that the majority of our older persons are not in homes. That is absolutely true and that is how it should be. The truth is that the policy attempts to put in place a perspective that says that it is our responsibility, as a government and a society, to keep our older persons as active, healthy and productive as long as possible, so that you

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constantly make them less in need of having to turn to care in a home or specialized care in the home, as the case might be. That is what the policy attempts to address.

They spoke about the Majid Plan of Action. The truth is that even in that plan of action, it recognizes that there are different categories of older persons. There is a category that they described as younger old, from 60 to 70 and there is “older” and “oldest old”. As you move from one stage to the other, your needs change because we ought not to assume that everybody over the age of 60 is a homogenous group. It is absolutely not. There are persons 60 years old who can outrun many of us in here, who are physically fit and are as strong as any 35 year old. That is a reality. We ought not to be considering persons that age in the same way we consider persons who are in need of care in a home. The policy addresses that. The Government asked itself: What can we do, or the population do to ensure that we keep our persons over 60 years as healthy and productive as long as possible? That was the goal. All of that we discovered as a country. These were the perspectives that came out. These were the bits and pieces of information, all of which went into the development of our policy on aging.

I would articulate some of the specific police objectives that we identified in the policy on aging. They are:

- To create an environment that would facilitate the meaningful participation and involvement of older persons in society.

We are not interested in a situation where our older persons are marginalized. We want them integrated in the society. It is exactly the same feature you would find in the policy for our differently-abled citizens, because it must always be our intention to foster integration and allow our citizens to participate in the mainstream of society.

- To ensure the provision of adequate and cost-effective community-based services for older persons.
- To promote wellness, active and healthy aging among older persons.

There is something such as healthy aging. There is a concept of healthy aging, which means as you grow older, you grow older in such a way that you remain as active as you have been in the years when you were considered young.

- To enhance the self-reliance and functional independence of older persons.

All of these, I will show you in a short while, impact upon the types of programmes that we design. If the policy says that we are encouraging and facilitating self-reliance, then we must put in place mechanisms and strategies that will indeed have the effect of ensuring that our older persons are able to function independently.

- To facilitate their continued participation in family life and the society.

We want older persons in their own homes relating to their family and imparting the kind of wisdom that they would have acquired over the years and imparting some of their values and continuing to participate in the socialization function.

- To promote and preserve the dignity and independence of older persons.

The truth is that there is a correlation between independence and dignity too. There is a relationship between those two, independence and dignity. No one likes to be reliant on other people. Many of our older persons—what hurts them the most about growing old is the fact that they have to rely on people to do this or that for them—feel as though some of their dignity is lost. You have been accustomed all your life functioning on your own and doing for yourself and you find yourself in a situation where you must have—Even when we get there, it must be done with dignity.

- To encourage and promote education and public awareness on issues relating to older persons at the aging process.

I am glad I used the word “education”. This is just an aside. Do you know that under our GATE Programme we have no age limit? We deliberately ensured that we did not put an age limit because we want to encourage persons aged 50 or 60. If you want to go to school and educate yourself, then by all means, because we think that there is value even if at the end of the day you make yourself a richer person intellectually and you are able to make a contribution to your family or the wider society, then by all means. We would like to see them stronger, smarter, and healthier intellectually and physically. That is why, as I have said, we are promoting education. It reminded me of an example of the policy, in effect, in the way we have designed some of our other programmes; our education programmes in particular.

- To facilitate, encourage and support research on aging issues.

We must. It is an area to which the world's attention has been drawn and we too have a responsibility to encourage the university and sponsor research. Within

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the Ministry of Social Development, there is a research division and part of their responsibility is to do research on aging issues. Even if they lack the in-house capacity, one of the things the Government does is hire consultants to do research on your behalf; even consultants coming out of the University of the West Indies and other places, private consultants. There is that responsibility that is given to us by the aging policy.

- To facilitate greater access to recreational facilities by persons in communities throughout the country.

You will find as a consequence of this, what the policy on aging does is that it gives guidelines to all the different ministries. That is what a policy does. It says to every ministry: As they relate to issues that pertain to aging and older persons, this is your responsibility. In very much the same way you would find the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education facilitating the education of older persons, it is the same way we would find that the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs facilitates the availability of recreational facilities.

As I said sport, one of the things that we have been doing over the last few years was an idea that came about called senior citizens' games. This has taken place on a number of occasions. I do not know if you are aware of it. That came about from discussions that took place in the sector consultations. That idea came forward and it was recognized to be an idea that had some value. I do not recall the lady's name, but she went ahead and this country has been able to host, at least on two occasions, a senior citizens' games. Again encouraging and demonstrating to the older persons who may be looking on, this is what you can do.

One of the things you want to do—many persons have self doubt. Many persons, in their ignorance, look forward to 60 as a day they would be lying in their bed. What we need to do is to change the mindset, so that younger persons prepare differently for their older years and they look at their older years as a time of continued, active and productive life. We do not want people looking at life in such a way that would suggest: When we get to 60 my job is to lie and wait. We must undertake that education exercise early so that people would have a different view. I now have a different and improved view. We would like to see all our citizens prepare themselves differently as they grow older.

Further to that policy, with a wide range of objectives, we developed something which is extremely consistent with what Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie was saying. This is called a continuum of services, recognizing that with older

persons, there is a wide range of needs. The continuum of services recognizes that and we have designed and approved the concept of it and we must now follow and implement the prescription of this continuum.

What the continuum speaks to is the low-end need. We are looking at preventative mechanisms. This is something we have already put in place, the establishment of senior centres. Preventative means that we are trying to keep our older persons active. We are trying to prevent a situation where there would be need—where we would descend in health and be in greater need as time goes by.

There are some programmes within the preventative category such as the establishment of senior centres. I am aware that we have a few in place. I think we have one in south, Gonzales and perhaps one in Maracas/St. Joseph, if I recall. What the senior centres do is that they are not designed to provide medical care to older citizens. They are designed to provide a social environment where they can keep their minds active by interacting with each other and keep them intellectually sharp and provide activities for the older persons to do so that they remain as efficient and productive as they might have been before. We are able to stimulate more and more activities.

In a senior centre there may be persons who may have never used a computer but would be trained to use a computer for the first time in their life. The reason for that is to have them explore new areas and stimulate their interest and as a consequence, in some cases, stimulate their desire to continue to live happily.

- Transportation and escort services.

Again that is in the preventative category. What we want in this particular service is that you may find, as mentioned earlier, that some of the older persons may not need anyone to come home and take care of them. All they may need is someone to take them to the grocery, by a relative or to the park, as the case may be. All of these have been recognized and approved as having to be done. Our challenge is to put these things in place. We have already designed the plan and we are working towards putting all these in place. It is a wide range.

Counselling services is something we have identified as a preventative measure—talking to our older citizens and helping them to understand what some of their challenges might be and helping them to work with their own psychological conditions, whatever it might be. We are working on ensuring that these are put in place.

- Meals on wheels.

This is a concept that they came up with. Again, some older persons may not be able to provide food for themselves, but they can stay in their own homes and they can be as independent as possible if they were to be provided with a meal. All these fall into the preventative category. That would be on the side that says lower need.

- Curative or partially supportive.

This includes home care; people visiting your homes and taking care of you in your own homes. Again, it is always advisable that older persons are likely to be much more comfortable in their own homes.

- Availability of assisted living facilities.
- Adult day programmes.
- Companion, care and supportive housing.

Adult day programmes refer to a category of care, whereby the older person may not necessarily need to sleep and live in a home full-time but during the course of the day they may need some attention. They may visit the home during the course of the day and again go back to their own homes during the course of the night. They are able to maintain a higher degree of independence and self-sufficiency if they were to be in their own homes.

- Restorative.

This is a third category. This includes the adult day hospitals and regular hospitals. Restorative is when you have an ailment and you need to be rehabilitated. That is a third category on this continuum that I have been speaking of.

The fourth category is fully supportive. This includes homes for the aged, chronic care or nursing homes. It is only in this category that we see our older persons having the greatest level of need.

We have looked at the low level of need. We can call it the middle level of need, and the greater level of need. Along this continuum, there must be different services provided at every step along the way. That will constitute, at the end of the day, a full range of services to our older citizens included along this continuum that we have just described.

