

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD
AND TOBAGO WHICH OPENED ON OCTOBER 17, 2002

SESSION 2006—2007

VOLUME 18

SENATE

Tuesday, May 01, 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. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand.

PAPERS LAID

1. The Public Accounts of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the financial year 2006. [*The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill)*]
2. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Public Accounts of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the financial year ended September 30, 2006. [*Sen. The Hon. C. Enill*]
3. The Homes for Older Persons Regulations, 2007. [*The Attorney General (Sen. The Hon. John Jeremie S.C.)*]

MOTOR VEHICLES AND ROAD TRAFFIC (AMDT.) BILL

Joint Select Committee Report

(Presentation)

The Attorney General (Sen. The Hon. John Jeremie S.C.): Madam President, I have the honour to lay on the Table the Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amdt.) Bill, 2006.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Details of Carifesta

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

- A. Could the Minister provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the cost involved in the staging of Carifesta in Trinidad and Tobago in 2006; and
- B. Could the Minister also provide the names of the organizers of this event and the respective fees and/or commissions paid to each organizer?

The Attorney General (Sen. The Hon. John Jeremie SC): Madam President, the hon. Minister is not here. I wonder whether we can defer this question for one week so she can take charge of the answer.

Madam President: All right.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, is the question ready, or is it that the Minister not being present and we can defer this question until she arrives?

Sen. The Hon. J. Jeremie S. C.: It is my understanding that the Minister is not here and will not be in this afternoon.

Question, by leave, deferred.

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

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

- A. With respect to the construction of Early Childhood Education Centres and Schools, could the Minister inform the Senate:
 - (i) how many have been completed during the period January 01, 2002 to December 31, 2006;
 - (ii) in what areas have these schools been completed;
 - (iii) how many have been started but not yet completed; and
 - (iv) in what areas are these buildings yet to be completed?

- B. Could the Minister also provide the Senate with the names of all the contractors and their Board of Directors who were engaged by the Ministry for the construction of these schools?

The Minister of Education (Sen. The Hon. Hazel Manning): Madam President, I am to inform this honourable Senate that the philosophy underlying Early Childhood Care and Education in Trinidad and Tobago is that all children can learn and each child, regardless of economic status, physical or emotional challenges or gender has a right to high quality education in order to realize his or her full potential.

Parallel with the development of administrative structures, agreement with partnering stakeholders e.g. SERVOL, staffing improvements and quality assurance provisions, the Ministry of Education has been conducting its research to allow the placement of its new and reconstructed early childhood centres to be informed by the relevant demographics, data and social needs.

To date, 110 sites distributed over all seven educational districts have been identified. In selection of the sites for early childhood centres, the Government has ensured widespread and national coverage as another measure of our commitment to guarantee equal access and to address poverty alleviation.

We have also researched and created a user brief which has informed the new design for these early childhood centres. This new design reflects a major improvement over centres that were built over the previous administration. Today's Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Centres are designed to be aesthetically pleasing. They consist of a well laid out single story building which, inter alia, are built to up-to-date structural standards, accessible by the physically challenged and allow for visual permeability to support monitoring of children. On completion, the centres will be outfitted with modern facilities for enhanced, interactive learning for our young citizens.

Madam President, the Tobago centres are being built under the Tobago House of Assembly and are not part of this response and, therefore, with respect to parts (i) and (ii) of part A of the question, whereas no centres were completed during the period January 01, 2002 to December 31, 2006, development of the new brief and related designs were completed by the year 2005. Following the establishment of the Education Facilities Company Limited (EFCL), in the year 2005, construction of early childhood centres commenced in the year 2006.

With respect to parts (iii) and (iv) of part A of the question, construction of 18 centres was started by the EFCL in 2006. The centres are being handed over to the

Ministry of Education as they reach completion, including outfitting with specialized furniture and equipment.

Completed are:

No.	ECCE Centres	Addresses
1	La Romaine	Church Street, La Romaine. Officially opened by the Prime Minister last week.
2	Santa Rosa	Shaddock Circle, Santa Rosa Heights, Arima

The following seven centres are nearing completion and are expected to be delivered within this quarter:

No.	ECCE Centres	Addresses
1	St. Augustine South	Bedassie Street, St. Augustine which will be officially opened very shortly.
2	El Socorro South	Kamal Avenue, El Socorro Extension #2, San Juan
3	Mayaro	Pierreville, Mayaro
4	Tacarigua	17 Back Street, Tacarigua
5	Valsayn	Old Southern Main Road, Valsayn
6	San Pedro	460 Tabaquite Rio Claro Road, San Pedro
7	Petit Valley	Quarry Road, Petit Valley

The following nine centres are also under construction and are projected to be completed June 2007:

No.	ECCE Centres	Addresses
1	Sangre Grande	Oropouche Road, Sangre Grande
2	La Puerta	Broome Street, Four Roads, Diego Martin

No.	ECCE Centres	Addresses
3	Little Gems Pentecostal	148 Saddle Road, Santa Cruz
4	El Socorro North	Lootoo Street, El Socorro
5	Chinapoo	Laventille Road, Chinapoo Village
6	St. Sylvan's Anglican	St. Mary's Junction, Carapichaima
7	Lopinot/La Pastora	Lopinot Road, La Pastora, Lopinot
8	Tulsi Manaas	Cunapo Southern Road, Sangre Grande
9	Ortoire RC	Manzanilla Road, Ortoire Village, Mayaro

Contracts have recently been awarded for construction of a further seven ECCE centres as the rollout process continues. These centres are:

No.	ECCE Centres	Addresses
1	Model Nursery Centre	San Fernando
2	Monroe Road Centre	Cunupia
3	Raghunanan Centre	Enterprise
4	Strange Village Centre	Barrackpore
5	North Trace Centre	New Grant
6	Santa Flora Centre	Santa Flora
7	Salybia Centre	Salybia

The above mentioned 25 early childhood centres are on sites which form part of the first 110 new ECCE buildings for which sites have been identified. The process of land assembly to support the programme continues. The following is the list of the 110 sites which have been selected to date:

No.	ECCE Centres	Addresses
1	La Romaine ECCEC	Church Street, La Romaine next to the La Romaine Government Primary
2	Santa Rosa ECCEC	Shaddock Circle, Santa Rosa Heights, Arima next to the Santa Rosa Government Primary
3	St Augustine South ECCEC	Bedassie Street, St. Augustine
4	El Socorro South ECCEC	Kamal Avenue, El Socorro Extension 2, next to the San Juan El Socorro South Government Primary
5	Sangre Grande ECCEC	Oropouche Road, Sangre Grande next to the Sangre Grande Government Primary
6	Petit Valley ECCEC	Quarry Road, Petit Valley
7	San Pedro ECCEC	460 Tabaquite Rio Claro Road, San Pedro
8	Mayaro ECCEC	Pierreville, Mayaro next to the Mayaro Government Primary
9	La Puerta ECCEC	Broome Street, Four Roads, Diego Martin next to La Puerta Government Primary
10	Valsayn Teachers' College ECCEC	Old Southern Main Road, Valsayn, next to the Valsayn Teachers' College
11	Tacarigua ECCEC	17 Back Street, Tacarigua
12	St Sylvan's Anglican ECCEC	St Mary's Junction, Carapichaima
13	El Socorro North ECCEC	Lootoo Street, El Socorro next to El Socorro Government Primary
14	Little Gems Pentecostal ECCEC	148 Saddle Road, Santa Cruz

No.	ECCE Centres	Addresses
15	Chinapoo ECCEC	Laventille Road, Chinapoo Village
16	Lopinot/La Pastora Government ECCEC	La Pastora, Lopinot Road, Lopinot
17	Ortoire RC ECCEC	Manzanilla Road, Ortoire Village, Mayaro
18	Tulsi Manaas SWAHA ECCEC	Cunapo Southern Main Road, Sangre Grande
19	Salybia ECCEC	Toco Main Road, Salybia next to Salybia Government Primary
20	Model Nursery School ECCEC	Ruth Avenue, Les Efforts West, San Fernando
21	Monroe Road ECCEC	Monroe Road, Cunupia next to Monroe Road Government Primary
22	Raghunanan Road ECCEC	Raghunanan Road, Enterprise
23	Santa Flora ECCEC	Santa Flora Road, Erin Village, Santa Flora
24	Strange Village ECCEC	529 Cumuto Road, Barrackpore
25	North Trace ECCEC	Naparima/Mayaro Road, New Grant next to North Trace Government Primary
26	Kilimanjaro ECCEC	Leari Place, Laventille
27	Tarouba North ECCEC	Housing Development Corporation (HDC) Site, Tarouba, North Land Development
28	Tarouba South ECCEC	HDC Site, Tarouba, South Land Development
29	Edinburgh South ECCEC	Coral Street and Poui Boulevard Edinburgh South Land Development

No.	ECCE Centres	Addresses
30	Belmont Wesleyan Holiness ECCEC	51-59 Belmont Circular Road, Belmont
31	Cocoyea ECCEC	31 Andrews Park, East Cocoyea
32	Patna/Bagatelle ECCEC	Patna Village
33	Belle Vue ECCEC	Belle Vue Long Circular, St. James
34	San Francique ECCEC	2 Mile Mark San Francique Road, Penal
35	Siparia SDMS ECCEC	Seegobin Drive, Siparia
36	Lawrencia Motas ECCEC	Southern Gardens, New Village, Point Fortin
37	Mendez ECCEC	Mendez Village, Siparia
38	I Am Special ECCEC	Abdool Village, Penal next to Penal Government Primary
39	St Christopher's ECCEC	St. Clair Street, Longdenville Road, Longdenville
40	Basseterre ECCEC	Basseterre Road, Moruga
41	Moruga ECCEC	2303 Gran Chemin, Moruga
42	Child Welfare League Chaguanas ECCEC	Corner Darling Street and Chaguanas Main Road, Chaguanas
43	Pleasantville ECCEC	Prince Albert Street, Pleasantville next to Pleasantville Government Primary
44	Sevilla ECCEC	c/o Sevilla School, Brechin Castle, Couva
45	Child Welfare League St. James ECCEC	1 Agra Street, St. James
46	Diego Martin ECCEC	1 Jerry Street, Green Hill Village, Diego Martin next to Diego Martin Government Primary

No.	ECCE Centres	Addresses
47	Caura Royal Road ECCEC	Corner Caura Royal Road and Karamath Street
48	Corinth ECCEC	Corinth Teacher's Training College, Corinth Road
49	Pioneer Drive ECCEC	HDC Site, Pioneer Drive, Mount Hope
50	Southern Gardens ECCEC	HDC Site, Southern Gardens, Land Development
51	Bien Venue ECCEC	La Romaine Government Primary, Eastern Main Road, Church Street, La Romaine
52	Bon Air West ECCEC	Bon Air Government Primary, Eastern Main Road, D'Abadie
53	Buen Intento ECCEC	HDC Site, Buen Intento
54	Carlsen Field ECCEC	HDC Site, Carlsen Field Housing Development
55	Caroni Village ECCEC	Ibis Gardens, Caroni
56	Maloney Gardens ECCEC	Next to Maloney Government Primary School, Flamingo Boulevard Maloney Housing Estate
57	Pleasantville ECCEC	Next to Pleasantville Government Primary, Prince Albert Street, Pleasantville
58	Edinburgh 500 ECCEC	Kestral Boulevard, Edinburgh 500, Chaguanas, next to Edinburgh Government Primary
59	Golconda ECCEC	HDC Site, Golconda Development
60	Harmony Hall ECCEC	HDC Site, Harmony Hall

No.	ECCE Centres	Addresses
61	La Horquetta South ECCEC	La Horquetta South Government Primary, Gladiola Crescent, La Horquetta
62	Retrench ECCEC	HDC Site, Retrench Housing Development
63	Wellington Road ECCEC	HDC Site, Wellington Road, Debe
64	Wallerfield ECCEC	Land Settlement Agency
65	Malabar ECCEC	Malabar Government Primary, Pomegranate Avenue, Malabar
66	Brothers Road ECCEC	73 Garth Road, Williamsville Brothers Road Presbyterian
67	Christian Union ECCEC	Egypt Village, Point Fortin
68	Clarke Rochard ECCEC	Next to Clarke Rochard Government Primary
69	Corinth Teachers College ECCEC	Next to Corinth Teachers College, Corinth Road
70	Iere Village ECCEC	Naparima/Mayaro Road, Iere Village Princes Town
71	Macaulay ECCEC	Hermitage Road, Claxton Bay, next to Macaulay Government Primary
72	Madras ECCEC	Madras Settlement Road via Cunupia, next to Madras Government Primary
73	Marabella ECCEC	Fahey Avenue, Union Park East, Marabella next to Marabella Government Primary
74	Edinburgh ECCEC	Kestral Boulevard, Edinburgh 500, Chaguanas
75	Coterie of Social Workers ECCEC	3 Longden Street

No.	ECCE Centres	Addresses
76	Fanny Village ECCEC	Via Dam Road, Fanny Village, Point Fortin
77	Penal Quinam ECCEC	Mendez Village, Siparia next to Penal Quinam Government Primary
78	Ste. Madeleine ECCEC	Manahambre Road, Ste. Madeleine
79	Wesleyan Holiness ECCEC Diego Martin	Covigne Road, Diego Martin
80	Cap-de-Ville ECCEC	Guapo Cap-de-Ville Main Road, Point Fortin, next to Cap-de-Ville Government Primary
81	Cushe ECCEC	Balata Trace, Rio Claro, next to Cushe Government Primary
82	Fun-Time ECCEC	34 New Colonial Road, Barrackpore
83	La Paille ECCEC	Tulloch Street, La Paille Village, Caroni
84	Maraval ECCEC	Maraval
85	Mayo ECCEC	c/o Community Centre, 1 Palm Street West, Mayo Village, Williamsville
86	North Manzanilla ECCEC	4 North Manzanilla Community Centre, Manzanilla, P.O. Box 181, LP #57
87	Tarouba Pentecostal ECCEC	Tarouba
88	La Horquetta North ECCEC	Ladybird Avenue, La Horquetta next to La Horquetta Government Primary
89	Lower Cumuto ECCEC	Cumuto Main Road, Cumuto next to Lower Cumuto Government Primary
90	Mount D'Or ECCEC	Mount D'Or Government Primary
91	Preysal ECCEC	Preysal Village, Couva

No.	ECCE Centres	Addresses
92	Pine Settlement Sangre Grande 1 ECCEC	Land Settlement Agency
93	Pine Settlement Sangre Grande 2 ECCEC	Land Settlement Agency
94	Samaroo Village Arima ECCEC	Land Settlement Agency
95	Caparo ECCEC	121 Main Road, Caparo
96	Munroe Road Little Hearts ECCEC	School Street, Munroe Road, Cunupia
97	Rampanalgas ECCEC	Jerome Street, Rampanalgas Village, Balandra
98	Union Hall ECCEC	Union Hall Gardens, San Fernando
99	Bon Air North Arouca 1 ECCEC	Bon Air, Arouca
100	Bon Air North Arouca 2 ECCEC	Bon Air, Arouca
101	Bon Air North Arouca 3 ECCEC	Bon Air, Arouca
102	Bon Air North Arouca 4 ECCEC	Bon Air, Arouca
103	Picton Road Extension Sangre Grande ECCEC	Picton Road Extension, Sangre Grande
104	Racecourse Road Arima 1 ECCEC	Arima
105	Racecourse Road Arima 2 ECCEC	Arima
106	Racecourse Road Arima 3 ECCEC	Arima

No.	ECCE Centres	Addresses
107	Racecourse Road Arima 4 ECCEC	Arima
108	Paramin ECCEC	Paramin Village
109	River Estate/Blue Basin ECCEC	River Estate
110	Upper Bournes Road, St James ECCEC	St. James

With respect to part B of the question, the following is the list of names of all the contractors who are engaged by the Ministry of Education for the construction of schools:

United Supplies and Services Limited

Tripple Bique Company Limited

Crown J's Limited

Geo Services

Amalgamated Engineering Services Limited

Ragbir & Deonarine Construction Company Limited

Bowain Contracting Limited

Double H Construction and Supplies Limited

R2K Engineering Services Limited

SL Limited

Skylon Construction Limited

Madam President, the companies are all registered and accordingly, the names of the Boards of Directors are in the public domain and can be obtained from the Registrar of Companies in the normal manner.

