

*Leave of Absence*

*Tuesday, March 17, 2009*

**SENATE**

*Tuesday, March 17, 2009*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

**PRAYERS**

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence to Sen. Dr. Adesh Nanan and Sen. Michael Annisette who are both out of the country.

**SENATORS' APPOINTMENT**

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

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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

/s/ G. Richards  
President.

TO: MS. KAVITA DABIEDEEN

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

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Leader of the Opposition, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, KAVITA DABIEDEEN to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with immediate effect and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of Senator Dr. Adesh Nanan.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2009.”

*Senators' Appointment*  
[MR. PRESIDENT]

*Tuesday, March 17, 2009*

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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

/s/ G. Richards  
President.

TO: MS ALTHEA ROCKE

WHEREAS Senator Michael Annisette is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 40(2)(c) and section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, ALTHEA ROCKE, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2009 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Michael Annisette.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 13<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2009.”

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Senators Kavita Dabideen and Althea Rocke took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.*

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**East-West Maxi-Taxis  
(Regulation by Government)**

**2. Sen. Gail Merhair** asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

Would the Minister inform this Senate of the steps, if any, which are being taken to regulate maxi-taxis that work parts of the route along the East-West Corridor?

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** [*Desk thumping*] Thank you for applauding the fact that I am about to ask for a deferral of one week. Mr. President, we should be ready with this question by next week.

We already have an answer. We are checking some legal issues. I would be in a position to answer question No. 2 next week.

If you will allow me, I will take my seat if you ask me to, I have noted seven questions on the Order Paper directed to me. I have the answers for four of them. I can tell you what I have. They are Nos. 17, 23, 24 and 25.

**Mr. President:** We still have to put questions Nos. 13 to 16, so we can defer them to an appropriate date.

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**Brian Lara Cricketing Academy  
(Details of)**

**5. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs:

Could the Minister inform this Senate of:

- (a) the current status of the Brian Lara Cricketing Academy in Tarouba;
- (b) the total sum expended on the project as at December 31, 2008;
- (c) the estimated sum required for the completion of the project; and
- (d) the completion date of the project?

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill):** Mr. President, the answer to question No. 5 is not ready. It should be ready in two weeks.

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**Dr. Rupert Griffith and Dr. Vincent Lasse  
(Status of debt incurred in Judgment)**

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

With respect to the judgment in the matter involving the challenge by the Prime Minister, Honourable Patrick Manning of the Crossing of the Floor Act relating to Dr. Rupert Griffith and Dr. Vincent Lasse, could the Attorney General inform this Senate of the status of the debt incurred by him?

**The Attorney General (Sen. The Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George):** Mr. President, I thought that this response would have been ready by this week. Unfortunately, the response has not passed the Parliamentary Questions Committee. Therefore, I ask for another deferral. I will try to have it within the next two weeks.

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**Motor Vehicle and Road Traffic Act  
(Date for the Full Enforcement)**

**15. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

Could the Minister inform this Senate of the date for the full enforcement of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act with specific reference to the introduction of the Breathalyzer?

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. President, I request a deferral of two weeks for this particular question.

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**Upgrade of Old Piarco Airport  
(Cost of)**

**16. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

With respect to the proposed refurbishment and upgrade of the old Piarco Airport facility, could the Minister state:

- (a) The estimated cost of the proposed refurbishment and upgrade of the facility?
- (b) The names of the companies contracted to undertake the works and the values of the contracts?

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. President, similarly, I request a deferral of two weeks for question No. 16. The answer is not ready. We are very close to getting the answer approved.

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**Upgrade of the Port of Spain Harbour  
(Details of)**

**17. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

With respect to the proposed dredging, refurbishment and upgrade of the Port of Spain Harbour, could the Minister inform this Senate of:

- (a) the estimated cost of dredging, refurbishment and upgrade of the Harbour; and
- (b) the names of the companies contracted and the values of the contracts?

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. President, I have the answer for this one. The estimated cost of dredging of the Port of Spain Harbour was \$28 million.

A contract has been awarded to Westminster Dredging Trinidad Overseas Limited for the dredging works in the sum of \$12,305,000.