That is what we have been doing by way of planning. We are already on the way with many of these, consistent with the policy and the continuum of care, which has already been approved. One by one, we are identifying the services that

need to be provided, we are developing the proposal and we are getting them approved and identifying the funding to ensure that as we go along, we will introduce these services one by one along the way and we too would be expanding the range of services that we are offering.

Having said that, and knowing what we have been doing, it was a little surprising to me to hear Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh say that we have done nothing to improve the life of the elderly. I alone was not surprised. It might surprise you to know that I met someone from Guyana, over the last two days, and he was looking at the Parliament Channel and he asked me, based on what he knew, how could Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh say such a thing. I cannot explain Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh's behaviour.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Not behaviour, statement.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: I too do not understand how Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh could say such a thing.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Statement is different from behaviour. You are a Minister of higher education? You should know the difference. You are a teacher in Social Studies. [*Interruption and Crosstalk*]

Madam President: Senators, give him a chance. Do not take advantage of my good nature today.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: The making of a statement is a behavioural act in itself.

He also said health care is abysmal. I know that he has his eyes set on the Minister of Health's office and constantly he challenges the Minister of Health. It is said if you are nobody you would pick a fight with somebody and maybe you might get some recognition. Week after week we have had a number of occasions when there have been Motions on the Adjournment put forward by Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh, making all kinds of accusations. The Minister of Health has come here and very competently and completely demolished every position he has put forward and articulated what the Government has achieved in health in this country, unprecedented. The unprecedented achievement of this Government in health care has happened during the last five years.

I would remind him. Because he has made the statement it has given me the opportunity to remind him. It is indeed relevant to the care that we provide for older persons. It might surprise him to know, perhaps, because he probably did not think it was possible, but in 2005 and 2006, in health care, we have been able,

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within the health care system, the normal regular health care system, to deliver 50,000 surgeries to citizens of this country. He might not believe that because he does not think it is possible but it is possible and it was done.

We also implemented the waiting list initiative, which allowed us to perform 10,000 surgeries.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: And three died including the child.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: Do you know what kinds of surgeries we have been able to perform? They are joint, hip replacement and 3,000 cataract operations. Do you know which category of citizens have been able to benefit from this? Our older citizens have been a major beneficiary of this intervention in the health care system; a great credit to our country and indeed a credit to our Minister of Health.

Many of these persons who are on the waiting list initiative were on that list since 1996. Today, the Minister of Health is able to boast—which is a boast that cannot be made by the Minister in the United Kingdom, the Canadians, or the United States—if you have been diagnosed and have been listed for elective surgery in Trinidad and Tobago, you would have that surgery in a matter of three months. More than that, it will be free of charge to the patient. [*Continuous Interruption and Crosstalk*]

Madam President: Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh, listen to what he is saying. You will have your turn at some time.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: I urge for you to be compassionate. He is a bitter and sad man. To sit on that seat cannot be easy. It is a tough place for them to be. I know that they are suffering.

Madam President: Get back to your contribution.

Sen. The Hon.M. Abdul-Hamid: They have called for the election. They are beggars to their own demise.

They cannot fill six Senate seats. They cannot find candidates, but they want the election. Look at poor Ato. [*Continuous interruption and Crosstalk*]

Madam President: Senators, I have been very, very tolerant this afternoon and I have allowed some kind of crosstalk but do not get out of hand, please. Minister I would like you to get back to what you were doing; a very interesting discussion, please continue.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: More than the 50,000 surgeries plus the 10,000 that were performed, as I have stated, a major beneficiary have been our older citizens. You see them on the television happy, reporting that for years they had their ailments and finally they have been able to get a remedy.

Years ago, I remember, we would be looking at the news and we would see, very often older citizens standing outside the hospital complaining that they had come from Rio Claro, Talparo, Arima and very far to get their medication at the pharmacy, but when they got there the pharmacy was closed and there was no pharmacist to be found, and whatever else the problems might have been. I want to dare you or anybody else to tell me when last you have seen a situation like that. It has been a while.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: He wants to dare you?

Madam President: Do not pull me into your—

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: Madam President, he knows that very well. He is grasping at straws. That is a very silly thing for a 60-year-old man to do.

The CDAP has been—*[Interruption]*

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: What type of language is that, you dare anybody?

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: Madam President, if the Senator tempts me I would tell the whole country why he is so popular on TV6. That is in case he tempts or provokes me. The CDAP—*[Interruption]* I am moving on.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: “Yuh beg Panday for a job.”

Madam President: Please! All right, Senator.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: I am moving on.

Madam President: All right, Senator. Minister, I would suggest that you ignore the side talk and the crosstalk and stick to what you are saying. Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh, please stop making those kinds of accusations across the floor.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: He said he dares you.

Madam President: All right, I corrected him on that.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: I want to protect you.

Madam President: Thank you very much. Please continue, Minister.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: He so big and tall with a 46-page resumé I cannot ignore him. It is hard. The CDAP—[*Interruption*]

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: I object to that statement. I am proud of my stature.

Madam President: All right, I am on my feet now. Minister, please do not make personal comments like that about other Members. I do not think it is right and I suggest that you continue in the vein in which you were going.

Sen. Mark: On a point of order. I want to refer you to Standing Order 35(4).

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: “Boy, yuh cyah step in my shoe.” I am clean.

Sen. Mark: It shall be out of order to use offensive or insulting language.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: “Yuh cyah” even tie my shoelace.

Sen. Mark: —of Members of either House. I would ask my colleague, through you, to refrain.

Madam President: All right, Senators, all right. Minister, it was wrong to say that about another Member. Any comment on physical or other attributes—I would suggest that you continue after maybe you say that you withdraw your statement. Please continue.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: Madam President, I really did not intend to be offensive. I neglected to say big, tall and handsome. The CDAP, as you know, has been a programme that has revolutionized health care in many ways in this country. At present, there are 11 illnesses which are covered by the programme. The Chronic Disease Assistance Programme covers 11 illnesses: acid reflux, asthma, depression, arthritis, cardiac disease, diabetes, prostate problems, epilepsy, glaucoma, hypertension and Parkinson's diseases.

A significant portion of the persons who suffer from these diseases are older persons. CDAP is a programme that makes the medication available to the citizens free of charge. The way it works is that they are able to go to any pharmacy in their neighbourhood. There are over 200 pharmacies where citizens can go and access this medical assistance. All citizens can go. A portion of the population that has experienced relief from this particular programme is that segment of the population which is referred to as older persons. I have outlined the specific illnesses.

We know that our older citizens who may suffer from these illnesses benefit from CDAP. There are 50 different medications. Today, we are proud to say that more than 300,000 citizens of this country have benefited from this programme.

That is a programme that did not exist in previous governments. It exists today and it has done—

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: We had CDAP with four drugs and you extended it to 11.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: We have done with this a major—
[*Interruption*]

Sen. Mark: He is misleading the Senate.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: We have been able to improve the quality of health care for all of our citizens. A notable segment of the population is the portion of the community which is referred to as older persons.

With respect to the old age pension I recalled the last government promised to take it to \$1,000. They got as far as \$720. They moved it up by \$100. It was \$720 and \$800 when they left office. Today, the old age pension stands at \$1,250 and the second year at \$1,350. That is a government that has been consistently demonstrating that it has a keen interest in the welfare of our older citizens.

I want to get to the specific clauses of the Bill. Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh asked why the homes were not licensed. Again, it speaks to innocence on his part, because you have to look at the legislation to understand why it was unworkable. It means that it cannot work. There were some provisions that were missing, which made it difficult for the Act to be operational. Let us go through and look at some of those very serious shortcomings of that particular piece of legislation.

The Act, in the Interpretation section referred to “Home” and there was a second definition for “Home for Older Persons”. I would take the liberty to read what the two definitions were.

“‘Homes for Older Persons’ means a house or other premises used as a place for the care and housing of older persons whether for a reward or not;

‘Home’ means a house or other premises established for the express purpose of caring for and housing older persons, whether for reward or not;”

The only difference there is in one they used the word “used” and in the second one they used the words “established for the express purpose”.

The technical advisors felt that needed to be clarified and there was a serious problem at that level very early in the legislation.