Thank you.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam President, I want to ask the hon. Minister of Education to clarify something in her response. She said “x” amount of money was spent on the construction of “x” number of schools, “x” meaning the value of the amount she has put in, but in the second paragraph of her response, she indicated—[*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Senator: To which response are you referring?

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: This response. [*Holds up paper*]

Madam President, I want to find out from the hon. Minister of Education how many have been completely built and in use. I asked that last week and she said the answer will be forthcoming this week.

Sen. Dr. Saith: Madam President, last week the Minister was replying to the question, we ran out of time and you suggested to her that she then circulate the answer and that is what has been circulated.

Madam President: So he has to ask questions on the answer that was given today?

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: That is why I am asking the supplemental question on—

Madam President: You are asking the supplemental on the Early Childhood Education Centres on question No. 63?

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: On Question No. 62.

Madam President: No, you have to ask on question No. 63.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: All right. Madam President, I just want to find out from the hon. Minister of Education how many of these schools she has mentioned have been completed and are in use?

Madam President: She said 18, as far as I remember. Minister, do you want to repeat how many were completed? [*Crosstalk*]

I think I remember her saying a certain number were completed and you were not here when she started her answer, Senator. Did you hear her answer?

Sen. Mark: It was so boring that I—

Madam President: Please Senators! Minister, would you just repeat how many schools were completed?

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Just two words; none or one.

Sen. The Hon. H. Manning: Madam President, we took a long while to gather the data for this analysis and I am really very disturbed that the Senator could talk about how boring it is. It took us months to compile this data and now—[*Interruption*] He asked how many have started, in what areas these buildings are yet to be completed and that is what we had to answer as boring as it is to us. [*Interruption*]

Sen. Mark: [*Inaudible*]

Madam President: No, I must object here, because I was observing when the Minister was speaking what was happening in this corner here and you were not listening. I heard the Minister say—

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: We do not have to look at her to listen, the point is, the answer is not forthcoming.

Madam President: Minister of Education, will you just repeat for their benefit how many were completed and how many are now being constructed? It was in the early part of your answer.

Sen. The Hon. H. Manning: I will go through the whole list again, Madam President.

Madam President: No, no—[*Crosstalk*]

Sen. The Hon. H. Manning: Could you give me a minute to find the paper?

Madam President: Yes.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: [*Inaudible*]

Madam President: Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh, I think you should take that back, you know. That is not a nice comment whatsoever.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: I beg your pardon. Madam President, I withdraw that.

Sen. Dr. Saith: Madam President, while she is looking perhaps I can make a comment. Senators ask questions for the detailed information which we take time to get, when we ask for a deferral, all over there back and front—Ministers are not answering questions—

Sen. Mark: Back and front? “Wha’ yuh mean when yuh say back and front?”

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Back and front what? He has no respect.

Sen. Dr. Saith: I notice when the Minister—would you allow me to finish?
[*Shouting across the floor*] [*Continuous interruption*]

Madam President: Sen. Mark!

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: This is the Opposition Bench—

Sen. Mark: This is the Opposition Bench, that is the Government Bench, he cannot say back and front.

Madam President: Sen. Mark!

Sen. Dr. Saith: Front and back—

Madam President: Minister Saith, please. Sen. Mark and Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh!

Sen. Mark: “He can’t address us like that.”

Madam President: Sen. Mark, I am speaking to you!

Sen. Mark: Yes Ma'am. “He say back and front; front and back.”

Madam President: Minister, will you continue?

2.00 p.m.

Sen. Dr. Saith: When the Minister was reading the answer, because it is a lot, I could see the body language of some Senators, as if to say she is wasting their time. They either want the answers—and I am going to suggest that the answer is now in the *Hansard* and if the Senator wants to check the number, he can check it. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Mark: I take strong objection to this kind of contribution. You have ruled on this matter and he is saying go to the *Hansard*. Who the hell is he to—

Madam President: Sen. Mark! I will not stand for that kind of language in this Senate. That is not how you address—

Sen. Mark: He is disrespecting us.

Madam President: All right! Let me rule on that, but you do not use that kind of language in here!

Sen. Mark: I take objection to that—

Madam President: Minister, have you been able to get the figures? If not, we will move on to another question and come back to you before the end of question time.

Sen. The Hon. H. Manning: With respect to (i) and (ii) of part A of the question, whereas no centres were completed during the period January 01, 2002 to December 31, 2006 because of the development of the new brief and because of the related designs—and these designs were completed by the year 2005—*[Interruption]* They are not listening, Madam President, and they are going to ask me to repeat.

Madam President: I agree.

Sen. The Hon. H. Manning: Because we had to establish the Education Facilities Company—and that was established in 2005—construction of the early childhood centres began in 2006.

With respect to (iii) and (iv) of part A of the question, construction of 18 centres was started by the Educational Facilities Company Limited in 2006. The centres are now being handed over to the Ministry of Education as they reach completion, including outfitting of specialized furniture and equipment.

Completed are: Church Street, La Romaine, which was officially opened by the Prime Minister last week, and Shaddock Circle, Santa Rosa Heights, Arima. The following seven centres are nearing completion and are expected *[Interruption]* to be delivered within this week. *[Interruption]*

Madam President: Please Senators!

Sen. The Hon. H. Manning: Bedassie Street, St. Augustine South, which will be officially opened within the next week or two; Kamal Avenue, El Socorro Extension No. 2, San Juan; *[Interruption]* Mayaro Centre at Pierreville, Mayaro; Tacarigua Early Childhood Centre, 17 Back Street, Tacarigua; Valsayn Centre at Old Southern Main Road, Valsayn. *[Interruption]*

Madam President: You asked a question and I am allowing the Minister to answer.

Sen. The Hon. H. Manning: The San Pedro Centre at 460 Tabaquite Rio Claro Road; the Petit Valley Quarry Road Centre at Petit Valley—

Madam President: Minister, are you going to read the whole list again?

Sen. The Hon. H. Manning: Yes, Madam President. I am willing to read—

Madam President: It is all right. Thank you very much.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: I have one supplemental question. The hon. Minister of Education, in her response, said that the expenditure was undertaken through

Oral Answers to Questions
[SEN. DR. GOPEESINGH]

Tuesday, May 01, 2007

the Educational Facilities Company Limited. We have a statement on the Educational Facilities Company Limited laid last week in Parliament. This does not include it. Will the Minister tell this Senate whether the construction programme undertaken by the company is reflected in the audited statements by PricewaterhouseCoopers for 2005? We do not see any figures in this.

Sen. The Hon. H. Manning: Madam President, I am sure I said here that the company was established in 2005 and that construction started in 2006. I can bring an answer to that question if he wants to lay it on the Table.

**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 budgeted 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 Industries (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, I have been advised that the answer to this question is not yet ready and I seek one week’s deferral.

Sen. Ali: I came prepared for the answer and I hope that next week I would get the answer to questions 65 and 66.

Question, by leave, deferred.

**Basdeo Panday v Wellington Virgil Matter
(Details of)**

67. Sen. Wade Mark asked the hon. Attorney General:

With respect to the matter of Basdeo Panday v Wellington Virgil, could the Attorney General provide the Senate with the following:

- (a) a detailed breakdown of the cost incurred by taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago in retaining the services of both national and foreign counsel in prosecuting the case at both magisterial and appellate levels; and
- (b) a list of the names of the attorneys retained by the State in the matter; and
- (c) a detailed breakdown of the fees paid to each attorney-at-law?

The Attorney General (Sen. The Hon. John Jeremie SC): The answer is not yet ready. It will be ready in two weeks, and the same for question No. 68, unless the Senator wants to rise specifically on that.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, I object.

Question, by leave, deferred.

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

**Attorney General
(Role in Recent Matters)**

68. Could the hon. Attorney General provide to the Senate the following:

- (a) a comprehensive breakdown or account of his role in the Anti-Corruption Investigation Bureau; and
- (b) relevant information on his office's role in the recent court matters involving Mr. Basdeo Panday and the Chief Justice Satnarine Sharma?

Question, by leave, deferred.

Madam President: Could we move on to question No. 69, please? Oh, oh. Sorry. The Minister is not here.

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

**NCC TV
(Breakdown of Operations)**

- 69.** Could the hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the operations of the NCC TV in respect of the following areas:
- (i) the number of employees and the nature of their employment;
 - (ii) the value of government's capital injection into its operations from its inception to the present time; and
 - (iii) the profits and losses experienced by the NCC TV since its inception to the current time?

Question, by leave, deferred.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Sen. Wade Mark: Madam President, I refer to the Appendix. You would see that questions have been languishing for several months. I would like you to direct these Ministers, who seem to be very tired, to come forward with the written answers as soon as is possible. They are overdue.

Madam President: I have made the appeal already to Ministers. I appeal again. We got some written answers two weeks ago, and it would be much appreciated by the people who asked the questions and the rest of the Senators if some more of these answers would be forthcoming.

COMMUNICATION PROBLEM

Madam President: Senators, I have been asked by the Communications Officer to ask that you move your mikes toward you when you are speaking because you are not being heard very clearly.

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER
Offshore Patrol Vessels
(Acquisition of)**

The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Martin Joseph): Madam President, during the course of the debate on the Appropriation Bill 2007, a number of allegations were made by Sen. Mark regarding the cost and other arrangements associated with Government's acquisition of offshore patrol vessels (OPVs). Subsequently, on December 12, 2006, Sen. Mark raised a matter on a

motion for the adjournment of the Senate pertaining to the decision by Government as part of the OPV acquisition to procure two interim vessels for use by the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard.

Hon. Senators may recall that I was able to share some information on the acquisition at that time. Due, however, to the fact that the Government was at a sensitive point in the negotiation process, I asked that my colleagues and the citizenry bear with me until a more appropriate time to reveal the details surrounding the OPVs purchased. This afternoon, I want to honour that commitment by laying in the Senate the details of that acquisition as contained in a statement on the procurement of the OPVs, which was delivered by the hon. Prime Minister in the House of Representatives on Friday, April 20, 2007.

As hon. Senators would note from the Prime Minister's statement, contrary to the unfounded claims that were being circulated, the vessels were procured through a transparent process involving a three-way agreement between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and VT Shipbuilding International, and that the actual cost of the OPV project, which comprises design and construction of three OPVs, maintenance and support programmes for said OPVs, a crew training programme and acquisition of two interim vessels, amounted to TT \$2.19 billion and not the \$12 billion as stated by Sen. Mark.

Madam President, having said that, I would now like to distribute, for the information of my senatorial colleagues, the statement by the hon. Prime Minister on the procurement of the three offshore patrol vessels and associated arrangements.

I thank you.

HOMES FOR OLDER PERSONS BILL

[Fourth 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: The persons who have spoken already are: Sen. The Hon. Anthony Roberts, who presented the Bill, Sen. Dr. Jennifer Kernahan, Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie, Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh, Sen. The Hon. John Jeremie S.C., Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand, Sen. Raziah Ahmed, Sen. Basharat Ali, Sen. The Hon. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid and Sen. Dr. Glenn Ramadar-Singh.

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I think it is the turn of the Independents.

Sen. Mark: No, Madam President. It is my turn.

Hon. Senators: O-o-o-o-o!

Sen. Mark: I was on my legs when Sen. Dr. Saith moved the adjournment.

Madam President: Normally I go according to this. If the Opposition has spoken—if there is nobody there, we will come back.

Sen. Mark: No problem.

Madam President: Is there anybody on that Bench?

Sen. Prof. Deosaran: But you had not started. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President: You had not started.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, if I may clear the air, Sen. Dr. Saith came in, I was about to speak and he indicated that we were going to adjourn. [*Interruption*] I was ready to speak. I stood to go and he told me no.

Madam President: But you had not started and, therefore, you should follow convention and let the other side go.

Sen. Mark: I bow to my colleague.

Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran: Madam President, it is with great pleasure and optimism that I rise to contribute to the debate in what is really, in view of prevailing circumstances, a very important Bill that the Government has brought to Parliament. They have taken the time to review the existing Act and come up with what are, in many instances, improvements both in terms of administration and legislation, which reflect quite well on the particular Minister and Ministry.

Generally, Madam President, I do not think the bureaucracy in this country has been very kind to older people, whether they have to line up, sit and wait, even in doctors' offices—with due respect to present company—take the bus and so many other services which should show naturally a higher regard for the dignity of the human being. I think this Bill will go a long way in trying to change the culture that we have been practising so unfortunately.

However, I rise for more specific reasons. I rise because, as I grew up on San Juan Hill, my neighbour was, and my good friend still is, Granny Luces. When I think about the spirit manifested by that woman; not only in terms of her athletic

capabilities, but also her gentle nature, her neighbourliness and her capacity to inspire those, especially in those days, younger people like myself, I really believe that we have to pay better and more noble regard to what the Bill calls “older persons”.

The other element that inspired me to speak on this Bill is that where I live, two old people's homes were put up and, with similar alacrity, closed in a short space of time, leaving some of us who are concerned about such matters to wonder what happened to the residents and whether there was some supervisory capacity that should perhaps have intervened both at the initiation stage of the home and more so at the closing down stage, with particular reference to the care of the people who were there.

Somewhere toward the end of my contribution I will put forward, with respect, what I consider substantive proposals to the Minister and to the Government to bring added value to the intended legislation.

As I look around, there are people I know—a gentleman called “chairman emeritus” for a very large conglomerate in this country, way over 80 years old—attending meetings and making, not only a corporate contribution in terms of finances, but being able to conceptualize the way forward for that very large conglomerate. I look around and I see a gentleman, who is way over 80 years and who has been asked to produce a draft constitution for the Government. I look around and see even a Prime Minister thereabouts the definition in the Bill, very agile, lively and seemingly with full intellectual capacity. Similarly, I see a member of the United National Congress, its political leader, demonstrating similar agility.

This brings us at this time really to consider what it means to be old in terms of what a country needs in certain areas of its public life especially. It brings us to the definition of being old and compelled to retire from the Judiciary. You ask a high judicial officer to retire at 65, especially those who know from experience about the development of the law and the kind of vision and wisdom that will go into the development of the law. At that age, some contribution could be made for such persons other than having them retire. I am not speaking about being advisors or heading commissions. I am speaking about developing the law and adding to the jurisprudential aspects of the country.

I think we need to rethink, just as Europe is now doing. You cannot hire people now stipulating age. It is against the European Convention and against human rights. I am not saying to overdo it; to drag someone limping, blind and deaf and give him something to do. Of course, we are speaking about reasonable circumstances.