**Water Taxis  
(Details of)**

**23. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

- A. Could the Minister provide the Senate with:
  - (i) the name or names of the company or companies from which the water taxis currently in service were purchased;
  - (ii) the cost at which each vessel was purchased?
- B. Could the Minister advise whether any local company or individual acted as an agent in the transaction and whether a commission was paid?
- C. If the answer to (B) is in the affirmative, could the Minister provide this Senate with the name(s) of the agent(s) and the value of the amount of commission paid?

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. President, I have the answer for this one as well. Two vessels for water taxi service were acquired directly from GATX International Limited. The third vessel was acquired directly from VT Leaseco Limited.

The three vessels for the water taxi service were each acquired for the price of US \$1,850,000.

No local company or individual acted as an agent in the transactions and no commission was paid.

Since the response to B is negative part C of the question is not relevant.

**Water Taxis  
(Refurbishment of)**

**24. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

With respect to the water taxis, could the Minister provide the Senate with:

- (i) the name of the local company which carried out the refurbishment work on the vessels;

- (ii) the nature of the refurbishment work; and
- (iii) the cost of the refurbishment work?

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. President, I have the answer to this question. The refurbishment work on the vessels was carried out by local companies Inter-Isle Construction & Fabrication Company Limited and Chute D'Eau Marine Limited.

The works carried out on the vessels included dry-docking, anti-fouling, painting and general repairs, all in accordance with the requirements of the Det Norse Veritas Classification Society and Flag State Maritime Services Division.

The total cost of the refurbishment works for the three vessels was US \$1,178,176.40 which is equivalent to TT \$7,422,511. It is summarized as follows:

Inter-Isle Construction & Fabrication Company Limited was engaged by NIDCO to carry out the refurbishment works on the three vessels which included dry-docking, anti-fouling, painting and general repairs totalling TT \$3,682,067.

Chute D'Eau Marine Limited was contracted by NIDCO to provide supervision services for the works undertaken by Inter-Isle to ensure that the works were properly executed and also for labour and supply of materials for specific jobs totalling TT \$1,399,069.

Signage was provided by Signwave Limited. The total cost of the supply and installation of signage for the three vessels totalled TT \$494,500.

In addition, Motor-Service Hugo Stamp Inc. of the United States of America was paid a total of TT \$1,801,106 for the overhaul of waterjets for the vessels, as required by the Det Norse Veritas Classification Society. The cost included the supply of waterjet parts and the services rendered.

The sum of TT \$45,767 was spent on other parts and supplies sourced from several local and foreign companies.

#### **New Vessels (Details of)**

**25. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

- A. With respect to the recent announcement by the Minister of Works and Transport that new vessels would be purchased from the Australian Firm Austal, could the Minister state:

- (i) the cost of the vessels; and
  - (ii) whether there was any tender for the purchase of these vessels?
- B. If the answer to A(ii) above is in the affirmative, could the Minister state:
- (i) the details of the tender procedure; and
  - (ii) whether there is a local agent for Austal?
- C. If the answer to B(ii) above is in the affirmative, could the Minister provide the Senate with:
- (i) the name of the agent; and
  - (ii) the proposed value of his/her services?

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. President I have the answer for this question. No contract has been executed for the purchase of the new vessels from the Australian firm Austal. However, the National Infrastructure Development Company is currently involved in negotiations with Austal as the preferred supplier.

There was a tender for the purchase of each vessel.

The tender procedure used what is referred to as a two-step sealed bidding process, or as it is commonly referred to in the industry, as a solicitation for goods and services with discussions. The name “two-step process” is derived from the use of both a request for information and a request for proposal to identify the most attractive bid.

The request for information is also referred to as a request for a technical proposal and the request for proposal is also known in their combined form as a request for a quote. This methodology is a combination of open, non-binding discussions which take place in order to permit the development of a sufficiently descriptive and not unduly restrictive statement of the employers or owners requirements, followed by competitive procedures designed to obtain full benefits of sealed bidding.

**1.45 p.m.**

The process is designed to minimize extensive negotiations with respect to technical matters after the sealed proposals have been submitted. The National Insurance Development Company (NIDCO) issued a request for information for the four new fast ferries and associated support services on June 24, 2008 to a pool of

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53 reputable shipbuilders derived from searches on the Internet, industry periodicals, journals and expert information. Responses were received from nine of these shipbuilders who were then invited to attend technical discussions.