The other problem that came up was who would grant the licence. When you asked why were the homes not granted licences, it was difficult to determine who had the authority to grant the licence. Section 6(1) gave the authority to grant the licence to one body, I think it is the Division. Section 6(1) provides that the Minister was given the authority to grant the licence in one part of the legislation and in section 9(2), it gave an authority to the Division of Ageing. You are creating confusion. It must be clear, definitive, specific and right. We must know exactly who is authorized, in legislation, to grant a licence. You cannot have a situation where—because with either one you have set up yourself to be challenged in court simply because the legislation does not make it clear who has that particular authority. How can you grant a licence if you do not know who is authorized to grant the licence?

In addition to that, there was the issue of fees, as was mentioned. You have to stipulate the quantum of fees. What would you charge? Would you charge \$1, \$1,000 or \$500? We do not know. The legislation has to stipulate the fees.

The Facility Review Team—there were a number of problems with this section of the legislation of 2000. First of all, largely it was drawn from employees and there was a single Facility Review Team and 103 homes at the time. That means the Facility Review Team had the responsibility to go to all of these homes and perform a very detailed analysis of what they saw. They had to examine infrastructure, management structure and a number of other variables and present a report, upon which the Division may act because we did not know. The Facility Review Team had that kind of responsibility; a very significant responsibility, yet the team was drawn from employees largely from the Ministry of Health. It was contemplated that they would do this, outside of their normal working functions. It is an enormous task to do by itself. It is an enormous task to ask one Facility Review Team to perform, let alone asking them to do it on a part-time basis. It was improbable and impractical that the Facility Review Team should be so composed, given the task that they were being asked to perform.

Secondly, there was the question—Again, it was unworkable in that sense. It was just impractical to ask this team to perform those functions under the terms that were identified.

Even the availability of persons—if we were to put that you needed an astronaut on a team to inspect a building, and without the astronaut it is impossible to constitute the team, which is what happened. There were some positions on the team that could not be sourced and it could not be duly

constituted, because there were some professions that needed to be on the team, which were not in existence and could not be sourced. It made it difficult, if not impossible, to properly constitute a Facility Review Team.

There was also the view that there was not enough balance on the team, given that the team had to look at issues that did not necessarily have to do with health.

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. [*Hon. J. Yuille-Williams*]

Question put and agreed to.

4.00 p.m.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: Madam President, thank you very much and hon. Members. It was felt, given that they had to look at management and other infrastructure issues that, perhaps, it was not properly considered—and that other kinds of expertise needed to be on the team. There was also a challenge, given that six out of the nine officers were employees from the Ministry of Health and, yet, the Division of Ageing fell under the Ministry of Social Development, whether there would be a problem there with the officers not being confused as to their line of reporting.

The worst example of a poor draft, poor legislation and poor policy was the fact that the legislation of 2000 did not give proper authority to the Facility Review Team to perform the functions that they were asking them to perform. It made reference for them to perform these functions, but it was not duly authorized by law to enter into homes and to perform these functions. If the Facility Review Team—this is to answer the Senator's question—does not have the authority to enter into homes for older persons to perform their functions, how can they advise the Minister or the Division of Ageing that a licence ought to be granted or that a licence ought not to be granted, as the case might be? Worse than that, even if you say that you can revoke the licence if they refuse, there were no provisions for the surrendering of a licence in the legislation, and there were no provisions in that legislation of 2000 that outlined the mechanisms by which the legislation would be surrendered or revoked.

So, there were a number of gaping holes in the legislation that meant, at the end of the day, the entire legislation had to be repealed. It was so bad. That is the point that we are making. They come here now and say that we are being careless in our legislation. Madam President, what is this? This has to be crazy. In fact,

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with respect to some pieces of legislation, I was told, that when they were presented before the court, the judge asked: Who wrote this? The judge questioned whether serious and competent persons were involved in the writing of these pieces of legislation. All of that I put down to inexperience in government, hastiness, scrappiness and unprofessionalism. At the end of the day, the best term that can be used to describe the UNC legislation and the UNC governance is just a horrible problem-ridden and problem-riddled government. [*Desk thumping*] It is consistent with the way they have been. [*Desk thumping*]

We have rectified a number of these issues. The new legislation provides a single definition for Homes for Older Persons. Just to make a point with respect to the Older Person Care Board, Sen. Ahmed spoke about a wide range of issues as they relate to older persons, but this legislation deals specifically with homes for older persons. It is not an umbrella Bill addressing all the needs of older persons, but it deals specifically with Homes for Older Persons and the governance, monitoring and regulation of homes for older persons.

There is a wide range of issues which we have addressed in our policy and which we have addressed in the continuum of services, and there is need for an umbrella Bill to govern a number of other issues as they relate to older persons, but this Bill is not required to address all of those issues. This is a very specific piece of legislation. So, they have brought in a wide range of issues as they relate to older persons which really do not have any bearing on this particular piece of legislation, but the Older Person Care Board which is intended and expected to perform functions as they relate to the full range of care for older persons would not be established under the Homes for Older Persons Act, but under an Act which is established to address and deal with the wider range of issues as they relate to older person.

Madam President, calling for a clause to establish a common room in a home, please. The next thing that we are going to hear is that the room should be painted in green; it must have lighting of a certain wattage and the dimension of the room must be this or that and so forth. [*Laughter*] That is not to be placed in the legislation. That is yet another example of ignorance of what is the role of the Government and what the role of the legislation is. That is not your role. I understand that in the past they used to watch TV and call the television station and tell TTT to move the flowers from there. [*Laughter*]

Madam President, the removal of the provision of the Older Person Care Board, as I have just explained, the transitional provisions are necessary, because whenever you are bringing in rules and regulations, you must put in place

transitional provisions. You cannot expect that today a home would be operating under a certain understanding, if not rules, and tomorrow they would be able to upgrade automatically. You must put transitional provisions in place which are in clause 36.

We have identified the quantum of the non-refundable application fee. We have clarified the issue of who will have the authority to grant the licence, and it will be the Minister. There are provisions made for the surrender of licences in clause 12, and there is to be the maintenance of a register of homes for older persons and, on that basis, a number of actions can be taken. There are new provisions for the submission of biannual reports by managers of homes on the status of residence to the division, which is a significant improvement. What this does is put a requirement on homes to provide reports, so that the Ministry through the Division of Ageing is kept up-to-date and would be able to monitor homes by way of not only the Facility Review Team, but to monitor the progress and the status of homes by way of periodic reports.

The powers of the Facility Review Team and the inspectors are clearly enunciated and they are granted the power to enter homes in clauses 25 and 28. The provision here for more than one Facility Review Team is very pragmatic and very useful, because you may find that the task may become so enormous that the Minister may be in a position to appoint a number of teams and have them working simultaneously, so that the work gets done. As you all know, the Minister also articulated and made it an offence to abuse our older persons.

Madam President, these were just some of the comments I hoped to make. In summary, we had to repeal the legislation. Repealing the legislation was as a consequence—I know they would be quick to say that we are just being spiteful. We have articulated it very carefully. The legislation was poorly done. They did no research whatsoever when they prepared that legislation. There was no consultation. It was legislation by “vaps.” There was no policy guiding the legislation and, as a consequence of all those negatives, when you put that in a pot you get bad legislation. That is what we had. This piece of legislation was so bad, along with other pieces of legislation that we had to repeal them. We are in the process of repealing the legislation and we have brought superior legislation; legislation that reflects competence, commitment and dedication to the older persons of Trinidad and Tobago; legislation that represents experience in government and good governance.

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

Sen. Dr. Glenn Ramadhar-Singh: Madam President, thank you very much. It is once more a distinct pleasure to address this august Senate. Reading this Bill, it cannot escape you that we are coming to the close of one term, and after the expenditure of an estimated \$150 billion, this Government has succeeded in nothing but driving the elderly into a state of despair, anxiety, restlessness, hopelessness and, recently, suicide. [*Desk thumping*]

This Bill, the Homes for Older Persons was actually a UNC measure. This was an attempt by the then government to ensure that our citizens of seniority were well looked after. It was a move by that high-paced, high-performance government of results to put people first, and to keep them at the centre of development.

What this PNM Government has done with this legislation and so many other brilliant measures instituted by the UNC is to frustrate the process. So, from 2000 to now, 2556 days later, they have come now to this august Senate with this legislation after completely ignoring the needs of our senior citizens, after shutting them out into the cold and putting them out into the streets. Because of an impending election, they usher in this piece of legislation through this Senate so that they can claim that they care about the elderly.