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So all these things prompt me to exploit the opportunity presented by the Minister and his Ministry in the case of this Bill. I am quite sure that when the Bill is passed, the technocrats will have to spend some time making the services friendlier to older persons. This is an age when technology is rampant. If you have to travel on an aeroplane, you have to fill out forms. Now there are more and more counters where there is self-service. You have to punch figures and put ID numbers and, for older persons travelling today, it could be a nightmare with all these technological developments.

So, I believe the Bill should signal something to us that we should enter into a new era of paying greater respect and taking greater care of older persons and all the implications that go with calling somebody old or, if they try to brighten up themselves, you ask them, “You playing young or what?” All those things should be in a past era. Of course, I speak for some of my distinguished colleagues on the Bench and myself.

Joke aside, the Bill makes a serious attempt to remedy some of these and related matters. Lest I forget, I got the regulations today and I wonder whether the Minister and his Ministry would care to look at the regulation under 32(2), the third schedule, where it asks for the resident status report—I just had a quick glance at it; I have not studied it—should we not ask, through you, Madam President, in addition to having the manager/supervisor sign, should we not get the resident himself to countersign this to help validate the information provided by the institution? In other words, whatever information the institution gives, the resident should sign to validate things like chronic illnesses. I will come to that later. There might be confusion there.

So the establishment of a Facility Review Team is a very substantive leap in the legislation. When I was looking for the definition of this mechanism in the Bill, on page 10, Part I, it says:

“‘Facility Review Team’ means the committee appointed under section 26.”

Could the Minister say what section 26 is? Is it a part of the Bill or the schedule?

The other minor point is the definition of “older person”. Age 60, but quite generously and appropriately I believe the proposition is that even persons less than 60 could enter these homes in certain circumstances. That is a welcome accommodation.

In clause 6 and several other clauses after that it puts the Minister and his powers into monumental ascendancy, that is, the powers given to the Minister,

duly so, are quite enormous. In clauses 6, 7 and 11, he is empowered and responsible for making several very serious decisions on the recommendations of the mechanisms he has put in place.

I take the opportunity to make reference to such rules by a Minister as a member of the Executive. There was a debate on the Telecommunications Authority Bill—I think it was piloted by Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith—and the question of the role and power of the Minister came up. The argument from one side was that certain selections of those powers and matters of that kind should be placed in the hands of the President or some other far removed body. When I examined the Bill, I made a case for letting the Minister have that authority on two grounds. One was that the Minister is responsible to the electorate and accountable in several other ways, and in an Act like that he should be held accountable because that is part of the system under which we operate. Having said that, I made a plea that the Minister or Ministers should seek, as far as possible, however difficult, to live up to the oath of office that they took in being appointed Ministers. Sometimes I am not sure whether the obligation for fairness and impartiality are really manifest in certain instances.

I say so with due respect and I remove the present Minister from that implication. I have known him for a long time. It is a point, perhaps in this year of election, that Ministers should take their job with the solemnity and the sanctity it deserves through the oath of office. For example, if any Minister attempts to spite a professional or deny an opportunity that is deserving on merit, his colleagues, those more politically mature, should stand the ground and reaffirm the principles upon which a ministerial portfolio stands. I will not venture too far. There will be another time when this matter will be dealt with more precisely.

I think that the word “Minister” comes from the verb “to minister”. “Ministration” means you take your job seriously without being unfair and without being partial. “Ministration” means caring for. I think that this particular Bill, which has to do with care, concern and compassion—I know this particular Minister, not because he comes from the same district in which I grew up, but I have known him for some time, will exert the kind of care and standard of conduct that this Bill will deserve in implementing the sections. A minister with all these powers really serves as a national guardian. Madam President, I am quite sure that you are aware of the kind of responsibility and obligation of which I speak because you have served well in such a capacity previously.

In terms of clause 6(2), when the application is under consideration to establish such a home for older persons, I suggest to the Minister that, apart from

the other conditions that have to be satisfied, if somewhere in the application process the views of the residents nearby could be taken into account. This is, in my view, a helpful suggestion because you do not want to start constructing a home and the next day there are placards all over the place. That is a bad start. As you know, this often happens, with or without justification. If we are to be proactive, I would respectfully suggest that the views of residents be taken into account, not in any arbitrary fashion, but in terms of due process so as to ensure that when the building is built, there will be no obstructive protests to diminish the purpose of the institution. Your Facility Review Team might well be advised to take that very important ecological aspect into consideration; that social environmental issue.

2.30 p.m.

Madam President, clause 11(2) is another good provision. It stipulates certain conditionalities and the work of the Facility Review Team. What I would like to interject at this point is a provision which was in the old Act in section 4(4) where it states that members of the Facility Review Team should not have any conflict of interest. That is any pecuniary interest or any such similar interest, and being on the team and inspecting such institutions.

I would like the Minister and his ministry to consider inserting that clause in this day and time when it is so easy to accuse people of impropriety. It is good defence for even the members as well as the Facility Review Team, because without proof, an accusation could be made and, I guess, that matter should be screened out rather early rather than leaving it hanging for perhaps some embarrassment.

In clauses 21 to 24, the role of the manager is good, but maybe I could be advised. It says in clause 21(1):

“...Manager, who shall ensure at all times, there is present on the premises an officer who shall be responsible for the operations of the Home.”

There are other functions of the manager. I am thinking that if you have a manager with all these things, why do you need to have another person appointed to be responsible for the operations of the home? Perhaps it is my limited thinking, but it tells me that if you have a manager that person is responsible for the operations of the home, unless you want a deputy manager. It seems to me, to have another person will perhaps add an additional expense upon the owners of the home. So, perhaps that apparent duplicity could be reviewed by the ministry and their technocrats.

Clause 27 is where I would say the trouble starts. The Minister has the power from time to time to establish a Facility Review Team. He needs the advice; he needs the monitoring; and he needs the instrument, but it seems to me that there are two aspects to this. If you look at clause 30 and the provisions for the Division of Ageing, it seems to me, in some material respects that there is a significant amount of duplication of operations and reporting functions. This is not to implicate the Minister and his functions, but this is to save him from mass bureaucratic confusion and bureaucratic jealousies.

We know that power goes to the head very easily, not only to the head of some politicians, but to bureaucrats who like to protect their turf; who like to appear important; and who like to adopt all kinds of machinations to establish that reminisce, even in working in one institution.

I would think to save any undue unproductive duplication of function, we should really examine these three roles. I know it might be too late. I do not think that I want to bring a flush of amendments. But as the Minister sees how the Bill is working, perhaps he could put this on his agenda for the future before or perhaps even after the election, who knows. The functions of the Facility Review Team, the inspectorate and, in some cases, the Division of Ageing, as far as reporting to the Minister and the function of enquiry, seem to me quite redundant. I would explain that a bit more.

I want to take the opportunity to look at the composition of the Facility Review Team, and to suggest to the Minister, through you, that in this list of persons: a nurse, an accountant, medical practitioner, a fire officer—I am going to explain why I am suggesting this addition. You put an occupational therapist, something which the old Act had, but I want to activate that for a particular purpose.

Madam President, considering what I had said earlier on about empowering the old and bringing a higher realm of dignity to their being and treating them with respect, I believe that we should put them in a home and take care of their health, but we should try and get them to do something useful.

I see a golden opportunity here for the Government and the Ministry to establish something which you can call a name, to direct the thinking, a senior skills bureau or a senior skills advisory counsel, where you could make a survey of the different agencies that you have under your control, and the NGOs could get involved or the NGOs could be served by this, and the Division of Ageing that you have, can have a skills bank from these older persons. Some may be retired physicians, retired accountants, retired contractors, retired auditors, retired teachers and

retired police officers, and through that skills bank, in connection with the senior skills bureau, you can then bring these people who are willing to offer their services; who are also able to offer their services; and who have the competence to provide a particular service required here, there or anywhere, not permanently, and not taking away anybody's job. But it is time that we bring back these persons who are called older persons into the realm of useful work, wherever it is possible.

I was explaining to my colleague, Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie, that I had a friend, and I would not call his name. In fact, he recently passed away. He was a retired senior magistrate. He told me that he did work twice a week for a private insurance company. He also told me that activity kept him mentally alive. It gave him a purpose to do something useful. He said that the money did not matter. He took some money and gave it to charity. It brought meaning to a life that would have otherwise languished under the burden of what you call age and, mentally, he would have perished even before doing so physically. That story could be repeated in hundreds of other cases.

I think the Government can take a very noble step in bringing a freshness to this Bill and, as I said, trying to change the culture of treating old people as waste paper, as it were, metaphorically speaking. The evidence is clear. As I said before, you look around and you would see how many persons over 60 or 70 are doing very useful and important things. We should maximize our human resources. That is a slogan that we have heard so many times but, quite rightly, it usually pertains to young people—the youth is our future and we have to maximize our youthful resources but, at the same time, you could build a country also not only on knowledge and youth, but also on wisdom and experience.

So, I think that you can dip into that senior skills bank and match it with where the needs might be and you would find that they are a tremendous contribution to our national development.

Now, returning to the issue of redundancy, when you look at clauses 8, 11, 13, 14, 27, 28, 30, 31 and even 32, you see a spread of functions ranging from enquiry to monitoring to checking up on the homes, and I am really trying from my knowledge about these things or anybody who does some course in management on what you call retooling your organization and making it productive and active. You would readily see some duplication that you may wish to avoid.

The role of the inspector is to inspect certain amenities and the physical environment, but so too is the Facility Review Team. So, to cut a long story short, the Minister and his technocrats should really take a close look at this, because

you do not want a mass of meetings and confusion and then you have to set up a new machinery called mediation amongst these three important legislative entities.

Suppose the inspector and the Facility Review Team do not agree, since they have similar functions in some respect, and the report goes to the Minister that is of a different recommendation. Suppose the Division of Ageing and the Facility Review Team do not agree. If you look at the legislation, each one in some way has a direct link to the Minister on making a recommendation on similar issues. Suppose the Division of Ageing and the inspector do not agree on surveying, examining and enquiring upon the same facility or conditions. This list is there. I think the Minister has three routes to use to close down a place: the Division of Ageing recommendation, the Facility Review Team recommendation and through the inspector which he may appoint at any time. I think it is up to 15 or so.

So, while inspecting is very important; supervising the operations of these older homes is very important; and accountability is very important, I think we have to disentangle what I call an administrative morass, so as to save the Minister from unnecessary headaches. I do not think that it can be done now, perhaps I would leave it for further thinking and, perhaps there might be an easier way than the one I am recommending. The inspector could report to both the Division of Ageing and the Minister. So, really, the whole reporting procedure needs to be chiselled and be refined for the convenience of the Minister.

It might look good to some extent on paper, but I really want to emphasize the point. This is something that I had taught at the university, and that is political power, the role of charisma, the ego and the little things that people kill one another for, political ascendancy. The bureaucracy is not much different from a political party for those of us who have studied administrative organizations and organizational theories and so on. Madam President, you have been a Minister—I reluctantly refer to you—and you would know what happens in the bureaucracy. Some people do not talk to one another for days because of some misunderstanding. I think the Minister does not have time for all this bungling. He wants a straight path to do his work. I believe a straight and correct path could be chiselled out if the Ministry reviews these seeming redundancies and comes up with something much more manageable, decisive and fruitful.

The last point I wish to make concerns the fees. I start off on the premise, as I did with food prices for which I got some punishment—press, media punishment. So, I come back again to this free market assumption that we make. I do not think that the fees paid to these homes should be left to the vagaries of the free market. I know a government is quite unwilling to intervene in setting prices whether for

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food, groceries, motor cars and so forth, because it really distorts the sort of democratic economic democracy to some extent. In this case, we are dealing with older persons, whose resources might very well be limited, and who really do not have the energy or the contacts to fight a case or to protest against high fees.

If the Minister does not want to set certain limits and range because you have Type I, Type II and Type III homes and the functions are different and costing different, you can make an estimate as to what is a reasonable range, subject to inspection for each Type I, Type II and Type III home, and if even that is not possible right now, or even with that enacted, you should still have an appeal process where a poor older person can make an appeal to get the fee restructured reasonably and fairly, or at least be told why the fee is such and such, because you must have bathrooms, security, a nurse and so forth. So, at least, reasonableness would be put into the system, because sometime the perception of a high fee is not always correct, but to put things and put the inmate at rest and at comfort which is really some of the necessary things for older persons—comfort and peace of mind. I do not want anybody to be disturbed, feeling that they are being taken advantage of by high fees when their resources are quite limited.

So, I say all these things to help the Bill and to wish the Minister well in his endeavour. I think we should look forward to a new culture where the old would be treated with the respect that they have long deserved, and when they can also find something useful to do even, as they say, in their golden years.

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

Sen. Wade Mark: Madam President, thank you very much. I am very happy to make a contribution on a piece of legislation that is almost seven years old. The Government has decided to repeal the Homes for Older Persons Act of 2000, and to proceed with some cosmetic changes in an effort to show that this is the PNM's Bill for older persons.

Madam President, I would like to examine some of the statements made by the hon. Minister, particularly as they relate to ageing, and the whole challenge that we are facing as a national community when it comes to the question of an ageing population.

Growing old in this nation, without the necessary financial wherewithal, is a virtual nightmare for tens of thousands of elderly citizens in our country. Madam President, you would have noted in the Minister's presentation, as we speak about the elderly or the senior citizens, we are speaking to about 130,000 persons, as we

were told, around this time, and only a mere 6 per cent are in these older persons homes, which is probably just less than 8,000 citizens who have crossed 60 years and who are placed in these homes. So, we are talking about close to 120,000 elderly citizens who are left to fend for themselves for one reason or the other. They may be unable to afford, or their families may be unable to afford to pay the cost of accessing treatment at homes for older persons.

The Minister went on further to indicate to this Parliament that by the year 2020—already these 130,000 citizens who are 60 years and over, constitute 10 per cent of the population. He raised a red flag by stating that once you have reached that 10 per cent mark, it is an indication that your population has begun to age, and this whole concept of an ageing population kicks in.

We were also told that by the year 2020, when all of us would be wearing glasses, that we are going to have 230,000 citizens who will be 60 years and over, representing about 15 per cent of the population. I say, listen, the Minister has circulated a policy on ageing which was tabled some time ago. I looked at some of the elements and the components of this policy, and I tried my best to glean and to extricate from this policy, what preparations are being made for the elderly in our society as we move towards that magic number of 15 per cent or 230,000.

You know, the Government has produced a document called *A Draft National Strategic Plan* which is their so-called 2020 Vision. We have never seen any operational plans to give effect to this 2020 document, but we understand that they have been produced, but we have never seen them. I looked under the section dealing with a caring society, and I thought I would have seen something about the elderly in a detailed way seeing that we are talking about 2020. I read about 100 words in this massive document that deals with the future of Trinidad and Tobago, focusing on the elderly and the ageing population of Trinidad and Tobago. It tells me that this Government, like in so many instances, as they have demonstrated over their tenure, is not really planning for the future, and the elderly in our country are left almost on their own.

Madam President, the tale of the elderly under this regime is not a pleasant one. You know, at the end of 1995, barring an interruption of about five years by the NAR, 1986 to 1991, the PNM was in complete charge of this country. During the period 1972 to 1973 and 1981 to 1982, this country had experienced what we are experiencing today, a so-called oil boom, and we got a windfall. It was estimated that \$60 billion passed through this country during that period of the oil

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boom. At the end of the oil boom, old age pension, which is the main means of income for over 90 per cent of the elderly in this country, was at \$356.12. I guess, under your watch, you have increased it by \$26.