Discussions were subsequently held with five of these shipbuilders with a sixth unable to attend in person due to scheduling conflict. The sixth bidder, however, requested to remain in the process. The RFP was thus developed and issued to these six parties on October 03, 2008 as follows: issue to Austal of Australia; Damen Shipyards Gorinchem of The Netherlands; FBMA Marine Inc. of the Philippines; Hikemetal/Batservice Mandal AS of Canada and Norway; Incat Tasmania of PTY Limited of Australia; and Nichols Brothers, Boat Builders of Freeland, WA, USA. The submissions were due on October 31, 2008.

There were five respondents to the RFP. In alphabetical order, the respondents were as follows: Austal of Australia; Damen Shipyards Gorinchem of The Netherlands; FBMA Marine Inc. of the Philippines; Hikemetal/Batservice Mandal AS of Canada and Norway; and Incat Tasmania of PTY Limited of Australia.

The submissions were evaluated by a technical evaluation committee, comprising representatives of NIDCO, senior public servants and maritime experts, among others. At the end of the process, the Austal's proposal was found to be the best after consideration of price, time for delivery, quality and other technical factors. In fact the Austal's bid was the lowest by far and was lower than the second lowest by \$80 million.

Answer to B(ii), Austal has advised the Ministry of Works and Transport that it does not have a local agent.

In answer to part C, in light of the response to part B of the question, part C is not relevant.

**Sen. Mark:** Mr. President, I want to, again, put on record our disappointment in the Government's tardy response to a number of questions that you have approved that were due and are now overdue. I want to appeal to the Leader of Government Business, through you, to make every effort in the future to ensure that these simple questions are answered rapidly, particularly the questions addressed to the Attorney General and the Minister of Works and Transport, as it concerns the breathalyzer. I find that the Government is taking inordinately long to deal with these simple matters.

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill):** Mr. President, I thank you and the hon. Senator for expressing an opinion on a matter, but the issue is as follows: As it relates to the questions not answered



this afternoon, most of those questions were in fact prepared and they were in fact sent to the person. For completeness and correctness, they were sent back either for amendment or for additional information. In those circumstances, therefore, the charges as expressed by Sen. Mark are not correct and we would have these corrected answers as we have indicated, within the next two weeks, as they relate to the specific questions.

#### LAND ACQUISITION

**The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Sen. The Hon. Arnold Piggott):** Thank you, Mr. President. Before I move the Motion on the Order Paper standing in my name, I wish to point out that there is an addendum to Appendix II on the Order Paper, which has been circulated for all hon. Senators today. There are two additional parcels of land to be acquired, but unfortunately the file for these was received by the Office of the Parliament on Friday, March 13, 2009, after the Order Paper for today's sitting was sent to Members on March 11, 2009. These acquisition matters listed at Appendix II and the addendum to Appendix II will be dealt with in the House of Representatives on Friday, March 20, 2009 and, therefore, it would be expedient to deal with these two additional parcels of land today.

Mr. President, I beg to move,

That this Senate approve the decision of the President to acquire the lands described in Appendix II and the addendum as well as the variation to the Order Paper as revised for public purposes specified.

It is the role of this Government—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Mark:** On a point of order. These—*[Interruption]*

**Hon. Senators:** What is your point of order?

**Sen. Mark:** May I seek a point of clarification, Sir?

**Mr. President:** There is no such thing, as you know, as a point of clarification. If the Minister is willing to give way, he may give way if he wishes or he may continue. Perhaps, may I suggest that you have a discussion with the Clerk to clarify your thinking on it before you interrupt the Minister again. I think that might be a more expedient way of dealing with it in your own mind. I think you would have a clearer view as to what interference or intervention you can then make on the matter that is in our mind.

**Sen. The Hon. A. Piggott:** Mr. President, it is the role of this Government to formulate public policy and initiate and facilitate programmes and projects that

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would increasingly benefit the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. Time and again, we have brought proposals to this honourable Senate that have resulted in the increased and improved access to public goods, services and facilities for the people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Our objective is to ensure the future survival of this nation and deliver an increased standard of living to all our citizens. In furtherance of this objective, the Public Sector Investment Programme clearly signals the Government's intention to utilize the resources of this country for attaining sustainable national development and improving the quality of life for all the citizens of this country.