Madam President, the population of Trinidad and Tobago grew from 931,071 in the 1970 census to an estimated total of 1.283 million people at mid 1999. Available data reveals that between 1970 and 1980, the population grew by 16 per cent with the rate slowing to 12 per cent between 1980 and 1990.

The elderly population, that is, persons 60 and over, showed decreasing rates of growth as with the normal population. However, by mid 1999, this population, the elderly, had grown to an estimated 120,912. It is a well-known fact that of this figure, less than 7 per cent to 8 per cent live in homes for the aged. The rest are fortunate to find themselves in the home of a family member, a descendant or a home of their own. In any case, however and wherever they may be, under this Government, they live in fear without support and totally unappreciated for their long years of sacrifice to the State and the government. This Bill does very little for them.

This legislation today seems to be part of a requirement of an election shopping list; just like the miraculous \$600 million to pave roads that they have refused to pave for the past six years, [*Desk thumping*] and just like the recent promise to provide water to parts of south Trinidad—

Madam President: I have allowed you some leeway because you are new, but you are straying.

Sen. Hamid-Abdul: Why is he reading?

Madam President: I gave him permission. Minister, you are enquiring as to why he is reading. I have granted him permission because it is only his second time in the Senate and many other Senators read on the sly anyway, very often. [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: I wish to advise this honourable Senate that I had the opportunity to telephone and call upon a few senior citizen's homes in this country and I was flabbergasted that some of the managers were unaware of the implications and the measures in this Bill. Is this public consultation? Is this Government outreach? Clearly, this is just a piece of mamaguy legislation in an election year. Do they really care about how the poor live? How much money do they have to spend? Do they really care if the poor can pay their electricity and telephone bills?

Madam President, I am saddened to quote the *Sunday Guardian* of April 15, 2007 which said that Boodwah Goodman, a 60-year-old man of Hermitage Settlement, San Fernando, reportedly hanged himself from a tree in his yard, because the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) disconnected his electricity supply, because he was frustrated with the high cost of living in this country. He committed suicide and left behind a note complaining about the high cost of food and the recent cutting of his electricity supply.

Madam President, if they really cared about the poor, Boodwah Goodman would be alive today. They would have subsidized incomes to meet the increasing cost of living, hence this Bill does not speak properly to subsidization and incentives from the Government to assist in the funding of these homes. It may be that they are too busy supervising Chinese immigrants and throwing up downtown mega structures, building multimillion dollar luxury palaces and Bahrain-like civil engineering, and then whipping the EMA for approvals for smelter plants—

Madam President: You have gone off again.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh:—and ensuring a veil of dependency.

Sen. Montano: And he is reading again.

Sen. Mark: The Senator just came here! What is the matter with you? Cool yourself. We will have to put you out this Senate.

Sen. Montano: Who is going to put who out?

Madam President: I am the only one to put anybody out here.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: The PNM sees the elderly as the problem that they can do without. They are immune to the cries for an increase in pension. They do not hear the pleas about the lines in the hospitals and the calls for hygienic bathrooms in public places. Madam President, it seems as if they do not support the call by the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid, Spain which celebrated life expectancy and called for the promotion of increased opportunities in particular to older persons to realize their potential and to participate in all aspects of life.

Madam President, the UNDP Poverty Assessment by Ralph Henry et al, had defined below the poverty line as less than US \$1 per day. Strictly by this definition, pensioners earn \$1,350; this will apparently cross the poverty line. However, this works out to \$40 per day and \$11 a meal. Therefore, uncle Smitty can only purchase two doubles and a bara, one piece of KFC and a chicken burger. That is all he can afford for the day. [*Crosstalk*] While it is acceptable that food is not his only cost, he also needs wheat and whole grain products, fruit juices—

Madam President: Senators, I will suggest that you listen to what is being said and then reply. I would be very happy if somebody would reply after. [*Interruption*] All right, I do not need that from you Senator Mark. Please continue.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh:—fresh fruit and salads, vitamins, minerals, a proper supply of drinking water, electricity, a Digicel or b-mobile phone, a home phone, clothes and extra survival items like a CD or a DVD or a book. Are they not worth that?

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs conservatively estimated, by their stringent calculations, that you need \$1,700.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Sen. Danny Montano calculated that.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: We all know that the figure is more in the region of \$3,600 but, where is the caring? Where is the heart? We on this side are calling for pension to be immediately increased to \$2,000 with a bonus tag linked to beat the inflation rate so that our elders can live a decent, self respecting life in the land where they have toiled and gave their sweat and blood, so that others may have a brighter future. [*Desk thumping*]

That fact that the pension is insufficient is one thing, but it is another heart-wrenching story to get it. A security guard who realized that I would be contributing to this debate today told me, with tears bubbling in his eyes—I saw pain in his eyes when he described a visit for his grandmother, grandfather and

another uncle, and the sufferings that people have to go through. Elders are forced to travel to the office and they have to sign and re-sign every six months for their pension. Continuous mistakes are made by the administrative staff. These people are semi-illiterate and illiterate. There is a lack of knowledge, feigned or real ignorance by the administering clerks.

Madam President, these pension recipients, many of them need assistance in their everyday lives. They need assistance in eating, dressing, combing their hair, taking medicine and bathing. They are merely getting in and out of bed, not to mention climbing stairs. They are riddled with chronic diseases associated with ageing such as arthritis, hypertension, heart problems diabetes and hearing loss. At these offices, there are no emergency rooms and no medical facility. There is not even a glass of water if they are so inclined to drink. Is that a Government which cares?

Most people in this country could recall the incident where an elderly lady was forced to urinate right there and then in a public institution. At that point in time, there was a hue and cry, and today after so many months nothing has been done as we speak. The Government has not brought any legislation or encouraged or made any statement that there should be at least public health facilities for old persons. [*Crosstalk*]

It is a well-known fact that not only does the PNM barely keep you alive with food, but they also destroy the future of us growing our own food. Having already failed to deliver a clean and regular supply of water, they are now eliminating all real source of food production in this country.

Sen. Padmore: They said water for all in 1999.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: We are certainly not waiting with bated breath for the arrival of the Cubans to start with those grand farms with short term cash crops. Why not just wait for the Cuban doctors to take care of the sick and the needy when they suffer from malnutrition and poor nutritionally-based diseases.

We in the UNC, to demonstrate care for the elderly will promote a massive community outreach programme highlighting the positive aspects of growing old and challenging communities to brainstorm a way forward with the challenges that exist. To make our elderly feel accepted, the UNC government will promote continuous education to the elderly. Learning is a lifelong experience. We will then identify economic activities that they can engage in and then decide whether

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multi-skilling or skills development is needed. This Bill is silent on this matter. We will then survey the elderly for innate and natural skills where a gentleman in Barrackpore can train a young man in Marabella and teach him how to produce food cheaply and effectively—

Sen. Abdul-Hamid: That is the grow-box.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh:—and intelligently. He will pass on the secrets of the ancestors that are dying with our elders. The UNC will make public buildings and offices elderly-friendly with easy access, first class public health facilities and a friendly staff.

Concomitant with this aggressive focus on education and training and retaining, we will inspire the entrepreneurial spirit.

Madam President: I have allowed you to go on a little there thinking that you would come back to the Bill. I would really like you to come back to the Bill. Try not to stray too much. I know that you want to say a lot. [*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: My point is that the Government spends approximately \$3 billion annually on social programmes and they do not reach the poor and the old. There is an urgent need to reevaluate the social services and realize that the poverty that they are dealing with is urban poverty, but much of the rural poverty that is hidden in rural communities is not dealt with.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: They do not see rural poverty and if they see it they will ignore it.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: I am advocating that we examine the policy of the Asian tigers, who during the 1980s and 1990s did not go on the path of state-led dependency, but went on the path of wealth creation and growth mediated security. This is what we need in this country where we are succumbing to the Dutch disease where we have one sector of the economy cannibalizing other sectors.

Hon. Senator: What!