So, here we are talking about the elderly and my colleague and hon. friend, Minister Anthony Roberts, in his presentation talked about the elderly and why we must love and care for these people, but here was an administration with \$60 billion between 1973 to 1982 which could have only provided these citizens who have contributed so much to our country, a small pension which, at the end of 1995 stood at \$356.12.

We are now into a second boom, where it is estimated that the Government may have collected over \$120 billion already. Where have the poor people gone, the elderly? They have gone to a mere \$1,350. We were told by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs that merely to buy and to have a nutritionally balanced meal in this country you need \$1,700, and an old age pensioner is getting \$1,350 and they are saying that they care about the poor and the elderly.

Do you know what is sad about this? This PNM Government, this heartless regime offered them only \$100 increase, and it is because the UNC put pressure on them in the other place, the Prime Minister said that they had already taken a decision to increase it by \$100 and they forgot and that they were going to do it. It went from \$1,250 to \$1,350. They forgot when they read their budget that it was \$1,350.

Madam President, and to tell me in the year 2007—Butler fought long and hard in this country. We had a revolution in the 1930s to establish old age pension. It did not come just so. Old age pension came through blood, sweat, tears and struggle by the working people of our country—today is May Day, international working class day in our country, and we want to extend militant greetings to the workers of this country on this very important occasion. [*Desk thumping*] We fought for that and here we have a regime, based on an IMF report which I brought to this Parliament, and they denied that the IMF instructed them in the year 2004, and here we saw in the 2006/2007 budget speech of the Prime Minister, on page 48, hear what the hon. Prime Minister said:

“The Government has reviewed the distribution of the Old Age Pension, to be renamed Senior Citizens Grant, and we now propose the following amendments:”

So, Madam President, old age pension existed for decades in this country, and this PNM dying regime on their way out, announces the review of the distribution of old age pension to be renamed the Senior Citizens Grant. Madam President, you know, as we speak, I have been in this Parliament for many years, and by the end of January, the Old Age Pension Act should have been brought to the Parliament to make the amendments once there are changes to the old age pension—we are now in the month of May, and this Government has not brought the Old Age Pension Act to reflect the new increases in old age pension. What conclusion would you come to? This Government has taken a decision to abolish old age pension in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. That is the decision that they have taken and to rename it the Senior Citizens Grant.

We want to tell the elderly in Trinidad and Tobago that a UNC government will never abolish old age pension. [*Desk thumping*] Old age pension is an entitlement and a grant is a favour. We shall continue to honour old age pension in accordance with the Old Age Pension Act of our country. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. Saith: What section of the Bill are you on?

Sen. W. Mark: You see, you are old, so you do not understand. You are greying; you are in the grey area. So, Madam President, he does not understand. He is reading. We are talking about the elderly and how they live in our country.

Madam President, I want Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith to rise at the appropriate moment and tell us in this Parliament whether the PNM Government has taken a decision to abolish old age pension in Trinidad and Tobago. We want you to come, not now, but after I speak, to get up and make your contribution and tell us if your Government has taken a decision to abolish old age pension in this country, and then go and talk to the elderly when election comes, and tell them that you have decided to abolish old age pension in this country, because the IMF tells you so. I am going to give him an opportunity later on to speak on this matter.

Madam President, the reason I raised the issue about old age pension is that the Minister spoke to the question of an ageing population. Whenever we speak to the issue of ageing, you are talking about more and more elderly citizens in our country. Too many of our citizens are trapped in a syndrome of old age poverty in our country, where they have to make a choice between buying medicine, eating or buying food. We see that every day on our walkabouts.

People are living in poverty, destitution and degradation under this regime, and when the cost of living gets too high for the elderly and food prices are going out of the window, we have Sen. The Hon. Christine Kangaloo coming to tell us

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that they are going to be importing more food instead of trying to grow more food. We should be growing more food rather than importing more food, [*Desk thumping*] but she said that we are going to import more food.

I raise these issues because when we deal with the elderly in the context of what we are talking about, we recognize that there are situations in which we have to address the problems faced by the elderly in our society.

Madam President, I am happy that the regulations have arrived, because I want to make certain proposals for the Minister's consideration. The elderly in our country is not only the Minister's business, but it is the people's business, and the people's representatives are in Parliament. I do not think that the Minister should almost arrogate onto himself or appropriate that power to make regulations on his own. Those regulations must be subject to an affirmative resolution of this Parliament so that we could have an input and Danny Montano could have an input into the elderly of our country.

Sen. King: Why only Danny?

Sen. W. Mark: Well, all of us. I mentioned him because he is a person who is greying. [*Laughter*] Madam President, there are areas that we need to address as well. I want to go immediately to Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran.

Madam President, it is good; it is great to improve the standards of care for the elderly at these homes for older persons, but there is a cost to upgrading and enhancing those standards. Is the Government prepared to subsidize those homes for older persons or are we going to leave it up to ordinary citizens who are already paying taxes in order to finance their families or their mothers' or grandmothers' care at these homes?

A caring Government would subsidize, through subventions, these elderly homes in our country. A caring Government would ensure that medical personnel are made available to those homes so that our elderly citizens can be properly taken care of on a monthly basis through check-ups at no cost. They should be paying not a cent! The Government should be subsidizing these homes for older persons once it is properly set up and pay for their medical expenses. [*Desk thumping*] If you have 103 homes, we can decide how many doctors we are going to allocate to a certain number of homes, and those doctors should come from the Ministry of Health or the Regional Health Authorities. They should visit these homes so that the elderly do not have to pay. That is what we are talking about, if you care. Do not tell me that you do not have money!

The Prime Minister is spending close to \$148 million to build a mansion, so they have money. They are not prioritizing where that money should go. As I am on the question of money, I want Sen. The Hon. Dr. Saith to tell this Parliament how we arrived at giving \$27 million to acquire the purchase of property located at 82—84 Queen Street, Port of Spain, and full payment was made to Victoria Court Limited on March 27, 2007.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Rahael and the boys.

Madam President: Get back to the Bill, please.

Sen. W. Mark: No. I am talking about money. We could use this money to help the poor in our country.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Rahael and the boys.

Sen. W. Mark: I am asking—

Madam President: Senator, do not try to bamboozle me.

Sen. W. Mark: I am not bamboozling you at all.

Madam President: Come back to the Bill.

Sen. W. Mark: Of course, I am on the Bill, but I am dealing with this.

Madam President: That has nothing to do with the Bill. When the time comes you will ask that question. Would you come back to the Bill now?

Sen. W. Mark: Madam President, we are dealing with financing here. I am saying that the Government should finance all these older persons homes.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Instead of giving it to Rahael.

Sen. W. Mark: I am showing you how we can get the money.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Twenty-seven million dollars gone to Rahael—

Sen. W. Mark: I do not want them to tell you and me that they do not have the money. I am telling them where they could find the money.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: The property is worth \$17 million.

Madam President: Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh, are you on your feet?

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: No, Madam President.

Sen. W. Mark: I want him to explain to us this transaction. I would say more about this later on. [*Desk thumping*] We understand that it was \$17 million in value.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: More corruption under this PNM.

Sen. W. Mark: We will come back to that. Madam President, do not get “tizick”.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: How much Rahael give the PNM for that?

Sen. W. Mark: You must allow me to speak. I am in the minority. You must protect me. [*Laughter*] That is what you must do. We are in the Opposition. You should protect me.

Madam President: I need protection.

Sen. W. Mark: Very soon I might occupy your seat. [*Laughter*] [*Desk thumping*] You never know. They might make me the president the next time, so you have to stay close to me. [*Interruption*] Give me the encouragement so that I could think about you in the future. So, I want you near me, vice-president. [*Crosstalk*]

Madam President, look at how we treat the elderly in our country! I remember a lady called Isabel Teshea. She died in the poor people’s home in St. James. She was the first female member of a Cabinet in this country. Do you know where she ended up? In a poor people’s home! That is how the PNM takes care of its people.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: And she was a Minister of Health.

Sen. W. Mark: Madam President, she was an Ambassador to Ethiopia. She was a great lady and she ended up in a poor people’s home. I hope that none of these Ministers—well, I think with what we are hearing, based on investigations, I do not think that any one of these Ministers is going to end up in a home for older persons.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: They would end up in jail.

Sen. W. Mark: They are so well off after such a short period of time that they are not going to end up in any home for older persons.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: They might end up in jail.

Madam President: Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh!

Sen. W. Mark: Madam President, if you look at clause 21, I know you want to follow my trend of thought, so I ask you to journey with me through clauses 21 to 26, and no fewer than about 10 times the term “Manager” was used. I wonder

why the Minister did not want to give us a definition of “Manager” in the context of clause 3 of the Bill. I would like him to consider incorporating this particular definition of “Manager” in the Bill.

Madam President, I also wish to draw your attention to clause 30, and according to the explanatory section of the Bill it says:

“Clause 30 of the Bill would empower the Division to employ on contract suitably qualified persons to be inspectors of Homes for Older Persons. This clause would provide that persons appointed as inspectors would be responsible for monitoring the administration, operation and management of Homes for Older Persons and the standards of care offered therein.”

It goes on to say:

“The clause goes on to require inspection to be carried out once every six months with a report going to the Division within fourteen days after the inspection. The Minister may also direct an inspector to carry out an inspection and in those circumstances the report must be submitted to the Minister within forty-eight hours of the investigation. The Minister is empowered to assign the responsibilities of an inspector to a public officer.”

I have noticed a trend, and it started with a Bill which was brought here sometime ago on increasing the age of employment from 14 to 16. Madam President, do you remember that Bill? I have observed a trend developing where Mr. Christopher Thomas, who is the Chairman of the Public Service Commission—maybe in his next report he may be able to explain to the country the incursions by the Executive on the functions of the Public Service Commission.

What is happening under clause 30 of this Bill is that this division falls under the Ministry of Social Development, and this division therefore falls within the ambit of the public service of Trinidad and Tobago. Here in a very surreptitious way, the Government has almost parachuted into this Bill, a provision to undermine the functions of the Public Service Commission which is responsible for hiring people, employing people, transferring people and disciplining people, and here you have an arm of the public service called the Division of Ageing, in the Ministry of Social Development, where the workers who are called inspectors are now going to be employed on the basis of a contract. So, they are now undermining the role and function of the Public Service Commission.

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Madam President, before this Bill was introduced, all personnel in the Ministry of Social Development within the ambit of the public service were directly engaged by the public service, and now the Government is proposing a change to bring in contract employment into the public service, and to give them power to inspect homes. They have powers to inspect homes and make reports. What kind of controls are we going to have over these inspectors? What is the accountability mechanism? The Minister! What the PNM Government is doing is undermining the Public Service Commission of Trinidad and Tobago. That is what they are doing here.

If you go to clause 30(2), it says:

“An inspector appointed under subsection (1), shall be responsible for inspecting all aspects of the administration, operation and management of a Home and the standards of care offered to older persons therein.”

So you have a contract worker going to do that kind of work when we know the Public Service Commission would normally engage persons to carry out those duties on behalf of the State once they have applied. But it goes on further.

Clause 30(6) says:

“The Minister may, by Order, in addition to inspectors employed under subsection (1), assign a public officer to be an inspector for the purposes of this Act.”

So, he has now compounded this situation. He is not only employing persons on contract to be inspectors, but the Minister is now arrogating unto himself—could the Minister tell this Parliament where in the Public Service Regulations he has the power to assign a public officer to be an inspector for the purposes of this Act? I would want him to bring this to the attention of this Parliament. How can a Minister direct a public officer, who is engaged by the Public Service Commission, to go and do x, y and z? There is a separation of powers there! We do not want the Minister to be tampering with the public officers, because we know that they can allow the public officers to go down slippery slopes, and that is why they are insulated by the Public Service Commission.

So, Madam President, we do not support these measures. I want the Minister to explain to this Parliament who gave him the authority. Let him bring the regulations to assign public officers as inspectors and, in addition to that, they are going to employ people on contract! We have a serious problem with that. I bring it to your attention because I believe that this is a shot in the dark. This is virtually

another attempt by the Government—it started under a Bill that was introduced by Sen. The Hon. Danny Montano to increase the employment age from 14 to 16, and now we have a second Bill before us where they are seeking to further undermine the public service.

I am going to write to the Chairman of the Public Service Commission on this matter. The Chairman of the Public Service Commission must know what this PNM Government is attempting to do. I would hope that in his next report to Parliament, he would be able to expose the shenanigans of this regime. It is control. They want to control. That is what they want to do, and they want to undermine the Public Service Commission in the circumstances.

Madam President, if you look at the Draft Constitution by Sir Ellis Clarke, you are going to see where the power is going to the President to deal with public servants directly through personnel boards. They are abolishing the Public Service Commission and they are going to establish personnel boards, and persons would be employed at the pleasure of His Excellency, the new President, but that and God's face the Prime Minister of this country shall never see.

Madam President, I want to indicate to you that under clause 37(1)—and I want the hon. Minister to pay attention—we think that the hon. Minister needs help, and the Parliament shall assist him. We do not believe that the Minister, by himself, should make regulations. We believe that these regulations should be subject to an affirmative resolution of this Parliament. So, we are going to propose to the hon. Minister that he inserts after “regulations” the words “subject to an affirmative resolution of the Parliament”.

If you go to clause 37(3), we are also proposing there that yes, he must make regulations, but subject to an affirmative resolution of the Parliament. We want to help the Minister.

Madam President, allow me again to engage your attention as it relates to the employment of contract labour in the public service. You know that there are persons who are employed in the public service on contract. They come and they go. Some of them remain for two years and they would move on, but as a career public officer, you come through the Public Service Commission.

I was shocked that the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, in an article dated Monday, March 26, 2007 in the *Guardian* on page 13—the headline read “Staff shortage hits T&T foreign service”. I am showing you the trend that is developing

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in terms of undermining the public service in accordance with the provision that I have just mentioned and it says:

“...Cabinet has approved the appointment of some 30-plus international relations officers to address the ministry’s shortfall in the interim.

‘They will engaged on contract,’ he said.

Piggott told reporters that an increase in trained personnel was crucial to T&T’s hosting of two major conferences in 2009—the Summit of the Americas and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference.

‘The estimate is that some 250 to 300 officers, properly trained, will be required to support those summits’

Piggott admitted that the ministry may not get 300 public servants trained in time for the conferences, but would ‘have to find creative ways of getting people trained outside of the Public Service for those short periods...’”

Madam President, there is no planning taking place in this Government. *[Interruption]* I am dealing with the Bill. You cannot tell me to come back to the Bill. I am dealing with clause 30(1) where you are seeking to undermine the public service. I am saying that this is another example of where you are trying to undermine the public service. *[Desk thumping]* I am very relevant to the Bill.

Madam President: Sen. Mark, you are stretching your imagination.

Sen. W. Mark: I may be stretching yours.

Madam President: You are.

Sen. W. Mark: I am telling you that this is, in fact, the reality of clause 30. I am bringing to your attention and to the Parliament’s attention the attempt by this administration—Madam President, you might be a bit frustrated when I speak, but I want to tell you to bear with me. I sat there at one time and I listened to Sen. The Hon. Dr. Saith and Sen. The Hon. Danny Montano, all of them, and I was quite comfortable.