It must be recognized that in order for this Government to effect the necessary development and facilitate an improved standard of living for our citizens, acquisition of private lands very often becomes a necessity, particularly since landowners are not usually willing to part with their ownership of lands, and, therefore, the other options of sale to the State by private treaty between the State and the owners can be protracted. While the facts are that the State is the largest landowner in the country controlling some 53 per cent of this country's land resources, the most appropriate location for development projects cannot always be found on lands owned by the State. For these reasons it frequently becomes necessary for the State to acquire privately owned lands to establish developments for well established public purposes.

Today, this Government is presenting a Motion before this honourable Senate that it facilitate 14 significant projects for public purposes. These projects would impact on the social and economic well-being and the overall development of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago by addressing areas such as education, sports, health, recreation, road access, flood prevention and drainage. Five of these projects, namely the extension of the St. Mary's Recreation Ground; the establishment of the recreation ground on Inner Mafeking Road in Mayaro; the establishment of a recreation ground at Springlands, San Fabien; the establishment of a playing field in South Street, Mon Repos, San Fernando; and the establishment of a playing field for the South Oropouche Government Primary School are intended to promote the social and community development required for the well-being of the citizens residing in these locations.

It is the philosophy of this Government to work and collaborate with our people in shaping their future in all facets of their lives. It is the intention of this Government to continue to promote healthy lifestyles as an integral component of the overall well-being of our entire citizenry and the Government intends to promote these lifestyles through the systematic and consistent provision of such facilities that would provide and enhance the infrastructure necessary for activities

related thereto. These facilities would also provide an avenue for the youth of our nation to occupy their spare time in a productive manner and to express themselves in a positive fashion. Additionally, it is quite conceivable that these facilities would no doubt be a positive breeding ground for the development of great sportsmen and sportswomen in the not too distant future. As this Government continues to build its pillars for achieving developed country status under its Vision 2020 programme, these five projects for recreational facilities are in furtherance of the pillar “Nurturing a Caring Society.”

In respect of road improvement, three of these projects, namely the extension of the North Coast Road, the improvement work to the Providence/Culloden Road in Tobago and the construction of the Uriah Butler Highway are part of this Government’s ongoing initiative to improve the road infrastructure and network throughout Trinidad and Tobago for the benefit of all our citizens. The expansion of infrastructure facilities is in fact a major priority of this Government, particularly as it relates to improving the road network throughout the country.

The traffic situation on the roads of our nation requires special attention if we are to make an impact thereon and these acquisitions would certainly go a long way in advancing the Government’s goal of being able to commute between the furthest locations in the country within a reasonable time frame, thus significantly reducing travel time.

Three of the projects, the widening of the La Seiva River in Maraval, the widening of the Caroni River and drainage and improvement works in the Caparo River are intended to reduce the incidence of flooding in these areas and to minimize the consequential damage and inconvenience caused to the population of these areas when heavy downpour of rain and consequent flooding occurs. As stated by the hon. Minister of Finance in the 2009 budget speech, the Government will continue to invest in first-class drainage and irrigation infrastructure to reduce the frequency and severity of flooding and erosion to eliminate the consequent health and environmental hazard and to end saltwater intrusion in agricultural areas. Therefore, no effort will be spared in seeking to alleviate flooding in Trinidad and Tobago. This Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is fully committed to pursuing projects which will lead to the alleviation of hardships to communities, while continually building on our development pillars.

I wish, therefore, to underscore the point that capital improvement works, be they road construction, or expansion, drainage projects and flood control projects, go to the heart of a major pillar in Government’s Vision 2020, namely “Investing in Sound Infrastructure and the Environment”.

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**2.00 p.m.**

Two of these projects, the construction of the schools in Chaguanas and Icacos, are projects within the framework of Vision 2020. This time, these projects span two pillars, “Developing Innovative People” as well as “Investing in Sound Infrastructure and the Environment”. The Chaguanas North Government Primary School and the extension of the Icacos Government Primary School are to provide for the educational needs of the resident population of the immediate area.

The construction of schools throughout Trinidad and Tobago is part of this Government’s commitment to providing quality and accessible free education to all at the tertiary level and beyond. A sound education system is a fundamental basis for sustained national development, poverty reduction and eradication. A sound education helps in the building of an inclusive society and is pivotal to the attainment of developed country status.