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: Madam President, to truly take care of old persons, the poor and the dispossessed, we need to use the riches from this sector to fire up other parts of the economy; to fire up agriculture so that we can plant, nurture and grow real crops and learn to do it more intelligently with fewer resources. We need to fire up the manufacturing sector and stimulate small

enterprising businesses with support from the oil and gas sector for the elderly. We need to stimulate tourism by bringing in more foreign exchange into the land so that the elderly can enjoy a real earned and substantial income instead of stretching their weak, beaten hands for crumbs. We need to fire up all sectors of the economy. If the Government fails to do that then they should be fired.

In the twilight of their day, our senior citizens are shut out, prone from malnutrition and they are unable to get water. I do not need to call out all the names of the villages and communities that are suffering for water today. Who suffers more than the old when they do not have persons to go and bring water for them? Those who are shut in their homes and cannot move, who suffers for water more? [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President, you just have to read the newspapers to see the struggles of the people. People's crops are dying, and people have to go to rivers for water. It is reported in today's *Express* newspaper that in Maturita Village, villagers walk for up to 20 minutes to the river to bathe and to bring buckets of water.

Madam President, in the afternoon of their career, our senior citizens, having abided by law and order and worked for this country by giving their sweat and blood to this republic, they deserve some peace and tranquility. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President: Senator, I just want to know, how long do you have again?

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: One minute.

Madam President: Okay, I am going to let you finish before we take the tea break.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: I want to take up one of the issues that came out from a bunch of policy statements, and that is the rights and protection of our elderly. In issue 3 of the Priority Direction and Ensuring and Enabling Supportive Environments on Ageing, it is said that neglect, abuse and violence against older persons can take many forms, physical, psychological, emotional and financial. All of these abound in this country today. Further, the process of ageing brings with it a declining ability to heal, so that older victims of abuse may never fully recover physically and emotionally from the trauma. The impact of the trauma is worsened because of shame and fear which causes them to be reluctant to seek help.

Madam President: Are you almost finished? You can finish and then we are going to take the extra time for tea.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: Madam President, in this their final hours, they should be given peace and tranquility. How can they do that in a land filled with terrorism and crime? The Government has failed with crime so they will fail with the old; the Government has failed with crime and so they will fail with the young; the Government has failed with crime and so they will fail with those in their midlife; and the Government will fail with those yet unborn. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President: Hon. Senators, we will now suspend for tea—if I say to return at 5.00 p.m, I will be denying you one minute—and we will resume at 5.05 p.m. [*Interruption*]

4.31 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.05 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

ADJOURNMENT

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 move that the Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, April 24, 2007 at 1.30 p.m. at which time we will continue—

Madam President: Is it not Private Members' Day?

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: Is it Private Members' Day?

Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie: Yes.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: Well, it will be Private Members' Day. We are going to do two Motions on the adjournment now.

Madam President: That is what I was going to ask you, because I do not have anything in front of me here. Which two Motions on the adjournment will we be doing? [*Interruption*] Hon. Senators, before we take the adjournment, we have two matters on the adjournment to be raised by Sen. Mark. Yes, I remember them from last week.

Alternative Sources of Energy (Failure to Provide a Comprehensive Report)

Sen. Wade Mark: Madam President, thank you very much. The first Motion deals with the issue of the need for the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries to provide this honourable Senate with a comprehensive report on the

employment of alternative sources of energy, in the context of the depletion of this country's natural resources.

You would recall that during the contribution by Sen. Dr. Jennifer Kernahan on the Heritage and Stabilisation Fund sometime in March, Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith intervened and I wish to quote what he said at that time. He said:

“I assure the hon. Senator that right now there are two demonstration projects taking place in this country for alternative energy; one is wind in Tobago, the other is a pilot project to use methanol as an input to generate electricity. I assure the Senator that this Government, two years ago, and I announced it here, reviewed our whole taxation policy in respect of additional taxation for the country.”

Now, Madam President, as you know, we have received information from the International Monetary Fund that unless we are able to source new gas supplies by the year 2024 or 2025, Trinidad and Tobago would have exhausted its natural gas supplies. We know that the Government is in very serious discussions, at the moment, with the Government of Venezuela, seeking to arrive at some agreement where they can jointly and mutually exploit natural resources, particularly gas supplies that border the both countries' territorial waters.

Madam President, in light of what is taking place globally, and the need for us to conserve energy resources, given the dire predictions that we have been informed about by the International Monetary Fund, I was quite happy that the hon. Minister did indicate to this Parliament that the Government had begun to explore and they were involved in practical activities aimed at generating alternative sources of energy.

Madam President, it is important for the country to have a detailed appreciation of these efforts on the part of the Government. We would like to know exactly where in Tobago this wind project is taking place. How long has this project started? What are the benefits that the Minister expects the country to derive from this particular alternative source of energy? In terms of Trinidad, we understand that methanol is being used as an input to generate electricity, meaning that natural gas would obviously be reduced as an input in generating electricity in the future.

So, I would like the hon. Minister to tell us exactly what is taking place. How are these measures going to save us in terms of energy supplies in the future, particularly as they relate to natural gas? And with all that is taking place, I do not

know if the Minister can brief us on current discussions between the government of Venezuela and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, insofar as sourcing more natural gas supplies, re our territorial borders.

As I am on this subject of alternative sources of energy, I read sometime today, with some degree of alarm and concern, because it was advanced at the last Cabinet post press briefing by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, that there were some talks to take place in Venezuela sometime yesterday and today involving energy matters, and because of the importance of these talks, our Prime Minister was supposed to be in attendance, because energy matters are very critical and crucial to the future of our country and, suddenly, I read in the newspaper today, with some degree of disquiet, that the issuing of a diplomatic note or contents or elements of a diplomatic note coming out of Venezuela, is being brought to the attention of the national community. I could not understand it. As far as I am aware, diplomatic notes are private and confidential, but we are being told, via the newspapers today, that these energy discussions that are supposed to take place in Venezuela, Margarita to be specific, are now going to take place minus the hon. Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

The view is being generated that the Prime Minister of our country has been snubbed.

Sen. Dumas: Nonsense.

Sen. W. Mark: I am saying that the view is being generated. I am not saying that it is my view. I am saying that as part of the energy discussions that are taking place right now in Margarita and given the fact that Venezuela has now taken over the Caribbean in terms of the PetroCaribe arrangement, I am very concerned, as a national, when I read this particular story in the newspaper.

I am glad that the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries is here, so that he can tell us exactly what has happened in this regard and how is this going to impact on our future as it relates to energy matters.

So, I raised these points because I believe they are important to the national community. I believe that we owe a duty to the country to let us know firstly, what alternative sources of energy are being explored by this Government, so that we can become less and less dependent on natural gas and oil.

We would also like to know what took place. Was it a diplomatic faux pas on the part of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to have issued a diplomatic note or the contents of a diplomatic note saying that our Prime Minister has been “uninvited”

to an event that we were told just last week that he was going to be attending, because of the importance of this exercise? Therefore, I would hope that the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries in this particular Motion would be able to provide us with some clarification on this particular issue as well, because it deals with the issue of energy and our future as a nation that is highly dependent on energy supplies, particularly in the gas sector.

Madam President, I would hope that my hon. colleague could bring to the attention of this Senate, what is the real story behind these developments and, most importantly, whether a diplomatic faux pas took place in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that resulted in our reading in the newspapers today that our Prime Minister, the hon. Patrick Manning will not be attending these energy talks in Margarita today, although he was prepared to leave this country today to head to Margarita. So, we would like to get some clarification on this matter.

Madam President, thank you very much.

The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, thank you. It always amazes me, the ability of Sen. Mark to be irrelevant, but what is even more amazing is that he is irrelevant to his own Motion. I will not be lured into that trap, and I will confine myself to the Motion that is before us, which is the failure of the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries to provide the nation with a comprehensive report on the employment of alternative sources of energy in the context of the depletion of the country's natural resources in the republic of Trinidad and Tobago. I am going to focus on my so called failure to provide this comprehensive report and I am going to try to do so now.

Madam President, it is recognized that energy security is the key to economic and social development. In this regard, oil and gas are dominant sources of energy.

Trinidad and Tobago, as at January 01, 2005—I had given that date because we are now doing an updated audit which should be ready in a couple months—proven, probable and possible estimates of gas reserves are 34.8 trillion cubic feet. These reserves are being updated, as I said, by consultant Ryder Scott and the new results will be available by the third quarter of this year. In addition, the proven, probable and possible oil reserves are estimated at 2.4 billion barrels of oil as at January 01, 2006.