Madam President, do not allow Sen. The Hon. Dr. Saith to give you any kind of miscue. I am giving you an example of the shortage that they are speaking about, and the fact that they are going to be using contract labour in the foreign service. That is wrong! That is a dangerous trend, and I must bring it to your attention and the attention of the population.

Madam President, a drop of water, drip, drip, drip, would eventually full the bucket. I am telling you that the drop has started.

Sen. Dr. Saith: It started with you.

Sen. W. Mark: No, not with me. You bring the evidence. I want to deal with the regulations. Madam President, did you see the regulations that came? It has been tabled, and it is quite relevant to the debate. In fact, I will move a Motion within the 40-day period to have this fully debated by the Parliament if the Government does not accede to our request.

Again, I want to ask the hon. Minister, with respect to these regulations that he has tabled in the Parliament, because they are properly before this Parliament, we talked about rights and responsibilities of the residents, and I would like the hon. Minister to tell us: Is there going to be some kind of documentation of these rights or are these rights outlined in clauses 15 to 24 of the regulations? I am seeing certain things being advanced, but they are not being elaborated upon and, therefore, I would like the hon. Minister to tell us the relevance of the rights and responsibilities in the context of Part IV, under standards of care. I have already indicated that this matter of medical attention should be free.

The elderly in this country are crying. I want to refer you to an article in the *Sunday Guardian* dated April 15, 2007 entitled “Cane is bitter, Tears flow in Barrackpore, Debe as death knell sounds for sugar industry”. Here you have an elderly gentleman by the name of Nandlal Sookram who is 63 years. As you know, you are classified as being old or an older person when you are 60 and over. Hear what this article says:

“Covered in black soot, Nandlal Sookram, 63, stood among his cane at the Dumfries scale in Debe last Wednesday and wept silently.

For several minutes, under the scorching mid-morning sun, Sookram wept as he was asked what will he be doing when the sugar cane industry closes at the end of the crop next month.

Wiping sooty tears with a grimy bandana, he said sadly: ‘From there, I don’t know what to tell you. All my life I in this thing with my father. I start from small. I hardly went to school. My family in cane from indentureship straight down.’”

Madam President, I am trying to explain to you how the elderly are being treated in this country. [*Desk thumping*] We are dealing with the elderly in our country and this gentleman is 63 years of age.

3.30 p.m.

Sen. Prof. Deosaran made the point that as you get older you need to be active in whatever you are doing to keep body, mind and soul alert and alive.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: To prevent Alzheimer's.

Sen. W. Mark: To prevent Alzheimer's.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Lenny, you getting it now.

Sen. W. Mark: No, no, please!

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: No, I am just making a little joke with Lenny; he knows it is a joke. [*Laughter*]

Sen. W. Mark: So, Madam President, I am raising these points to show you how the Government is treating with the elderly in our country.

Sen. Montano: You are talking about Alzheimer; do you know what clause we are on?

Sen. W. Mark: Yes, no, no we are not talking about—Madam President, may I be protected? [*Laughter*]

Madam President: I am too, wondering what clause you are on.

Sen. W. Mark: No, no, I am dealing with the elderly, Madam President.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: The way they are treated, Madam President.

Sen. W. Mark: Yes, how, how!

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: How the elderly are treated. [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. W. Mark: Home, and look at that, this lady—

Sen. Montano: Person.

Sen. W. Mark:—another elderly citizen [*Interruption*] [*Sen. Mark holds up newspaper*] crying out for water—

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: They must have homes.

Sen. W. Mark: The elderly do not have water. Madam President, food prices are too high!

Madam President: All right Senator! Please sit down!

Sen. W. Mark: Yes.

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

Motion made, That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh*]

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. W. Mark: Thank you very much, Madam President. I want to indicate to you that one of the areas that we have to pay attention to as a national community as we deal with the aged and we deal with the elderly in our society, is for the Government to take account of the fact that there is need for a national pension programme in this country. Because would you believe that close to, the last count at the end of 1998—1999 we had over 24,000 public officers retiring or who had retired from the public service. So between 1998 to the current time, 2007 we may have had another 5,000 to 6,000 public officers, so we are talking about 30,000 to 30-plus thousand public officers who have retired from the public service.

I want to make an appeal to this Government, and you do not have to reinvent the wheel. In the budget speech of 1998 there is a whole section that dealt with the national pension programme in our country. How a UNC administration was going to deal with pensions within the public service of Trinidad and Tobago, and to avoid pension from—

Sen. Dr. Saith: Madam President—

Madam President: Senator!

Sen. W. Mark:—becoming a direct charge from the public purse.

Sen. Dr. Saith: [*Inaudible*] I really want to raise the point of order about relevance. The Bill that we are debating is “An Act to Repeal the Homes for Older Persons Act, 2000 and to provide for the licensing, regulation and control of Homes for Older Persons.” For 46 minutes the Senator has not dealt with that at all. This is not a Bill to debate older persons—

Sen. W. Mark: I think he is eating into my time. He is eating—[*Crosstalk*]

Madam President: Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh, let me give the ruling please!

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Go ahead, Madam President, we welcome the ruling.

Madam President: Even when Sen. Mark is speaking I am hearing two voices all the time. I am not too sure who is contributing. But Sen. Mark, I have tried to make the point to you all evening that you are being irrelevant. You are

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trying to bring issues that you feel that you would like to raise but this is not the right time to raise them. *[Interruption]* We are talking about homes, we are repealing an Act and we are talking about—

Sen. W. Mark: Madam President, you do not have to tell me that, I know all of that.

Madam President: Exactly, so you know it, so please!

Sen. W. Mark: Not because he said that, that is so.

Madam President: That is not—look!

Sen. W. Mark: Not because Sen. Dr. Saith gets up and says I am being irrelevant, you believe him. I am being relevant to the debate. *[Desk thumping]* *[Interruption]* Very relevant, look I have spent a long time and you were following me going through the Bill. I am not being irrelevant! They do not want to hear what I am saying.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: They never want to hear what we say.

Madam President: Sen. Mark, are you questioning me?

Sen. W. Mark: No, how can I question you. I sat there before.

Madam President: All right, thank you.

Sen. W. Mark: I do not question. *[Crosstalk]* Nobody could question me when I sit there!

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Suture of our lips.

Sen. W. Mark: So I could never question you on that.

Madam President: All right, please come back to the Bill!

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: We could suture our lips and come back.

Madam President: Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh!

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, if that is what you want, we must not talk. *[Crosstalk]*

Sen. W. Mark: Madam President, no, no, we are always going to be able to speak here. Otherwise there will be no sitting—

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: This is a democracy you know. This is not Zimbabwe.

Sen. W. Mark: Madam President, may I continue?

Madam President: No, not unless Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh stops his comments. [Interruption] Nobody will stop you from speaking. [Crosstalk] You have your time to speak but you must abide by the Standing Orders. The Standing Orders say that you must not be irrelevant, and therefore I have every right to stop someone whom I feel is being irrelevant. I am not stopping him from speaking; I am simply asking him to come back to the Bill.

Sen. W. Mark: Madam President, can I refer to the regulations that are properly before us?

Madam President: Yes.

Sen. W. Mark: Could you go to page 8 with me? Because I want you to follow me, so you do not rule me relevant.

Sen. Dr. Saith: Irrelevant.

Sen. W. Mark: Irrelevant that is. Go to clause 23 of these regulations on page 8. [Interruption] Because the regulations are related to the Bill.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: That is right, so he is very relevant.

Sen. W. Mark: I want the hon. Minister—Madam President, it says that a manager may, where changes have occurred in the physical or mental condition of a resident which cannot be adequately met by the home promptly notify the division, next of kin or primary contact person of the need to transfer the resident. Transfer the residents to where, Madam President? To where? To the hospital? To another home?

Madam President, I want to let you know that an aging population is associated with mental health consequences and therefore it calls for effective action. Nowhere in the policy on ageing, in the Bill, or in the regulations is there mention of the need for us to focus on mental health and you know, as a practitioner yourself, that old age or when we get older it brings many sources of stress and that may increase mental ill health, such as decreasing functional capacity and social isolation. You would know that the elderly through late life depression and age related neuro-psychiatric conditions could increase to some extent the burden of mental disorder, and we have not seen in the legislation or in the regulations any support intervention mechanisms to improve the mental well-being of the elderly in our society.

While we are focused only on the Bill as it relates to the older persons, just remember that it is only a small percentage of the people who are in the older people's homes. The majority of those people are in the larger community, and

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therefore we need to recognize, through our professionals the importance of this particular illness. And from one extreme of the spectrum you may have, for instance, very serious forms of mental illness and when you go to the other extreme you may have milder forms of mental illness, but we do not see any provision in the legislation to address the issue of mental health and well-being for the elderly in our society. This is why we would like the Minister to pay some attention because it is our view that it is under-resourced, it is under-recognized and it is under-treated. Therefore, many older citizens who may have mental health problems, we will need to identify and treat with those problems very early, because depression could easily be overlooked and this is very common among older persons in our society. And therefore I would want to appeal to the Minister to address this issue of the pervasive tendency to under-resource, under-recognize and under-treat this whole question of mental illness.

I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether the Government has a comprehensive older people mental health strategy. Is there a strategy by the Government to deal with the mental health of the elderly in our society and have they identified the promotion of good mental health for older people? We are talking about lifelong learning; we are talking about volunteering; we are talking about housing and safety and we are talking about health, social care and social activity. These are very important issues when it comes to the issue of mental health and the elderly in our country. We do not believe sufficient attention is being paid to this particular question.

Madam President, I want to go back to clause 27 of the Bill and it deals with the composition under clause 27(3). I would like to ask the Minister, why did he leave out a nutritionist from this committee? Why? When we look at the debate back in 2000 it was the PNM Government that was proposing that we incorporate such a professional on this particular team.

Madam President: You have five minutes.

Sen. W. Mark: Why has he left out this person? Where is the social worker in this team? Where is the social psychologist on this particular team? Where is the occupational therapist in this team or the civil engineer, and architect, Madam President? We are not seeing these positions and I would like to advise the hon. Minister that we would like to see the incorporation of some of these professionals in this Facility Review Team, because they would be very critical in dealing with the elderly in our society. So I would like him to pay attention to this particular matter.

Madam President, whilst the old is being distressed, the young is also under assault. I want to call on Sen. Dr. Lenny Saith, I want to bring to his attention a situation involving a 7-year-old child; his name is Adrian Henry and he suffers from something called severe—

Madam President: How you reached there, Senator?

Sen. W. Mark: No, I am dealing with the spectrum. You, on the one hand, have the elderly who are not being taken care of in our society and on the other hand the younger people are also not being taken care of.

Madam President: Sen. Mark, unless I suggest that you pass the piece of paper to Minister Saith and let him deal with it. Continue. You have about three minutes left, please.

Sen. W. Mark: Madam President, I would like to indicate that the pressures exerted by population aging, because this is what the Minister spoke to. Therefore, we need a public pension system that is in fact sustainable. We need major pension reforms in our country. Problems plaguing pension systems revolve around two issues: Population aging and premature retirement. As it relates to population aging, the natural policy response would be simply, one, there are two processes involved here, fertility decline where fewer people, younger persons that is, having children and where in a society where you have an ageing population you have to deal with pre-funding or what is called a contributory mechanism in order to deal with this thing.

The secular increase in longevity is another area that we need to focus on when we are talking about population ageing. The Minister made reference to population ageing in his presentation, I am responding to population ageing and indicating to the Government that when we talk about population ageing that is linked to pension reform, because as the population gets older less people are able to work. The younger people are going to carry the burden and it is either we increase the retirement age from 60 to 65, so you have more people in the workforce or you have what is called a pre-funding pension mechanism or what is called a contributory pension mechanism. I raise these matters because it is important for the Government to recognize and to take steps. In any event in winding down, I do not think they have much time, so it will fall on the new Government led by the UNC to continue its great work in dealing with pension reform in the public service and in the wider society.

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And, Madam President, I want to say in closing that the time has come for pensions, occupational, NIS and old age pension to be indexed to the cost of living so that it could reflect the continuous increase in the cost of living in our country.
[*Desk thumping*]

I have made certain suggestions, I would await my colleague's response in terms of trying to incorporate these suggestions to make the Bill a better Bill. There are several areas that have been advanced and I look forward to engaging [Interruption] him at the committee stage so that we can have some dialogue on it.

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

The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, I rise because in his usual fashion Sen. Mark makes an outrageous statement in the hope that the media who are with us before tea will go away and report it. But he did ask me and I am going to respond. [*Interruption*]

Madam President, the Government [*Interruption*] is not abolishing payments to old age pensioners. I repeat, despite Sen. Mark, the Government is not abolishing payments to old age pensioners. What the Government has said is that it will change the name to a Senior Citizens Grant which is a more accurate term for the payment being made. Old age pension at the moment is subject to a means test. Am I right? It is subject to a means test, so the more accurate term is a Senior Citizens Grant. So that all it is doing is changing the name to a Senior Citizens Grant and people who are now getting that so called old age pension will continue—

[*Sen. Mark raises hand*]

No, I am not giving way. [*Interruption*] I am not giving way!

Sen. Mark: A pension is an entitlement, a grant is a favour. So since you are not giving way, I will talk to you.

Madam President: Please, Senators!

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: Madam President, the hon. Minister in his winding up will explain it more fully but I want to make sure that the people who are listening to this broadcast and hearing it understand that what Sen. Mark has said is not true. It is not true.

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Is it not a grant that you are giving?

Sen. Mark: Why change it to a grant?

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Is it not a grant you are giving?

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: It is a grant now. [*Crosstalk*]

Madam President: Please, Senators! [*Pounds gavel*] [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: A grant is optional by the State. [*Crosstalk*]

Madam President: Will you give the Minister a chance to say what he is saying!

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: Madam President, I do not understand, when they are speaking and they are irrelevant they do not want anybody to draw their attention to it. He asked a question, I am answering it and they are not giving me a chance.

Sen. Mark: Yes, but you are not clear.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: I declare again, old age pension at the moment is a grant because it is subject to a means test.

Sen. Mark: Old age pension is not a grant; old age pension is an entitlement under the law. [*Crosstalk*]

Madam President: No, it is not. [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: So that will deal with that.

Sen. Mark: No, we are not changing the name to senior citizen; the UNC will not allow that.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: Yes, but you would not be there!

Sen. Mark: Leave old age pension! [*Laughter*]

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: The second point I want to make, and again I think the Minister in winding up will deal with it; this is not the only avenue that Government assists old age pensioners. We have a CDAP programme [*Interruption*] free pharmaceutical—[*Crosstalk*]

Madam President: Please, would you give the Minister—[*Crosstalk*] Give the Minister a chance to speak?

Sen. Mark: I will give him a chance. We will give him a chance. He is importing dead class drugs for the elderly.

Madam President: Continue, Sen. Dr. Saith, please. [*Interruption*]

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: Madam President, that is all I wanted to put on the record at this time. As I said, the Minister in his winding up will deal with it, but I did not want the headline tomorrow to be the misinformation—

Sen. Mark: What are you worried about headline for? [*Laughter*] [*Inaudible*] You do not have to worry about headline.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:—that Sen. Mark normally introduces into debates in this Senate.

Thank you, Madam President.

Sen. Brother Noble Khan: Thank you, Madam President, for allowing me to share some thoughts on what is before us here today, what we continue to deal with, “An Act to repeal the Homes for Older Persons Act, 2002 and provide for the licensing, regulation and control of Homes for Older Persons.”