The 14th and final project related to these land acquisitions is the construction of a natural gas pipeline for improvements in the oil and gas sector which plays an extremely important role in this country’s economic sustainability and viability. Indeed, it is a well established fact that the energy sector has been the engine of growth which facilitates Government’s mission of “Enabling Competitive Business”, another one of the pillars of Vision 2020. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, the Land Acquisition Act, No. 28 of 1994 allows for the acquisition of private land for the implementation of development projects. The procedure for the acquisition of land for this purpose is standard in nature, and such matters have been brought before this honourable Senate on an ongoing basis. Permit me now to speak to the specific parcels of land which are being acquired in respect of the 14 projects to which I referred earlier.

The extension of the St. Mary's Recreation Ground: Mr. President, this honourable Senate is being asked to approve the decision of the President to acquire one parcel of land described in the Schedule on the Order Paper under No. 1 and which is coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated July 02, 1996 and filed in the Office of the Director of Surveys.

The land in question which is being acquired for the public purpose of the extension of the St. Mary’s Recreation Ground is a parcel of land comprising 1,909.3 square metres, more or less, situated at Moruga Road, in the ward of Ortoire, in the county of Victoria and said to belong now or formerly to Bridgelal.

This acquisition was at the request of the Ministry of Local Government. The existing pavilion was structurally unsafe and was demolished and is to be rebuilt, but the opportunity is being utilized to simultaneously improve the facility by the addition of a playground for the children, washroom and changing facilities, a jogging track and a basketball court.

Extension of the North Coast Road: This Senate is also being asked to approve the decision of the President to acquire 11 parcels of land described in the Schedule on the Order Paper under No. 2 and which are coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated August 06, 2004 and filed in his office.

More particularly, 11 parcels of land comprise together approximately 3,252 square metres, more or less situate at Las Cuevas and La Fillette, in the ward of Blanchisseuse in the county of St. George.

Mr. President, I wish to inform this honourable Senate that by notice published at item No. 1903 in the *Trinidad and Tobago Gazette* Vol. 17, No. 284 dated September 28, 1978, several parcels of land together comprising 40,615 acres more or less situate at Las Cuevas and La Fillette were formerly acquired in accordance with section 5 of the Land Acquisition Act for the extension of the North Coast Road from Las Cuevas to La Fillette. However, the 11 parcels referred to in the Schedule at No. 2 on the Order Paper were omitted at that time from the acquisition process.

Upon discovery of the omission, the Director of Surveys issued a Survey Order in order to rectify the matter, and the requisite survey plan was subsequently approved. Mr. President, I wish to indicate that section 3(6) of the Land Acquisition Act provides that, if the project was already completed before acquisition proceedings were initiated, which is the situation with these 11 parcels of land, then sections 3 and 4 proceedings under the Land Acquisition Act are, therefore, not necessary and section 5 proceedings may be initiated directly.

Construction of the North Chaguanas Government Primary School: Mr. President, this Senate is also being asked to approve the decision of the President to acquire the parcel of land described in the Schedule on the Order Paper under No. 3 coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated November 30, 2001 and filed at the office of the Director of Surveys.

The parcel of land comprises 1.9976 hectares more or less situate at the southern extremity of the Endeavour Estate Development, at the corner of Tenth Avenue and Michael Street, Chaguanas, in the borough of Chaguanas, in the

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county of Caroni, said to belong now or formerly to Colonial Homes and Commercial Properties Limited and is coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys, dated November 30, 2001, and filed in his office. It is required for a public purpose of the construction of the Chaguanas North Government Primary School. This acquisition was at the request of the Ministry of Education and is required to support the educational needs of the resident population of the immediate area. This school has already been completed.

This Senate is being asked to approve the decision of the President to acquire the parcel of land described in the Schedule on the Order Paper under No. 4 coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys dated June 13, 2005 and filed at the office of the Director of Surveys. It is required for a public purpose of improvement works to the Providence/Culloden Road in Tobago. The parcel of land comprises 1,368.1 square metres more or less situate at Culloden Road, in the parish of St. David, in the ward of Tobago, and is said to belong now or formerly to Harold Sebro.