The allocation of six marine blocks in 2005 and the recent bid rounds for the allocation of blocks onshore, near shore and in the deep marine areas augur well for the sustenance of the local energy industry for the foreseeable future. The production of gas today is approximately four billion cubic feet per day and oil production is currently at 125,000 barrels per day.

With the increasing consumption of gas and oil, there is need for the development of alternative sources of energy. I did indicate two projects when I made the intervention. Those projects are, in fact, not yet started but which we are considering. One is the wind project in Tobago and the other was methanol for energy, a pilot project to be done by UTT.

Sen. Mark: You did not say that.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: With the increasing consumption of oil and gas, I have said that there is need for alternative sources of energy and, to this end, the Government has been actively encouraging renewable sources of energy in the forms of solar water heating, photovoltaics and to a lesser extent wind energy. The various potential renewable energy sources, when combined, can add significantly to our energy mix with continued development and could ultimately replace a significant proportion of our energy needs from fossil fuels. It will also enable us to take those fossil fuels which we are using and export them at a much higher price. Initially, the cost of implementation will be high and there will be need for fiscal incentives from the Government to promote development and expansion. This will create opportunities for generating revenues for carbon credits from developed countries in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol which was fully ratified in 2005 and of which this country is a signatory.

Currently, the Government is involved in two significant initiatives, which could have long-term impact on the energy utilization in Trinidad and Tobago. These are pilot solar water-heating projects and the evaluation of prospects for the development of a photovoltaic industry.

The solar water-heating project was officially launched in 2006 as a Government and private sector initiative. It involves 11 host homes; five in Tobago and six in Trinidad. To date, solar water-heating units have been installed in five bed and breakfast homes in Tobago, and work is currently being undertaken on six host homes in Trinidad with completion estimated for May 2007. A monitoring and evaluating committee has been established to monitor the performance of this solar water-heating application and make recommendation as to its future adoption.

The photovoltaic study is a co-operative effort by the Government, the University of Trinidad and Tobago and the private sector. The objective is to determine the feasibility of manufacturing photovoltaic panels in Trinidad and Tobago, firstly for an export market and, initially, the proposed usage will be for the remote street lighting for isolated communities. Madam President, how this works is that you will have these units placed on street lights even where you do not have electricity supply at the moment.

At the regional level, Trinidad and Tobago is a member of the Caribbean Renewable Energy Development Programme. This programme has the mandate to remove barriers to the development of renewal energy in the region. Through specific actions to overcome policy, finance, capacity and awareness barriers, it is estimated that renewable energy contribution to electricity generation in the region could increase from the current 2 per cent of electricity generation to 5 per cent by 2015. This programme is funded by international sponsors, governments and national institution. In 2008, the programme will be replaced by the Caribbean Renewable Energy Technical Assistance Fund, which is a dedicated investment vehicle which will provide equity and debt financing to eligible projects.

It is recognized that there must be a framework for the adoption of a renewable energy application over the longer term. To this end, the Ministry has prepared a draft document for consultation purposes on policy guidelines for renewable energy in Trinidad and Tobago. This document addresses the pertinent issues for the adoption of the renewable energy on the local scene as they relate to financial and commercial activities; public education and awareness; research and development; legislative and regulatory and regional.

On the financial and commercial side, the major policy recommendations are:

- provide incentives to private companies to invest in renewable energy in rural areas;
- provide incentives for domestic households, hospitals and the commercial sector to install solar water-heating and photovoltaic devices;
- provide incentives to prospective entrepreneurs/manufacturers for the development of the domestic renewable energy industry;
- encourage local private lending agencies to provide funding for the renewable energy industry at affordable rates; and

- encourage international donors to invest in, and promote renewable energy development locally.

In respect of public education and awareness:

- creation and public dissemination of information through such tools as technical briefs, documentaries and video and other media;
- organize renewable energy educational and awareness programmes in schools and other institutions;
- include renewable energy as an item in the curriculum of schools and tertiary education institutions; and
- organize seminars and workshops for financial institutions, public utilities and other agencies.

In respect of training and development:

- establish an agency solely responsible for the conduct of renewable energy research and development and training in renewable energy technologies;
- encourage and support private institutions to conduct renewable energy programmes and provide technical training;
- establish scholarships in energy design and efficiency and environmental design and renewable energy engineering; and
- facilitate technology transfers and work exchange programmes with international renewable energy institutes.

The legislative and regulatory framework:

- devise new legislation and regulations for the exploitation, development and use of the renewable energy.

In respect of regional co-operation:

- continuously support and cooperate with our regional neighbours for the development of renewable energy projects and initiatives; and
- encourage private sector collaboration between this country and its neighbours to exploit prospective joint renewable energy business opportunities.

Madam President, the general proposal is that the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries should be mandated with the responsibility to monitor and perform administrative and regulatory functions with respect to the renewable energy sector. It is also proposed to establish a renewable energy advisory body which will undertake specific renewable energy projects and report to the Ministry. This body will comprise pertinent stakeholders including the Government and state agencies through the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment, the Ministry of Education, the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission, the Tourism Development Company and educational institutions including the University of the West Indies and the University of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam President, we all know that oil and gas are wasting assets. With the development of renewable energy sources there is hope that a diversified energy mix will be available in the future. However, any expectations must be tempered by the fact that modern sources of renewable energy, due to their intermittent availability, and the fact that the commercial application of these technologies are still evolving, will not be alternatives to oil and gas for some time.

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

Natural Gas Agreement (Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica)

Sen. Wade Mark: Madam President, large sections of the citizenry of our country have been somewhat alarmed at what could only be described as a growing anti-Trinidad and Tobago sentiment, emanating from the utterances of very prominent organizations in Jamaica.

The failure of this Government to table in this Senate a copy of the memorandum of understanding entered into between Jamaica and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago concerning the supply of natural gas at some agreed price, has generated a lot of hostility towards Trinidad and Tobago in Jamaica.

The private sector in Jamaica, the Jamaica Manufacturing Association and even columnists have been attacking, and I would say, in many instances, unnecessarily, Trinidad and Tobago.

5.30 p.m.

In 2004 this Government entered into an agreement with the government of Jamaica—when the former Prime Minister, P. J. Patterson was in charge—to supply Jamaica with some 1.5 million cubic feet of natural gas on an annual basis over a period of time. That is what I was made to understand.

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Because of the fact that we have serious gas supply constraints in this country, Trinidad and Tobago was unable to honour or meet its obligation to Jamaica.

This has resulted in Jamaica, through these sectors, threatening to withhold trade; threatening to look for alternative sources of supply of energy; threatening to look for alternative sources of manufacturing goods and services. This to my mind is a very serious development, because it has implications for jobs in our country. Trade between Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago is estimated to run over \$500 million on an annual basis.

Therefore, we would like to know what are the elements of the confusion. We would like to know what is generating this hostility in the capital of Jamaica. Why are these stakeholders in Jamaica so hostile to Trinidad and Tobago? Why did we enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Jamaica if we knew we did not have the capacity to supply them with natural gas? Why? Did we not know from the reports that my good friend just quoted from, the Scott Ryder Report on Gas Supplies in our country in terms of reserves, that we did not have the capacity as a country to supply Jamaica with 1.5 million cubic feet of natural gas on an annual basis for a period of time? Did we not know this? Why did we set up ourselves? Why did we enter into an MOU at an agreed price to supply gas? So that we could be embarrassed? Is that the aim of this Government?

I have seen blunders after blunders after blunders committed by this administration in terms of foreign policy, and this is another foreign policy blunder on the part of this administration. They never came clean to the Parliament. They never laid in this Senate the memorandum of understanding. We do not know what it contains; we do not know what the elements are, and therefore we cannot speak authoritatively on this matter. So I am simply bringing to the attention of this honourable Senate what I have read in the newspapers, because as a parliamentarian, I am yet to see a copy of the memorandum of understanding.

Madam President, this situation is destined, if not properly handled, to undermine Caricom relations that we have taken so long to build and establish. Already we have seen our oil supplies drying up in terms of Caricom. All of those Caricom countries, with the exception of Barbados, are now getting gas and oil supply from Venezuela. So Petrotrin is in trouble. Petrotrin has to look for extraregional markets in order to survive this debacle that we are faced with.