I must say that this indeed has ushered in a new era insofar as deliverables are concerned in this modern time. We know for sometime that historically the care for our older folk has been looked upon as an honour and privilege within the home circle, and this, obviously is recognition of a shift from what modern society demands. Obviously, if you are to care for those who have served and who have been responsible for those coming after, there is a deep commitment to see that the best could be provided for them. It is against that background that I would like to share some thought on what is before us.

Firstly, the scope of this Act, I would think our Minister would have considered not in a vacuum of just providing for a facility and that that facility insofar as the law is concerned is covered. [*Interruption*] To this end I would think the question of accountability of the service that is to be provided within that facility is one that we should link with it, and most likely we will be hearing something on that too. I do not want to get into any question of the litigations or the litigious debate. I do not think I am competent for that and I am sure there are other people here who would be dealing with that. But it does seem to my mind that with respect to the Facility Review Team which falls under the control of the Minister and within the framework of what the law seeks to do, you have a sort of closed shop between that area of the homes and who is supposed to monitor it.

In my humble view I would think this tight control within the programme of the ministry—and obviously the review facility will form part of the ministry. There might be a need—I do not know if it is in the Act or if it is perceived that there should be a sort of an overseeing committee or, I would not like to say an

overseeing committee, but our overseeing committee or some authority to which appeals could go insofar as small as that is. We can see this being institutionalized in this law and expanding substantially in time to come. This is one of the points that I would like to see clarified.

It is indeed nice to see the law coming into being and may I remind ourselves that even in our quest to add to our social value deliverables, they should think in terms of widening our guard, our protection mechanism within it. And I would like to suggest first between ourselves, our colleague Sen. Prof. Deosaran had made mention to some of the suggestions but I would like too, to also mention, even within the framework of our oath that we take here and particularly the oath that our Ministers take, that we be reminded of some of the pitfalls into which we could fall victims of. To that I would just like to refresh ourselves in the words of one of the great men of our time, Mahatma Gandhi, when he referred to and what has been synthesized as the seven deadly sins which we could easily fall victim to. I will refresh our memories, when he referred to politics without principles, wealth without work, commerce—business that is—without morality, education without character, pleasure without conscience, science without humanity, worship without sacrifice.

I put this against the background of accountability and our responsibility and I will refresh ourselves again as recently I have said it that this new era that we are in, particularly with the blessing that we have had, and the monetarizing of the resources of our land, that we pay particular attention to what the great Mahatma has advised us not too long ago. He had capsuled—it has been with us for quite some time and I speak for centuries and maybe aeons—these elements that he has brought to our attention, so on that point I bring them to your attention. I would like to mention that we are going into a new era in the establishment of the provisions for these homes, but even for quite some time we have had pension laws on our books. Those pension laws are linked with people. I see here, Madam President, and it is inside of here, for older persons. I would like to link it with that, because I think it is very relevant.

I refer particularly to those who have served in our land, our country and in our public service for quite some time and have retired. Subsequent to their retirement, pensions were paid, benefits were paid all in the law, and these are closely linked to conditions of service within the law. Even when those laws were saved with the establishment of our republican status, the establishment of our dominion status with our independent status, it seems to me that part of the mechanisms that are in place, because it is relevant that we show this point,

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because what is coming in the law within the framework of the older person. I am trying to link what has taken place between older persons against a framework of a law, we are bringing a law with older persons here to see what has happened over there that does not happen here or could be corrected here as this is brought to our attention.

Madam President: Just be relevant, Senator, I am listening. Once it is relevant then you would be relevant too.

Sen. Bro. N. Khan: We are speaking about older persons—

Madam President: You are speaking about homes for older persons.

Sen. Bro. N. Khan: Right, and benefits for the homes. Thank you, Madam President. Particularly with respect to people who because of the money change that took place their benefits are not correct at the moment, I would just like to bring to our attention that within the framework of the law there are irregularities to people who—because we are hoping that for the older persons we will have an increased benefit by this facility that is before us.

I will leave that to rest for the moment, but I think I have said sufficient, to put the Senators on the alert that there is an element of injustice because this law seems to widen the scope of social justice as we bring more deliverables into place. So this is one aspect of it. I know the litmus test of any law that we are bringing is what we are delivering. Obviously what is before us is still on new chartered waters, and obviously we should make or bring attention to ourselves matters that could impact insofar as this is concerned.

4.00 p.m.

Very often, with respect to people in situations such as this, the quality of care though we are providing for a home here, we must link the question of quality of care that would emerge out of this building. And I would like to see or hear from our Minister, for whom we have the greatest respect by his past service and even his commitment, his demeanour and everything that we know of him, that he would definitely be going into this area with the desired commitment and the desired feeling that should be given to it. So I would like to hear some commitment or some reference being made, to how we would manage the caring aspects that will be emerging out of this home.

These are some of the areas that I would like to touch on to be aware of the area that we are going into, to take within ourselves because basically, when we come here, very often we speak about things that seem to have a disconnect; a

disconnect within our inner selves. But legislation like this when it comes, allows an element for the conscience to be raised because you are dealing with our older people or provision for our older people.

So, I take this opportunity, Madam President—which I know with your usual way of allowing some form of elasticity if I am bordering—as I said and thank you for allowing me to share these moments, and definitely, I think it is a good piece of legislation. It is a piece of legislation that needs to be monitored and I can see changes taking place as matters emerge.

Thank you and God bless. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Ronald Phillip: Thank you kindly, Madam President. Madam President, I welcome this debate on homes for older persons, since we are talking about the segment of population who are that vulnerable segment in the population. We talk about the young, we talk about the old, but more importantly, when we talk about this segment in the population, it disturbs us on this side when so little is being done for this vulnerable segment and the Government continues to ignore the plea of people in dire need.

Madam President, as we talk about this home for older persons, there is a thin line between the services required by older persons and health care because of the natural process of ageing, and so, there is always a movement in the discussion in the debate. I have listened to my colleagues on both sides; they have agreed that there is need for good health care and services to establish this home. This home is not going to be established in a vacuum, it is going to be established in surroundings, in a catchment area, in a demographic area that services the needs of the people. But, when we look at these homes, it is essential that we establish a quality health service that is available to the public, else the poor people who are around—and we know the poor people who cannot afford expensive medication—would not be able to go to these health facilities, and so, if they are residents of these homes, they would just be residing here and suffering silently without the necessary care.

Also, Madam President, I would like to make the point that, when we talk about the old, we tend to associate old with like an old car, an old shoe and something that we discard. Sen. Prof. Deosaran had asked the question, what does it mean to be old? He also made the connection with the old having some value and I just want to elaborate—if you would just bear with me, Madam President—that the older persons in our society have institutional capacity. They

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have been there; they have done that and so they can transfer learnings to the young people. So, as we talk about establishing these homes for the older people, they cannot just be a place where we house old people.

The Bill in its essence seems to be dressing-up what we call poor people home or the poor house. So what I would like added with this in terms of consideration, is this whole aspect of training where it was discussed here, but what is the qualification framework to allow an exit of persons and entry back into the training mode. And it means now, that all of us know that when we talk about apprenticeship, the young persons, the students, sit at the feet of the master to learn and most of these times the master only talks about the elderly, the older persons who have been there, did that and have something valuable to contribute towards society.

So, I do not want, where we are looking at the Bill and we want to lock away the old people and remove them from contact with the young, where we are connecting a disconnect. It is no wonder that our young persons who are not cultured and interacting with the older persons are so angry. They callously commit crimes against each other and against members of the public. They are not learning anything of worth from the older persons, and so the young persons see the older persons at times in our society as a burden and useless people, and it is in that context, I am looking at the connection between the older persons established in the homes and the other persons that they interact with.

Madam President, the question was asked who is going to pay for this service. When we look at the homes, we want to ensure that proper health care and facilities are in place and we also are bringing an Act to allow people to establish business. Now, the sole purpose of a business is to make money, so we know that we are talking about a segment of the society that is most vulnerable, they are not wealthy persons. The wealthy persons do not find themselves in these homes and now we are asking people to get a licence to run a business. In business you want to know who could pay for it; who could afford it.

When we look at this Bill before this honourable House to repeal the Homes for Older Persons, Act No. 38 of 2000, and it provides for the licensing, regulation and control of these homes, we are really asking people now to engage in a business enterprise. So, when I looked at this Bill seven years later and with consideration of global changes taking place, the society changing and people's lifestyles are changing, I would have expected the PNM administration to really bring before this honourable House, a Bill with much improvement in

administrative services. The Bill is laden with bureaucratic blunders and it does not encourage the private sector to really go towards this. So when we establish this law and the private sector is able now to establish business, I see few people probably jumping at the opportunity to really take it on, so we would always have this segment not catered for. There are just a few changes to the Act and it was reintroduced for the debate, Madam President.

Madam President, surely the hon. Minister would have attempted to put in place a First World facility, since it is a term they associate with everything they are doing for elderly couples or single persons to spend their old age in care and comfort as they convalesce together. So it means now that I would have expected since everything is Vision 2020 and First World, the First World Prime Minister's house and everything, the poor people should also have this First World facility. The question then is, does this Bill provide for this First World home for older persons; and does the Bill align with the present administration's vision as they outline plans and programmes for our people?

When we look at "huffers" and how they spend the money, do we see a trickle down effect and are we bringing a Bill that caters for this vulnerable group and allows us to provide the essential services and protect our people, the people who have been productive in society and have contributed to this country, the building of this country?

Madam President, if you would allow me to just look at their Vision 2020 document and I quote:

"The Draft Plan focuses on the human dimension and all factors that impact the quality of life within the society. In contrast to previous planning efforts which focused on broad economic and social matters, prime importance is being given to identifying and fulfilling the basic needs of the population."

So to discard everything that was done before as being broad-brush and they now are saying that they are able to identify and fulfil the basic needs of the population. Let us examine this basic need because it is important for us to look at the health facility and the facilities that are in the communities and how it will help the support system for these homes for this vulnerable population. I read again, Madam President, from the Vision 2020 document:

"Though the health status of the people of Trinidad and Tobago has improved over the years, significant health challenges are yet posed by the increase in life expectancy and the attendant chronic and degenerative disease."

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So, they are agreeing that people are probably taking better care of themselves, availability of medication and technology and people are living longer. They are also saying on the other hand that they have serious challenges in the health sector because of chronic disease.

Now, I know that this ageing population because of poor lifestyle, in terms of nutrition and so on which is important, people suffer from chronic diseases. Madam President, we should look at what this administration has achieved in terms of putting the support system in place because if we are going to pass a Bill for the homes for the older persons, we should make sure that there are the support systems rather than allowing people to establish this home; recruit or tell people to come and enroll in it and we put all these measures with inspectors and managers, and then, when the person gets sick and they cannot afford to pay, what happens? They can put them out and it means that our citizens suffer.

So, can you picture, Madam President, in your mind how one of these homes for older persons would look? If we take the Bill and we try to say, okay, what are the provisions of this Bill that allow us to paint a picture, what do you see? How are the facilities arranged? What kind of support services are there? What kind of activities were these people engaged in? Because we know when we talk about “poor house” in our country and society, we think of a place where people would go and waste away rather than engage in activities. Everybody here is making the point that the older persons in society have something to contribute.

So, where is the mechanism now for contribution to the wider society? [*Desk thumping*] In a sense, what is the quality of this retirement that we are talking about for these older persons? And more specifically, what is the quality of the older persons homes that we expect the older persons who are retiring—When we look at this quality—and they talk about the health sector development, a quality drive and quality checks and so on—is this administration really in touch with the people? Do they know what the people want? Do they know the lifestyles of the older persons; and are they catering for it or are we just bringing a Bill that embellishes the poor house and say, okay, people will go and run these businesses and cater for that?

Madam President, what this clearly demonstrates, is that the PNM is really out of touch and inward looking. They are not outward looking in terms of incorporating this and if I can go back to some vital statistics that will allow us to develop the point. Looking at the source from CSO 2002, Population and Housing Census done in May to June 09, 2002 and also the latest labour market bulletin in the fourth quarter in 2005 from October to December. It is noted in 1990 that the

population 60 years and over was 8.72 per cent representing a total figure of 105,841 persons. Ten years later, census again reported that persons 60 years and above are now 126,477 persons. This is now represented as being 10.02 per cent of our population, so the population has increased by an overall of 1.3 per cent. Looking at the latest figure obtained from CSO which is 2005 although we are in 2007, we are seeing now that the ageing population 60 and over represents 11.75 per cent of our population.

Madam President, what this clearly demonstrates, is that there is an increasing number of persons 60 years and over who we need to cater for and is a vital part of our society. When we look at this Act, it is very relevant. We recognize as we did in 2000 that there is a need for an Act to provide for homes for older persons and the service, that is why we brought the Act in 2000 to this Parliament.

Madam President, if I could go to the first schedule on page 15 where we talked about the classifications of the home. I am trying to establish the labelling of Types I, II and III that we tell people, so I ask the question, how would these homes look? And in looking at this schedule on page 15, we see where the Type I is basically any home for older persons which provides care and housing to four or more healthy able-bodied older persons.

So, we establish that we can set up this home with four or more persons and they are healthy and able-bodied, but the Act also stated that it is the care that is provided that distinguishes the types of homes that they are establishing. They went on to qualify this by saying, "Who are not in need of immediate or intermediate skilled nursing or medical care". So, the first type as far as they are concerned, would not need skilled nursing or medical care, "but who may require administration of medication". Who is going to administer medication if not a skilled nurse or somebody who is trained in this area of primary medical care? So there is a contradiction in terms of how they define the first type.

If you look at Type II in this classification:

"Any Home for Older Persons which provides care and housing for four or more..."

Establish a number, but then they come and qualify by saying:

"who are not in need of skilled nursing or medical care, but who may require either dietary supervision or the administration of medication under the supervision of a registered nurse or physician."

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So, they are stating in Type II that you need to have a registered nurse or physician on board. And in Type III now, they are saying same four persons again, and who may require the supervision of a registered nurse or physician.

So what is the differentiation if we are going to have a fee structured difference in terms of the classification? And there are summary convictions in clause 35 when people contravene these regulations and laws. My point is that there is no dividing line between the classifications and there seems to be some confusion in the Minister's mind or probably it was not thought out properly to put this Bill together.

There is no clear line and if you could just permit me to demonstrate to this honourable Senate in terms of what a clear line would be. If you look at the astute management of the United National Congress administration and we look at mismanagement of this in terms of it. The United National Congress, astute management is shrewd, smart, of good judgement, perceptive, [*Crosstalk*] judicial, incisive, wise, intelligent, sharp and clever; [*Desk thumping*] and the PNM is about mismanagement. P-N-M. Planning National Mismanagement. [*Desk thumping*] Planning—to deliver for our elderly. Planning, planning, planning. National—making sure everyone suffers, that is what national means. And Mismanagement—that is the confession of a Prime Minister.

Madam President, the administration is planning for homes for older persons and I fear that we will continue if we look at this Bill in its present form to have the stigma of the poor house continuing rather than providing for our elderly. Coming back to the Bill, Type I states that persons do not need medical care, but may require medical care. There is a contradiction in the definition. Types II and III both state that they would require the supervision of a registered nurse or physician, but with Type II requiring dietary supervision or the administration of medicine. Is there sufficient or clear dividing line between the types? And should there not be clear dividing lines between the types of homes distinguishing between this mode of operation?