Mr. President, I wish to inform this honourable Senate that in June 2001, the Chief Administrator of the Tobago House of Assembly requested the initiation of the acquisition proceedings for the subject parcel of land which was utilized for the improvement works on the Providence/Culloden Road. As I have already stated, according to section 3(6) of the Land Acquisition Act, if the project was already completed before acquisition proceedings were initiated or if the acquisition is one of urgent importance, sections 3 and 4 proceedings are unnecessary and section 5 proceedings may be initiated directly.

Widening of the La Seiva River, Maraval: This honourable Senate is being asked to approve the decision of the President to acquire the parcel of land described in the Schedule on the Order Paper under No. 5 coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated June 18, 2004 and filed in the office of the Director of Surveys.

This land is required for the public purpose of the widening of the La Seiva River, Maraval. It is a parcel of land comprising 247.7 square metres, more or less situate at La Seiva Road, in the ward of Diego Martin, in the county of St. George, and is said to belong now or formerly to one Johnson. Mr. President, this acquisition was at the request of the Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization, as it then was. This project was completed in 2005.

Land for Natural Gas Pipeline: This Senate is being asked to approve the decision of the President to acquire the parcel of land described in the Schedule

on the Order Paper under No. 6, coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated May 05, 1987 and filed in the office of the Director of Surveys.

This parcel of land which is required for the public purpose of construction of a natural gas pipeline comprises 0.652 hectares, more or less, situated at the eastern side of Kanhai Trace, in the wards of Naparima and Moruga, in the county of Victoria and said to belong now or formerly to Sinanan Ramsubhag. Mr. President, this acquisition was at the request of the Ministry of Energy, as it then was.

Mr. President, this Senate is also being asked to approve the decision of the President to acquire three parcels of land described in the Schedule on the Order Paper under No. 7 and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated March 05, 2002 and filed in the office of the Director of Surveys.

These parcels of land which are required for the public purpose of the establishment of a recreation ground together comprise 1.6222 hectares more or less situate along Inner Mafeking Road, Mayaro, in the ward of Cocal, in the county of Nariva and said to belong now or formerly to the heirs of William Taylor and further described as follows:

- (a) a parcel of land comprising 0.519 hectares known as Lot 5B;
- (b) a parcel of land comprising 0.9276 hectares known as Lot 6B; and
- (c) a parcel of land comprising 0.1747 hectares.

Mr. President, this acquisition was at the request of the Ministry of Community Development and Local Government, as it then was.

Establishment of a Recreation Ground at Springlands, San Fabien: Mr. President, this Senate is also being asked to approve the decision of the President to acquire the parcel of land described in the Schedule on the Order Paper under No. 8, coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated August 15, 2001 and filed in the office of the Director of Surveys.

This parcel of land is required for the public purpose of establishment of a recreation ground at Springlands, San Fabien, comprising 2.7375 hectares more or less situate at Springlands, San Fabien, in the ward of Pointe-a-Pierre, in the county of Victoria and said to belong now or formerly to V.O. West. This acquisition was at the request of the Ministry of Community Development and Local Government, as it then was.

Widening of the Caroni River: This Senate is also being asked to approve the decision of the President to acquire the parcels of land described in the Schedule

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on the Order Paper under No. 9, coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated April 04, 1995 and filed in the office of the Director of Surveys.

**2.15 p.m.**

These lands which are required for the public purpose of improvements to the Caroni River, Phase III which entails the widening of the Caroni River comprise two parcels of land containing altogether 39,948.9 square metres more or less, situate off Kelly Road, St. Helena Village, Piarco, east of the Golden Grove Road, in the ward of Tacarigua, in the county of St. George as follows:

1. a parcel of land comprising approximately 339 square metres belonging now or formerly to Eddy Bachan; and
2. a parcel of land comprising approximately 39,609.9 square metres belonging now or formerly to Frederick Sui Butt.

Mr. President, this acquisition was at the request of the Ministry of Housing and Settlement, as it then was. Its purpose is to improve drainage in the area and to alleviate flooding which has been a serious problem in this area.

This Senate is also being asked to approve the decision of the President to acquire a parcel of land described in the Schedule on the Order Paper under No.10, coloured raw sienna, on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys, dated May 04, 2000 and filed in the Office of the Director of Surveys.