So from the fairy godfather of the region, our Prime Minister has been isolated, virtually disgraced in the region today, where all the support we have

given, and all the funds we have established in the region, have come almost to nothing because all of them have gone in a new direction.

This is serious, Madam President, and I believe that the time has come for the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and the Prime Minister of Jamaica to meet to repair whatever damage has developed. I have read in the newspaper where the private sector of Jamaica and the JMA talked about, as I said, getting out, in terms of trade relations with Trinidad and Tobago. It means to say that something is wrong and we need to get to the bottom of it. Why after six years we have a situation today where Caricom trade could be in jeopardy because of what has happened with PetroCaribe?

We would like the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries to provide us with an understanding as to what has led to this development. What has gone wrong? Could the Minister make available to this Parliament a copy of the memorandum of understanding, so that we in the Parliament, as legislators, would be able to understand what the components are; what the elements are? We do not know, but what we are reading in the newspapers has us concerned, because we are nationals of Trinidad and Tobago. And when people are bad talking nationals of Trinidad and Tobago we have to be concerned.

When we are hearing about threats to the manufacturing sector, which involve \$500 million worth of trade, after we in Trinidad and Tobago have done so much, it is time for us to understand from the Government what is taking place. Caricom is very essential for the future development of Trinidad and Tobago; we know this. We know from the statistics we have a favourable trade relations and balance under Caricom. We know the number of jobs that have been generated in the manufacturing sector because of our relationship with Caricom.

Therefore when we read these things we become very concerned, and you know what is even more alarming and disconcerting? It is the deafening silence on the part of the Government. The Government will not come here, until I raised this matter, to give us an explanation as to what is taking place between Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago insofar as this MOU is concerned. Why? Why do I have to raise a Motion here when the Government could have gotten up and made a statement under "Statements by Ministers", and indicate to this country what is taking place; why it is taking place; what we are doing to resolve what is taking place, rather than my having to raise this matter here today.

I am not happy to raise this matter here today because I know what foreign relations are about, unlike the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is there. I have to

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deal with him on another occasion. But for now, I am simply concerned about the national interest; about Trinidad and Tobago's future relations with Jamaica; about the future of Caricom; about the future of Petrotrin and the manufacturing sector in our country; that is what I am concerned about and the people are concerned about. That is why I have raised this; not to score points, because Trinidad and Tobago belongs to us. We are concerned about our national interests and all of us have to stand up in defence of the national interest. In this particular matter, the UNC would like the Government to make a categorical statement on this MOU and all these hostile statements that are emanating out of that capital and what can we do to resolve the matter.

I have a proposal in closing. I would like to propose that the hon. Patrick Manning meet urgently with Portia Simpson-Miller, the hon. Prime Minister of Jamaica and these two leaders settle this problem so this hostility and this concern that we betrayed and set up Jamaica, and we were supposed to supply them with gas and we did not supply them with gas and they have now gone to Venezuela.

We need to clear the air on these matters and that is why I have raised it because people have been asking me about it; people have been phoning me about it and I want to get answers and the national community would like to get some answers on this matter, hence the reason I have raised it so the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries could bring some closure to this matter and bring some light in an area of darkness at the moment in Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you very much.

The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Thank you, Madam President. It is an unintended benefit of this Motion, because I was very pleased to hear Sen. Mark say two things. One is, he is very concerned about the reputation of this country. Given the statements that Sen. Mark and his colleagues make so often, I hope he keeps that in the back of his mind when he continues to make statements which damage the reputation of this country.

The second point is his concern for Caricom and our Caribbean nations. Again, Madam President, you have sat in the Parliament and every time legislation comes here to strengthen Caribbean integration, whether it is the Caribbean Court of Justice, whether it is some of the Caribbean Treaties we have signed, we have never seen support from—

Sen. Mark: I disagree on those things. No, no, no; I would not support the opposition on the Privy Council.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: I let you talk. Did I let you talk? I do not see that and I hope that impassioned plea that he has made is more than just playing politics, but we will see a change in the attitude of that bench when we come to debate these matters. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President, as usual the Motion starts about the failure. I mean every motion that come starts off with the failure of somebody to do something; so this is a failure.

Sen. Mark: Well, this is a failed administration.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: Madam President, this Government intends and has always intended to comply with provisions of the MOU as agreed between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Government of Jamaica.

In this regard, in a press release in the *Jamaica Gleaner* on March 20, 2007 and in the *Daily Observer* on March 21, 2007, the Government publicly affirmed its willingness to honour its obligations as outlined in the MOU and to work with Jamaica to ensure a steady and reliable supply of LNG in the future. This is in addition to discussions between the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago and the Petroleum Company of Jamaica. This is a statement I have made to the media and at a post-Cabinet press conference.

The facts of the matter are as follows:

- In November 2004, a memorandum of understanding was executed between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Government of Jamaica, as well as between the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago and the Petroleum Company of Jamaica.
- The MOU stated, subject to the economic feasibility—I repeat—subject to economic feasibility, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago would supply 1.15 million tonnes of LNG per year for the twenty-year period commencing 2008. Further, that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago would be willing to invest up to 40 per cent equity in the project and the Government of Jamaica providing the remaining equity, because to ship LNG to Jamaica you need to build a re-gas plant in Jamaica. And we agreed that we would be willing to invest up to 40 per cent of the equity to the Jamaican government 60 per cent.
- The MOU also acknowledged that the potential demand might be greater than the volume offered and the LNG might be required prior to the start-up of a new LNG Train in Trinidad and Tobago. In this regard the

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Government of Trinidad and Tobago offered to work with the Government of Jamaica to secure the necessary supplies of LNG. Let me repeat that. It indicated that it is quite possible that prior to the start-up of a new Train in Trinidad that they may require it and we would work with them to secure the necessary supply.

Subsequent to the execution of the MOU, these activities were undertaken in 2005:

- The award of a consultancy for an engineering study of the re-gas terminal;
- The appointment of a financial and investment advisor; and
- The appointment of a legal advisor.

In September 2006 the results of the engineering study came up with a capital cost of US \$400 million for the terminal. This was considered as too high and a search for economic alternatives was initiated. Additionally given the delay in commencing the next LNG Train, the Government of Jamaica was informed that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago would be unable to meet Jamaica's timetable for LNG supply. One, the new Train had not come on stream. Secondly, given the price for the re-gas terminal it did not seem to be feasible to ship LNG for the re-gas—

At a bilateral discussion held in Jamaica with the Prime Minister of Jamaica on February 05 and 06, 2007, the hon. Prime Minister explained Trinidad and Tobago's position that our natural gas reserve position did not allow the country to pursue additional liquefaction facilities at this time as:

- 60 per cent of the natural gas produced is utilized by the local LNG producers who have prior contractual supply commitments;
- exploration efforts have not yet yielded additional supplies of natural gas to justify the establishment of the next LNG Train; and
- the capital costs in all areas of activity, including exploration and establishment of the new LNG Train have since increased considerably. As a result the cost parameters associated with the supply of LNG to Jamaica may have to be revisited.

Those of us who are following what is happening in the energy sector know that cost of exploration is expanding at a tremendous rate and the capital cost of

these projects is now so large that you have to review the whole economics of whether they make common sense.

In the circumstances, having briefed Jamaica, including the Prime Minister, Jamaica was advised to approach Venezuela as an alternative energy source. Also because we knew that the cross border field that we are working on unitizing, we have enough gas to feed a new LNG Train.

The Jamaican government successfully explored this option with the Venezuelan government. Additionally, the recent signing of the Framework Agreement between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela opens up the possibility of new gas supplies and the establishment of an LNG liquefaction plant, but 75 per cent of that gas belongs to Venezuela, 25 per cent to us. Therefore, the approach to the Venezuelan government was an approach that should have been made if we had to use that gas.

Madam President, pending the determination of new gas supplies the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has initiated discussions with local producers to divert some of their LNG to meet the requirements of the Government and Jamaica. These discussions are ongoing, but we recognize that most of these producers do have long-term contracts for their supply of the LNG.

Additionally, the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago and the Petroleum Company of Jamaica are currently evaluating technology and feasibility options for a re-gas terminal. We are still working on that re-gas terminal.