Clearly, if you picture the Type II business establishment because I made the point that we are trying to encourage people to take this as a private enterprise and this person is now advertising to this market segment, in terms that the person decides that they want to have a business, in terms of a plan and they want to advertise for the market segment. Can you see, Madam President, the person is saying that the segment of the market is persons who may require dietary

supervision or the administration of medication, but not in need of skilled nursing or medical care. So for whom really is the Type II providing? Confusion, Madam President. Confusion!

Confusion on that side to bring a simple Bill to lay in Parliament to provide for our elderly. I would like to recommend to the hon. Minister that he defines in the Bill what is skilled nursing. What is the difference between medical care and primary medical care? Because he makes it as the differentiating point in the different types and if he is going to weigh the difference between primary medical care and medical care with such weight, then he should definitely explain the terms that we use.

However, clause 9 of the Bill would require homes for older persons licensed under the Act to be operated in accordance with the terms and conditions of the licence and the licence is based on the types, so subclause (2) would make it an offence if you breach subclause (1). And further, clause 35 of this Bill would provide that where no penalties are specified for offences under the Act, the penalty would be a fine of \$25,000, and where the offence is a continuing offence to a further fine of \$500 for every day or part of the day during which the offence is committed.

It clearly states in the Bill that breaching the type that they have outlined in terms of classification of home and doing things probably ultra vires in terms of a Type II, trying to assume the position of another type, there is a clause in this Bill that states that there is a \$25,000 fine and we are expected to pass this Bill and send it now. There is going to be confusion in our legal system when lawyers argue over what is the classification and differentiation between types I, II, III homes for the older persons.

The types of homes and their services are essential for this Bill, and therefore, with that confusion there, nothing else in the Bill seems to make sense because you are really looking at embellishing a poor house as I said. But, if you just permit me to let this honourable House know how to go about providing for the elderly in our society. The United National Congress during 1995 to 1999, provided care for the older persons in our society. What we did is that we renovated hospitals and in renovating hospitals and clinics throughout the nation, we were able to put health care facilities in all the geographical areas and decentralized the health system. We put clinics in communities so the old people, elderly persons would not have to travel too far and we ensured that this was decentralized in the rural areas. We also provided ambulances.

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There were more than 30 ambulances established and a national ambulance service to get persons to hospital and there was medicine available in hospitals. We also made drugs available for the sick and the elderly and there are certain chronic diseases we know because of lifestyles such as: glaucoma, diabetes, asthma and arthritis and what we did, is that we made these drugs available. Chronic disease drugs were available to the ageing and to the elderly in our hospitals and they could have come and obtained it freely.

Madam President, presently, if you get sick on a Saturday and you have to go to the hospital, the pharmacy is closed. The doctor writes a prescription on one side and tells you, “You are unable to obtain drugs under this administration and you have to go and buy it privately.” That is how we treat our elderly persons who cannot afford the drugs. We staffed the ambulance and we hired and trained persons, dozens of emergency medical technicians and these people were able to go and deal with people in the homes, in the rural areas.

We are about taking care of the elderly. [*Desk thumping*] And on a related point because we are talking about these people going to the homes and being cared for—

Madam President: I want to tell you that I have allowed you to go around and around.

Sen. R. Phillip: Okay.

Madam President: Come back to the Bill.

Sen. R. Phillip: Thank you, Madam President. When we look at our senior citizens, we were able to increase their old age pension to allow them—We increased it by 121 per cent, from \$356.15 to \$720 at that time. [*Desk thumping*] One hundred and twenty-one per cent. We also expanded the pension and made thousands of people more eligible to pension benefit; not a grant, not a give out for PNM handout and [*Desk thumping*] hacks. We are about the people. We always put people first, and in addition to that, we established this hardship relief programme where we were able to help persons cut their annual water rates by up to 25 per cent. Thousands of people who are pensioners benefited from this. [*Desk thumping*] But, Madam President, PNM, Planning National Mismanagement. [*Crosstalk*] [*Laughter*]

Madam President, can you imagine this Cabinet when they meet with the hon. Prime Minister. We would assume they are discussing the business of the country, but rather they are discussing how to mismanage the country’s business.

Madam President: Senator, can I just ask you how long do you think you will be again because if you are going to be five minutes we will wait, but if you are going to be longer, we would take the tea break.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, I think we would take the tea break.

Madam President: [*Crosstalk*] All right. We will suspend for tea now and we will return at 5.00 p.m. and I hope Senator, that you will come back to the Bill when we return.

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Madam President: Senator, you had 27 minutes; you may continue now.

Sen. R. Phillip: Madam President, it concerns me that when we pass this Bill we are asking members of the public to come on board and develop a business. In my contribution I am putting myself in the place of the public, trying to decide: Do we need to have an owner/operator type model or do we need to hire a manager? In Part III where it talks about a requirement for a licence, it is mandatory that you must have a manager. Is this manager going to be the owner or is the manager just going to manage the business? At the end of the day, it is a business enterprise.

When we look at this business model that we want to encourage our members of the public to engage in, I am asking basically: What are the supporting, enabling facilities that we have in the community? We know that the cost of this facility would depend on the availability of health care; there is definitely a connect between them.

My colleague, Sen. Mark, mentioned the provision of mental health services for the ageing population. The PNM administration in 2003 had stated, basically, in the budget presentation, that the Ministry of Health would have shortly begun implementation of the Trinidad and Tobago Mental Health Plan:

"The plan will rationalize and reorient the provision of mental health services using a holistic and integrated approach to mental health promotion, treatment and care."

They recognize that our citizens will require this service and in 2004 they came and added \$500 million for funding the health sector for the next three years. This funding should have really helped them develop a national health policy which they said would have been formulated and articulated, clearly

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identifying the scope of the public health services. I definitely see the need for all of this, because it helps to build; it would help if they could have gotten this thing in place.

They also spoke in 2004 about health quality legislation: prescribing proper standards for the quality of health care in our public and private health sector. So when the Bill debates issues about complaints and mistreatment; for example, you do not know if the elderly woman slipped or if the caretaker pushed her down; we would have established standards that our professionals would know and be trained towards in terms of providing. That was in 2004.

In addition to that in 2005, they said that they would enable infrastructural development to provide for the primary health care systems' development, training and health promotion projects. So in 2005 we were still talking about these projects; and in 2006 they said that in health despite all the setbacks—I do not know who was setting them back—and all the industrial issues that they had to grapple with—what they have done is drastically reduce the waiting time for a whole range of surgical operations. These are the types of operations that would affect the old, like cataract and prostate operations.

They said that they were going to establish outreach centres in Las Lomas, Williamsville, Talparo and Guayaguayare by 2007. In addition to that they were going to build the Point Fortin and Scarborough Hospitals and they said that all would be completed in 2007. What does that mean, when the hon. Camille Robinson-Regis, Minister of Planning and Development, on Wednesday 12 July, 2006—[*Interruption*]

Madam President: I am letting you through a bit, but you have gone off. Please, get back to the Bill.

Sen. R. Phillip: Sure—when she received the final report of the Vision 2020 Committee on Health? We are waiting for the enablers in the society in terms of the infrastructure, the medicines, the hospitals, and all they have received by Wednesday 12 July, 2006 is a report. They also said that they were going to construct the Point Fortin and Scarborough Hospitals in 2007. I wait to see.

When we talk about this business model that I am trying to develop, I am looking at this Bill that talks about embellishment of a poor house, as opposed to how we would have liked them to envisage the environment. For instance, when we talk about older persons, they are looking to get a support system as they age that would help them in terms of their determining a lifestyle. I would have liked the Bill to

really put the person first, at the centre of the design and then bring the supporting system to allow the person to live their life in the comfort and care he or she desires.

This information is widely available. If I could just share from the online www.retirementhomes.com website; there is a classification, homes and retirement communities. For instance, we talk about putting the person first in terms of an active lifestyle; these are seniors who live independently with an active lifestyle; that is a category or type. Independent living—seniors who are able to continue living at home but need some help. Congregate living—seniors in good health who want independence and companionship. Assistance living—seniors who need bathing, dressing and other daily activities. Continuing care—seniors who want to provide for ageing health without having to relocate.

Basically we are looking at designing the system to enable the rural communities to benefit from this. Nursing care—seniors with deteriorating mental and physical abilities requiring skilled nursing facilities. So there is a whole plethora of services that they could have considered in the design. In fact, Alzheimer's care is also considered with seniors with Alzheimer's disease. Coming back to the Bill, we also have seniors who would have undergone some kind of surgical procedure, who just need to rehabilitate for a short while and we need to have consideration for that.

In fact, in terms of how they should have designed this, if they had looked and if I could share with this noble Senate an example of Century Village amenities and activities. This is a community that caters for older persons and provides a service for older persons. In this community there are approximately 16,000 residents who live in the 8,500 one- and two-bedroom apartments and the village itself 775 cool, inviting acres shaded by thousands of trees, shimmering lakes and miles of waterways. In this village there are heated pools; a 160-seat theatre; golf courses; saunas; walking parks; public speaking; billiards tables; writers' workshops.

The point is that we should design a home for our old people that is based on a lifestyle, on an activity. It should not be a place where we think that old people should go and waste away. Sen. Bro. Khan also made the point about our old people being our human resource. We cannot be squandering our human resource in that manner, thinking that we are just going to put them in an old people home.

In conclusion, when I look at this Bill, I would say that it is unsuitable to implement in this form. It demonstrates that the PNM is out of touch with the people and they are really not up to the job in terms of doing this. [*Crosstalk*] I will like to make some recommendations to the hon. Minister that he could

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probably consider. I would like him to reexamine this legislation to provide for a better quality of life with the required health and patient care services that are so missing in our society and cater for these aging persons. We need to adopt the older person's approach; meaning let us look at the older person; look at his lifestyle and put them at the centre of the activity. Do not think that we are going to build a facility and allow these persons just to waste away there.

Secondly, whenever we have a problem, my faith advises me that we gather the elder and seek the counsel of the godly. This type of service is one which will be provided in our spiritual organizations; in our churches, temples and masjids. We should put incentives to allow these people to engage in this type of business activity and develop the programme that is very similar to what we do with the Concordat in the denominational boards for our schools. You would have people based on their religious beliefs and faith having that type of care and comfort and so we will not have a poor house, but an older persons' home based on faith. These things are already there, to some extent, in our society.

The last recommendation I would like to make is that when we look at this home, should we not be thinking about the whole idea of retirement tourism? When we look at tourism being a big industry employing 15 per cent of the world's population in terms of the social sector, should we not consider, when we look at the number of people coming to the Caribbean to enjoy the sun and sand, that we could encourage these people to retire and convalesce in the warm sunshine with a crime-free environment and with the state-of-the-art facilities for health services. This is the type of model I would like to see develop and this is the society that I would like for the future.

Thank you, Madam President.

Sen. Angela Cropper: Madam President, I rise to make a short contribution to this Bill.

I have to say that I do so somewhat tentatively recognizing that in the not-too-distant future I will be a candidate for the services of such homes. I may not be able to speak as disinterestedly as I normally do. Having declared that interest, let me say that I rise in support of this Bill. I think it is right in principle. I think the intent is quite clear; it is rather detailed and we are seeing the difficulty of examining its details, especially now that the regulations have been presented, through the kind of process and method that we have here for doing so.

I would not like to go into the details of the clauses and provisions, but make a few comments about the Bill as a whole and its impact. I think the Bill is timely,

because we are seeing that our family systems are changing very rapidly and very radically. Not only are they changing, but one might say that our family systems and traditions that we might have grown used to in our society for caring for the elderly, are falling by the wayside; therefore it is incumbent upon us, as a collective, to anticipate the needs of a clearly increasing proportion of our population and to put in place the kind of services that inevitably many of us may need to draw upon in later years.

As Sen. Dr. Saith has pointed out already, we have to see this Bill as only one part of the total package of measures and policies that are being developed for looking after, caring for and contributing to the well-being of senior citizens as a whole. I appreciate that, and I will comment specifically on this Bill.

The first point I would raise is that it is not clear to me from the Minister's presentation and in some of the analyses he presented, how we might expect this Bill and package of measures and the regulations that have been brought forward, to affect the existing providers of the services we are talking about. It is very important for us to have a sense of how the existing providers might be affected by this, because we need to strike a very delicate balance in this Bill, which seeks to lift the standards. But in doing so, we have to be sure that we do not inhibit the motivation and incentives for persons to engage in operations that provide those services and then leave, perhaps, our elderly population with fewer services and homes at their disposal, rather than more and better.

It is clear that this Bill has been brought to elevate the standard of care and quality of services that are provided for the elderly in the society. I wondered, having looked through the regulations this afternoon, how many of the 103 such homes that already exist might, at this moment in time, satisfy those regulations that were actually issued? I am very concerned about that, because I think that it is important for us to know how the constituency of providers is likely to be affected in order to see what kind of support we might identify in advance that needs to be put at their disposal to enable them to upgrade their services to be in conformity with the regulations.

I would also be very interested to hear if the Government has a sense of that and whether there is some thought of a package of support that might be made available for existing homes to actually rise to the standard that we are now imposing on them. It may well be that what might be called for is a good assessment of the status of the homes that do exist and a clear appreciation of the extent to which and how many of which may need some assistance to upgrade themselves according to the lines being prescribed.

Homes For Older Persons Bill
[SEN. CROPPER]

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Looking a bit more into the future, the Minister having told us that by 2020 we might expect approximately 15 per cent of our population to be in the category of those who might be candidates for the services of these homes; it might be very useful for us, as part of the planning for upgrading homes for older persons, to do an assessment of the numbers of persons who might over time need to avail themselves of these services and to look at that supply/demand relationship over time to make sure that we have a programme in place through which we can satisfy the demand as it increases and can be expected to increase over time.
[*Interruption*]

Madam President: Sorry about that. You may go ahead. [*Interruption*]

Sen. A. Cropper: I was about to say that, “The proof of the pudding is in the eating” as it is said; the test of any public policy is in the way in which we give effect to it in implementation and enforcement. We would all readily concede, if we are honest, that we do not have a very good record of implementation, irrespective of who occupies the seat of office at any time and, therefore, we need to make sure that the kind of administrative arrangements and supports are in place to make sure that the very detailed and fairly onerous set of standards to be met by these homes, can actually be administered and enforced.

What is more, in this particular matter we need to approach the enforcement of these regulations and the implementation of this policy in a very sensitive manner, because of the nature of the services we are dealing with and the persons who are dependent upon those services. I think we really need to pay some attention to that in the way in which the public entities set about to implement the Bill.

Having said that, it is important that we should see the sentiments, philosophy and policy that lie behind this Bill reflected more broadly in concern for the elderly in the society. I cannot help contrasting what this Bill seeks to do and what lies behind it with what we see so often in the media, for example, in the way in which we evict persons from houses, including the elderly and children. When we see those things happening, we hear no account of the measures that have been put in place or the provisions made for those persons who are turfed out from their dwellings and from the places where they may have set up their households, albeit in an unauthorized manner.

It is important to enforce the law in those situations, and I think we have to appreciate that, but at the same time it can hardly be that we are making policy on the one hand for making sure the elderly in these homes are treated at a very high level, but at the same time we are treating elderly people by turfing them out of

their homes, putting them on the roadside with their children and all their belongings, and having absolutely no provision or alternative to present to them at that point in time. The sincerity that goes behind this Bill must be reflected in other areas that also implicate and impinge upon the well-being of elderly people in the society.