The land which is required for the public purpose of the establishment of a playing field comprises 583.2 square metres more or less, situate at No. 19 South Street, Mon Repos, San Fernando, in the ward of Naparima, in the county of Victoria and is said to belong now or formerly to Rampersad Maharaj and others. This acquisition was at the request of the Ministry of Local Government.

Drainage improvement works to the Caparo River: Mr. President, this Senate is also being asked to approve the decision of the President to acquire three parcels of land described in the Schedule on the Order Paper under No. 11, coloured raw sienna, on a plan of survey, signed by the Director of Surveys dated March 20, 2002 and filed in the office of the Director of Surveys. These three parcels of land are required for the public purpose of drainage improvement works to the Caparo River.



The three parcels of land comprise together approximately 1,929.7 square metres more or less, situate along the Caparo River in the borough of Chaguanas, in the county of Caroni and are described as follows:

- a) 58.9 square metres said to belong now or formerly to Samatie;
- b) 1,824.2 square metres said to belong now or formerly to Subhadra Chankadyai; and
- c) 46.6 square metres said to belong now to Ramasar and Soogan.

Mr. President, this acquisition was at the request of the Ministry of Works and Transport.

Construction of the Uriah Butler Highway. Further, this honourable Senate is being asked to approve the decision of the President to acquire a parcel of land described in the Schedule on the Order Paper under No. 12, coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated January 16, 2004 and filed in the Office of the Director of Surveys.

This parcel of land which is required for the public purpose of the construction of the Uriah Butler Highway comprises 647.2 square metres more or less, situate at Munroe Road in the ward of Chaguanas, in the County of Caroni and is said to belong now or formerly to Salamat Khan and Twazul Khan.

Establishment of a playfield for the South Oropouche Government Primary School: This honourable Senate is being asked to approve the decision of the President to acquire a parcel of land described in the Schedule on the Order Paper under No. 13, coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated June 03, 2005 and filed in the Office of the Director of Surveys.

This parcel of land which is required for the public purpose of establishment of a playfield or a playing field for the South Oropouche Government Primary School comprises 3,362 square metres more or less, situate at St. John's Road, South Oropouche, in the ward of Siparia, in the county of St. Patrick and is said to belong now or formerly to Sumintra Partap.

Extension of the Icosos Government Primary School: Mr. President, this honourable Senate is being asked to approve the decision of the President to acquire a parcel of land described in the Schedule on the Order Paper under No. 14, coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated September 02, 2004 and filed in the Office of the Director of Surveys.

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This parcel of land which is required for the public purpose of extension of the Icacos Government Primary School comprises 0.5201 hectares more or less, situate at Icacos Erin Beach Road in the ward of Cedros, in the county of St. Patrick and is said to belong now or formerly to Agostini.

Mr. President, hon. Members, in bringing the Motion to a close, as the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, I am indeed honoured to carry this process of acquisition of land for national development forward.

This Government has demonstrated beyond all reasonable doubt that it is committed to providing new and improved infrastructure, and to providing facilities and essential services to communities and citizens in diverse locations throughout the country, including Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] These facilities we expect will bring social and economic benefits to all the citizens of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, a major hallmark of this Government is crystallized in the final development pillar to which I referred today and that is “Governing Effectively”, a quality with which this Government has distinguished itself illustriously during the past seven years.

This Government shall remain focused on a quality of good governance that would effectively build upon the five development pillars that would take us to developed country status in keeping with our Vision 2020 plans and programmes.

Mr. President, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**Sen. Wade Mark:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. We have before us a Government Motion to acquire lands for specific public purposes as outlined in the Appendix to the Order Paper.

I must record my disappointment from the very outset over the addendum that we received a few moments ago, in which the Government is seeking to acquire land for the establishment of a playing field. Nobody can object to a playing field for children attending the South Oropouche Primary School, but we would like to record our disappointment over the second aspect of this late submission; that is the extension of the Icacos Government Primary School.

As lawmakers, we need to investigate these matters in a thorough way before we can give our support to these measures. I really want to warn this Government and to advise them at the same time, that this particular ambush that took place

today will not be facilitated and accommodated in the future, because we require more time to look at these proposals, and as I said, we were only informed when we came here today about these new acquisitions.