Madam President, to summarize the position, Trinidad and Tobago has not reneged on its commitment under the MOU with Jamaica and as indicated in my presentation, subject to the economic feasibility, will honour whatever obligations it has under the provisions of that MOU. I think the hon. Senator could rest easy.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 5.50 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

The following question was asked by Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh:

**C.T. and M.R.I. Machines
(Details of Award of Contract)**

7. (a) Would the Honourable Minister please inform this Senate of the name of the Company which was awarded a contract for the purchase and supply of C.T. and M.R.I. machines for use in the nation's hospital?
- (b) Would the Honourable Minister further inform this Senate of:
- (i) The names of the Directors of that company;
 - (ii) The number and names of the companies which submitted all bids;
 - (iii) The value of each bid submitted;
 - (iv) The value of the successful bidders' tender; and
 - (v) The names of the Specification Committee and the Evaluation Committee involved in the award of this contract?

The following reply was circulated to Members of the Senate:

The Minister of Health (Hon. John Rahael):

2002 – North West Regional Health Authority (NWRHA)

Supply, Installation, Commissioning & Financing Diagnostic Imaging Items of Equipment for Major Health Care Institutions Trinidad & Tobago:

- (a) The NWRHA invited tenders for the Supply, Installation, Commission & Financing for Diagnostic Imaging Items of Equipment for Major Health Care Institutions Trinidad & Tobago. The contract was awarded to Siemens Medical Solutions.
- List of items: 1-Tesla MRI & accessories, 2-General X-Ray units, 1-Digitized Diagnostic Imaging System, 1-Mobile C-Arm, 2-Mobile X-Ray Units and 1- Ultrasound multi-speciality with accessories
- (b) (i) The names of the Directors of that company are as follows:-
- Wolfgang Kroll
 - Guenter Wellendorf
 - Alberto Guevara

(ii & iii) Five companies submitted bids.

The names are as follows:

NAME OF COMPANY	VALUE OF BID
A A Laquis [Medical Division]	\$14,852,229.11 USD
Siemens Medical Solutions	\$ 8,892,100.00 USD
Calmaquip Engineering Corporation	\$ 9,951,951.39 USD
Alston Marketing Co. Ltd. [AMCO]	\$ 9,262,603.17 USD
Medical Imaging Ltd.	\$10,405,496.00 USD

- (iv) The value of the successful bidder was US\$ 8,892,100.00. It should be noted that the bid from Siemens Medical Solutions was the lowest bid.
- (v) There is no Specification Committee under the Regional Health Authority Act, 1994. However specifications are developed by end users in consultation with other professionals.

The Evaluation Committee comprised of the following persons:

- Dr. Leonard Jaggasar Chief Executive Officer, NWRHA
- Dr. Omar Khan Clinical Director Radiology Department, EWMSC
- Mr. Ram Rampersad Biomedical Engineer/Hospital Engineer II
- Mr. Deonarine Prashad Chief Radiographer, EWMSC
- Mr. Anthony Davis Manager Quality Systems, Audit Department, TRHA
- Dr. Ann Albert Consultant Radiologist, SFGH
- Dr. Anthony Ameerl Head of Department, Radiology, SFGH
- Mr. Michel Turcotte Procurement Professional

2005 – North West Regional Health Authority (NWRHA)
Supply, Installation & Commissioning for Multi Slice CT Scanner for Port Spain General Hospital

- (a) The NWRHA invited tenders for the Supply, Installation & Commissioning for Multi Slice CT Scanner for Port of Spain General Hospital. The contract was awarded to CASi Healthcare Technologies Limited.

(b) (i) The names of the Directors of that company are as follows:-

- Rasa Baptista Lopez
- Helenio Arque

(ii & iii) Two Companies submitted bids.

The names are as follows:

NAME OF COMPANY	VALUE OF BID
CASi Healthcare Technologies Al	TT \$8,574,300.0
Siemens Medical Solutions	TT \$8,665,740.00

(iv) The value of the successful bidder's tender was TT \$8,574,300.00. It should be noted that the bid from CASi Healthcare Technologies was the lowest bid.

(v) There is no Specification Committee under the Regional Health Authority Act, 1994. However specifications are developed by the end users with consultation with other professionals.

The Evaluation Committee comprised of the following persons:

- Dr. Ann Albert Consultant Radiologist, NWRHA
- Ms. Jasmine Hodges Radiologist, POSGH
- Dr. Anthony Ameeral Head of Department, Radiology, SFGH
- Ms. Lystra Bharratsingh Regional Coordinator Radiology Services, SWRHA
- Mr. Asif Ali Director Finance & Accounts, Ministry of Health

**2005 – South West Regional Health Authority (SWRHA),
Supply Installation Commissioning & Maintenance of Diagnostic Imaging Items of Equipment for the San Fernando General Hospital**

(a) The SWRHA invited tenders for the Supply, Installation, Commissioning for Diagnostic Imaging Items of Equipment for the San Fernando General Hospital. The contract was awarded to Siemens Medical Solutions for one (1) MRI system and accessories.

List of items: 1-MRI system & accessories, 2-General X-Ray systems, 1-Digitized Diagnostic Imaging system, 1-Mobile C-Arm, 1-Multi-Speciality Ultrasound, 2-Mobile X-Ray.

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- (b) (i) The names of the Directors of that company are as follows:
- Wolfgang Kroll
 - Guenter Wellendorf
 - Alberto Guevara
- (ii & iii) One company submitted a bid for one (1) MRI system and accessories that is Siemens Medical Solutions.
- (iv) The value of the bid was TT \$16, 813,180.00 for one (1) MRI system with accessories and all related services including the required building.
- (v) There is no specification Committee under the RHA Act, 1994. However specifications are developed by users in consultation with other professionals.

The Evaluation Team comprised of the following persons:

- Dr. Anthony Ameeral Head of Dept, Radiology, SFGH
- Mrs. Vidya Ramsubhag Senior Radiographer, SFGH
- Mrs. Lystra Bharratsingh Regional Coordinator, Radiology Services, SWRHA
- Mr. Russel. Sooknanan Manager, Biomedical Engineering NCRHA/NWRHA
- Mr Deonarine Prashad Chief Radiographer, EWMSC/NCRHA
- Mrs. Gail Miller-Meade General Manager, Finance & Logistics
- Mr. Anil Gosine Ag. General Manager, Operations SWRHA
- Mr. Faraz Rahamut Biomedical Engineer, SFGH
- Mr. Ronald Koylass Former Manager, Commissioning, SWRHA

2006 – Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA)
Supply, Installation, Commissioning of a CT Scanner for the Sangre Grande Hospital

- (a) The ERHA invited tenders for the Supply, Installation & Commissioning of a CT Scanner for the Sangre Grande Hospital. The contract was awarded to Siemens Medical Solutions.

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(b) (i) The names of the Directors of that company are as follows:-

- Wolfgang Kroll
- Guenter Wellendorf
- Alberto Guevara

(ii & iii) Two companies submitted bids:

The names are as follows:

NAME OF COMPANY	VALUE OF BID
Siemens Medical Solutions	TT \$6,647,244.00
CASi Healthcare Technologies	TT \$7,848,420.00

(iv) The value of the successful bidder was TTD \$6,647,244.00. It should be noted that the bid from Siemens Medical Solutions was the lowest bid. Further, it should be noted that the Evaluation Committee conducted the evaluation exercise based on the Qualification Criteria on both Siemens Medical Solutions and CASi Healthcare Technologies and agreed to disqualify CASi Health care Technologies Limited as it did not meet the requirements of "Eligibility of Bidder" Section II – Instructions to Bidders i.e the Bid Security was not submitted.

(v) There is no Specification Committee under the RHA Act, 1994. However specifications are developed by the end users in consultation with other professionals.

The Evaluation Committee comprised of the following persons:

- Mr. George Hadeed Deputy Chairman ERHA (Chairman)
- Mr. Sean La Motte Chief Financial Officer
- Mr. Russell Sooknanan Manager, Biomedical Engineering (NCRHA)
- Ms. Lystra Bharratsingh Regional Coordinator, Radiology Services (SWRHA)
- Ms. Paula Chester Manager, Hospital Services, Sangre Grande Hospital
- Mrs. Debra Easlie-Bastaldo Radiographer II, Sangre Grande Hospital