I close by saying that I entirely support the idea that Sen. Prof. Deosaran has put forward, about trying to have a better appreciation of the skills that elderly people might still be able to put at the disposal of the society, because I do not think that accumulated skills and experience should simply be lost to the society because someone has come, not to the age, but to the stage where he or she needs to have some assistance in the daily services of care, but may be perfectly capable of still carrying out some services and providing some inputs on the basis of their expertise and experience. I think we need to find ways of making sure we capture what elderly people still have to offer.

The Minister in his introduction of the Bill did cite some of the philosophy behind the policy on ageing. He said, for example, “that the Government policy wanted to ensure that citizens were treated as important resources of the country” and that “its intention was to draw on such persons to contribute to the building of the society towards the Vision 2020.” It was not clear to me, having listened to the Minister, what were the ideas and measures being thought of for giving effect to that philosophy. I think that the idea put forward by Sen. Prof. Deosaran is one step in that direction and one idea that might be considered.

Thank you.

The Minister of Social Development and Minister in the Ministry of Housing (Hon. Anthony Roberts): Madam President, I first want to express my sincere gratitude to all Members of this Senate who have taken the time to contribute to this debate on what I consider to be a very, very important piece of legislation. I think the level of contributions we have had throughout this debate, in most cases I should say, was very, very high. It demonstrated to us the kinds of concerns that as legislators we have for senior persons in this society.

One thing I have noted during the period when we were debating this piece of legislation, was that persons seem to prefer to discuss ageing in general and quite a lot of my friends did not really stick to the piece of legislation that is before this Senate. However, Madam President, for the important issues raised today and previously, I want to crave your indulgence to be able to respond to some of the concerns to allow me the latitude to respond at the next sitting of the Senate.

Madam President: Are you going to continue at the next sitting?

Hon. A. Roberts: I will be grateful.

Madam President: We are going to grant to the Minister that permission so that he could look at all the contributions made and be better able to reply to them at the next sitting.

**DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID (DNA) BILL
Joint Select Committee Report
(Adoption)**

The Minister of Legal Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Christine Kangaloo):
Madam President, I beg to move,

Be it resolved that the Senate adopt the Third Interim Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on a Bill entitled “The Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) Bill, 2006.”

You may recall that on the last occasion when an extension was sought of this Senate, it was on March 20, 2007. A two-week extension was sought at that stage for the committee to complete its deliberations. The committee is still awaiting clarification on certain technical issues and, therefore, an extension of four weeks is now being asked for the committee to continue its deliberations on the Bill and to report to the Parliament.

I beg to move.

Madam President: Hon. Members, the Minister is asking for a four-week extension of this committee. Do I have the agreement of the Senate?

Sen. Mark: Madam President, we do not have any difficulty in supporting the extension, but I would just like to ask the hon. Minister if four weeks would be adequate, because the last time it was moved, I raised the issue whether four weeks would have been adequate—it was two weeks at the time—and she said yes. We are now going to extend it by four weeks. I want to find out from the hon. Minister whether she does not need another eight weeks to complete the exercise. I do not know. I would not like her to come back again for a further extension; that is all. Take the full amount of time, Christine, and do it.

Sen. Dumas: “How you generous so man?” [*Crosstalk*]

Madam President: Unfortunately Senator, I really missed what you were saying.

Sen. Mark: I just simply asked if four weeks would have been adequate and she said yes.

Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie: Madam President, I remember distinctly the last occasion when you said two weeks. When you are not depending on yourself for the information—the committee has done all it could do and has referred certain technical points outside of itself and, therefore, they have to wait until that information comes back. I am not sure that the hon. Minister could probably guarantee, but could we frame it in a way that whether or not she gets it in four weeks time, then so and so? Could we say two months and if she gets the information within two months there would be no problem with bringing the report completed; rather than we have to come back and it looks as if we do not know what we are doing.

Madam President: This is what I am trying to clarify here. [*Interruption*] What we are doing here is really adopting the Third Report. [*Interruption*]

Question put and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): I beg to move that this Senate be adjourned to Tuesday, 08 May, at 1.30 p.m. at which time we will complete debate on the passage of this Bill and, should time permit, we will move on to an Act to amend the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act, 1999.

Madam President: Leave has been granted for a matter to be raised on the motion for the adjournment of the Senate by Sen. Mark.

Ministry of National Security (Failure to Disclose Moneys Spent)

Sen. Wade Mark: Madam President, the Motion deals with the failure of the Minister of National Security to disclose fully the sums of money paid to Prof. Mastrofski in his task and/or responsibility of transforming the Police Service of Trinidad and Tobago.

I refer to an article in the Trinidad Guardian dated Saturday 26 February, 2005 headlined:

"US crime buster arrives to clean up police service"

At that time we were told by the hon. Minister of National Security that the purpose of this Prof. Mastrofski team's presence was to perform and to engage in

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a transformation programme that was a systematic and pragmatic approach aimed at optimizing the management of the service and its ability to effectively fight crime. That was what the hon. Minister told the country on February 26, 2005.

At that time, the professor had with him some Dr. Jeffrey Snipes, an assistant professor of criminal justice at the San Francisco University. He gave details as to the plan of the team to transform the police service. Madam President, 2005, 2006 and we are now in May 2007, almost two years later and some months and we are yet to see any visible manifest improvement in the police service as it relates to its transformation.

I want to remind this honourable Senate that in this particular article it was stated and I quote:

"The Government will be paying Mastrofski and his team \$5.7 million over a 12-month period for their services."

I do not know if it was US or TT; I assumed that it was TT \$5.7 million at the time. Lo and behold, the Minister in trying to anticipate and in trying to subvert the process of answering this Motion today, proceeded last week Tuesday to throw his hands in the air, as this picture demonstrates here. [*Sen. Mark shows picture*] He threw his hands in the air as though he was saying "he give up; he can't deal with this thing"; [*Laughter*] completely surrendering. [*Laughter*]

What was alarming about that particular article, based on his statement, and this is where we need proper accountability, was that the University of the West Indies under Sen. Prof. Deosaran in the Criminal Department or the criminology section of the university would have been in a position to do a better job for a lower sum of money.

I would like the hon. Minister of National Security to tell this Parliament how we moved from \$5.7 million over a 12-month period; that is one year. If we understand the work of this gentleman, and he has been here since 2005, 2006, 2007, at \$5.7 million a year and then he ends his stint sometime in 2008, I get about \$23 million.

We need to get a detailed account from the hon. Minister of National Security of how he and his Government arrived at a total of \$80.8 million, when we were told in February that for 12 months this gentleman, Mastrofski and his team, would be paid \$5.7 million for a year. That jumped from \$5.7 million, a 12-month period, one year. The Minister, throwing up his hands in complete surrender, said in this article that it would be a total of \$80.8 million over eight years.

This man was supposed to do a job and go back to America within a three-year period; he has now gotten an eight-year contract; as if the Minister of National Security would be there for the next five years. [*Laughter*] Why are you bogging down the UNC when we return to office, with Mastrofski? We do not want Mastrofski in our country; we would hire Sen. Prof. Deosaran and not Mastrofski. [*Crosstalk*]

We do not understand why this sum of money: \$80.8 million over eight years. Why so long? Is it going to take this gentleman so long?

"US crime buster arrives to clean up police service"

That was the headline. So it is taking him eight years to do that? What is even more interesting, and I go on to read, was that the Minister said the Government seriously studied a number of proposals and he chose, at the end of the day, this professor.

"Joseph said Mastrofski and partners..."

Who are these partners?

"is supported by teams from George Mason University..."

Not the University of the West Indies. He also brings a second university, San Francisco State University, and then Pennsylvania State University and then the Justice and Security Agency.

So you have this gentleman coming to our country, taking away \$80.8 million; bringing all his friends and family to be part of this process and giving away—just like how "yuh bring Chinese to lick up our country"; and I want an investigation into that; next week I am bringing a motion on Calder Hart and the Chinese connection. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he could provide this Senate with a detailed breakdown of this organization.

What is the track record of this gentleman? Where has he performed before? Why are we saddled with this gentleman for eight long years? Not two years; not two and a half years, but eight years for almost \$81 million. Howard Chin Lee was doing a better job than Martin Joseph while he was there and he did not hire a consultancy. We are spending \$80.8 million in consultancy services in three phases to be completed in 2008.

Madam President, hear my honourable colleague's prediction, that is the hon. Minister:

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"At the end of day the police station will be a highly performing organization, efficient and effective. We are building an organization to last."

On the one hand we are being told in this article and maybe they probably got it wrong, that it was a total of eight years, but we also heard from the Minister that the three phases would be completed in 2008. [*Crosstalk*] That is what he said. I would like him to tell us; give us a detailed account of this \$80.8 million.

We want to know what the learnings are that we are getting from this gentleman. Give us a detailed account of the work that he has done so far. How has his work impacted on the crime level? There is more crime in Trinidad and Tobago since this man came here than before he came. [*Desk thumping*] So what are we spending \$80.8 million on? I call on the Minister to give a proper account. Do not throw your hands in the air this afternoon. We want you to account and tell us exactly how taxpayers' dollars are being given away to this gentleman and why you forsook the University of the West Indies. Why did you not seek the assistance of Sen. Prof. Deosaran, a renowned criminologist in the region? [*Desk thumping*]

We are very unhappy with this squandermania; this reckless expenditure of \$80.8 million, when people "cyar" get water in this country; when poor people are dying because they "cyar" eat properly in this country and when the URP workers are going home with \$500 a fortnight and a CEPEP worker is going home with \$75 a day. And you have a man coming down here and taking out of our country \$80.8 million! What is the justification for that? [*Crosstalk*]

We condemn the action of this Government. This Government has no right to use our money in such a scandalous manner. What is the justification for this?

Sen. Montano: How do you justify your salary?

Sen. W. Mark: I call on the hon. Minister to give us a detailed account of this \$80.8 million and let us know how this money was spent; what benefits we got from it; how crime was stopped, solved or reduced. Until we get answers, this is a scandal of enormous proportion in our country and somebody must be made accountable for this disaster called the Ministry of National Security. [*Desk thumping*] I call on the Minister to account to this country and to give us a full, full detailed account of this matter. I await his response, because the population is asking us why we spent \$80.8 million on this matter.

Thank you. [*Crosstalk*]

The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Martin Joseph): Madam President, for the Senator to say that I tried to pre-empt him by speaking in the debate last week Tuesday, at which point in time I was responding to a Motion that called on the Government to explain all the expenditure on crime and what benefits we derived from it. At that time I spoke to the question of Prof. Mastrofski; but let me deal with Sen. Mark's Motion.

Sen. Mark talked about the failure of the Minister of National Security to fully disclose the actual sums of money paid to Prof. Mastrofski in his task or responsibility to transform the police service. In short order, I could respond to this Motion by saying that the Government does not pay Prof. Mastrofski. He is a lead consultant for the George Mason University; so that I do not know how much we pay to him. At the same time Sen. Prof. Deosaran would recall a question being asked about the moneys paid to the criminology department and payments made to Sen. Prof. Deosaran. Mastrofski and Partners are the lead consultants for George Mason University in the transformation of the police service.

I will not bore the Senate by indicating the statements I made last Tuesday as to how we got to Mastrofski, because Giuliani and Partners approached the Government. Interestingly enough, if we go back to our record, we would see who were promoting Giuliani and Partners as the preferred persons to help in the transformation. [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Montano: Tell us who!

Hon. Senators: Tell us who!

Sen. The Hon. M. Joseph: As a result, on the basis of proposals before us, we felt that the question of Mastrofski and Partners would have been— [*Interruption*]

[*Madam President pounds gavel*] [*Crosstalk*]

I am not afraid to say. The support that comes with Mastrofski and Partners are as follows: the San Francisco University; Harvard University; Arizona State University; Bowling Green University; University of North Carolina; University of San Francisco; South Illinois State University and our local research agency was HHB and Associates. They are also joined by the Pennsylvania State University and Justice and Security Strategies Incorporated. Those are the persons who are part and parcel of the team that is involved in the transformation.

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Basically, it is a four-tier approach to the transformation:

1. Create a functional organization;
2. Promote professionalism;
3. Improve crime control; and.
4. Enhance service.

The phases and cost of the transformation project: The first phase which ran from August 30, 2004 to May 30, 2005, cost some US \$1.27 million or TT \$8.06 million and the second phrase of the project went from June 01, 2005 to August 31, 2006 at a cost of US \$1.826 million or some TT \$11.5 million. Concerning the third phase, whoever reported got it all wrong; it was interesting that Sen. Mark in his flight recognized that they got it wrong when they talked about eight years. I am not responsible for what is reported.

The third phase runs from September 2006 to August 2008 at a cost of US \$9 million. They are not here until eight years into the future. [*Crosstalk*] This represents the phases; the total cost of the involvement is TT \$80.8 million.

With respect to the first tier, creating a functional organization, I will just identify the areas: review of the performance appraisal system; merit based promotion system—when that comes to the Parliament, as I indicated the last time, because of the assessment process we are now putting in place measures to deal with promotions within the First Division and promotions into the First Division; a complete overhaul with respect to the promotion arrangement; the Police Complaints Division, review and reorganize; police prosecutors evaluation; Crime and Problem Analysis Unit (CAPAU) set up—for the first time we can now use intelligence driven policing to help the mapping of gangs, et cetera; strategic allocation of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service resources; personnel transfer policies reviewed and a system of managerial accountability.

Mastrofski and Partners were instrumental in helping us with respect to the legislation that is now the hallmark of the question of transformation; review of the Police Service Commission and also of the entire management of the police organization to give the Commissioner of Police the authority to run his whole shop—a whole set of adjustments we needed to make in that regard—the new Police Complaints Authority Act that has been implemented and, of course, a transformation of the Ministry of National Security.

All those fall under the governance of the police service. There is also the Police Public Information Office with respect to the police, in terms of promoting

professionalism; the question of police integrity; review of the entire Command College; police supervision and management; the whole question of recruit training and changes in that training and the implementation of field officers to change the way in which when they have just passed out, instead of putting them right in the field just like that, there is a whole new mentoring system. We have established new ways of doing that. There is also in-service training and senior executive development programmes.

In terms of the other area, improved crime control, we have had strategic crime control seminars. We have improved crime reporting; we have established the homicide prevention working group that has contributed so much to reduction in a particular class of homicides. We have also established the Homicide Bureau of Investigation; all those things as a result of the involvement of the consultants; improved gang intelligence; the whole question of the policing for people and the model police stations initiative.

We have established the gang repeat offender project (ROP). I cannot give you all the details as it relates to certain types of hardened criminals, what measures are being put in place to treat with that. Working groups on other crimes; the Gonzales Community Project, which has gotten an international award as it relates to community involvement in transforming a community. Enhanced service—we are now looking at a comprehensive review of the whole question of the motor vehicle fleet operations and the model stations initiative which I spoke about.

Madam President, I have indicated here and I will continue to do so, that the transformation on which this Government is embarking as it relates to the police service is designed to build an efficient and effective organization that will be built to last. [*Desk thumping*] The investments we are putting in are designed to do just that. I have said over and over that if we want to improve law enforcement, we have to improve the capacity and capability of the law enforcement agencies. We are doing that. The results, while they are gradual in the first instance, I am sure that as all these measures come into place we will continue to see an improvement in law enforcement capacity and capability and a reduction in crime and criminal activity in our society.

I thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned 5.55 p.m.