So, I want to record our objection, opposition and disappointment to this kind of guerrilla tactics that we have had to witness today. We have more to say later on. I would like to indicate from the very outset that the Government continues to acquire lands in different parts of the country for all kinds of purposes as outlined in Appendix II, as well as the addendum to Appendix II. What we have not been able to witness and to actually realize, is for the Government to take steps to urgently establish a proper land use development policy that would contribute to the rationalization of land use in Trinidad and Tobago.

**2.30 p.m.**

In the absence of a proper land use development policy, we continue to be witnesses to a process in which the Government compulsorily acquires large acreages of rich and at times, arable lands. And those rich and arable lands are being used for all other purposes than for the kind of development we require in other areas of our economic development. So, we believe that these acquisitions that we have before us beg the question, how long has it taken for citizens—whose lands were compulsorily acquired under the Land Acquisition Act, Chap. 58:01—to be compensated for lands that were acquired? One would have expected the hon. Minister to give this honourable Senate some appreciation of the values associated with these acquisitions. One would have expected the hon. Minister to share with us today how many citizens are still owed moneys by this Government and how much, in total, is owed to citizens whose lands were acquired under the Land Acquisition Act. You know what is even more important to note here, is the heavy bureaucracy involved still in this process.

The Minister indicated to us that several parcels of lands are being acquired by the Government for several public purposes. In the main, we have witnessed here the use of land for recreation purposes and for the development and establishment of recreational grounds.

These lands have been acquired several years ago. The problem that we are faced with is whether the owners have been compensated. Therefore, I would like to ask the hon. Minister, through you, whether in the instance of the construction of the Chaguanas North Government Primary School—which as he has admitted has already been constructed, is already being utilized—the owners of this particular parcel of land have been compensated? One would have thought

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that he would have shared with us whether the owners of this piece of land were paid for their property? We do not know. Therefore, again, we call on the Minister to provide this Senate—not with the kind of statement about Vision 2020; we want to get some hard facts, not rhetoric and cheap talk. We want to know whether the owners of this parcel of land in the borough of Chaguanas have been compensated; how much it cost the taxpayers.

I made reference to the whole issue of a proper land-use development policy. I think it is important for us to emphasize, somewhat, the critical importance of pursuing such a policy in the context of land acquisition and, of course development. Lands being acquired in different parts of the country, houses are being constructed in different parts of the country, but it does not appear that when the Government acquires land to construct homes there is any holistic, coherent and integrated approach to the whole question of land use and development.

As we speak to the issue of the Chaguanas North Government Primary School in the borough of Chaguanas, we know that in that said borough proposals have been submitted for the acquisition of lands for the construction of a licensing office. That has not reached here as yet. I do not know if it will take another 10 years for the Government of this country to bring a Motion to acquire land to establish a licensing office in the borough of Chaguanas.

Mr. President, there is need and there have been proposals, I understand, advanced for the establishment of a judicial complex in the borough of Chaguanas. When are we going to get motions for the acquisition of lands in the borough of Chaguanas to establish a judicial complex? But you know what is happening? In the borough of Chaguanas a building is still being rented, without occupation, for use as a Magistrates' Court. Do you know how much they are paying? The sum of \$110,000 for the last two to three years at an overall cost of, I understand, close to \$4 million, and no occupation has taken place. The reason for it, we have failed to acquire lands, we have failed to proceed with a proper physical development plan insofar as land use is concerned in the borough of Chaguanas.

Mr. President, recreation facilities: Since Saith Park was acquired, the Government agreed to provide recreational facilities through the establishment of a sporting complex on Factory Road; I think it was about 15 to 20 acres of lands. You know, Mr. President, as we speak, no motion has been brought here by the hon. Minister to acquire those lands for the purpose of establishing a sporting complex for the residents and people of that bustling city and town called Chaguanas. Why? Why has it taken the Government so long to do so?

People in St. Thomas Village have been waiting for 15 years for Government to acquire lands in order to establish a recreation ground for them. Fifteen years and nothing has taken place! So, we come to acquire lands to build a school which has already been constructed but the Minister has failed to bring us up to speed with all the outstanding land acquisition matters as it relates to the borough of Chaguanas. I would want to call on the Minister when he is winding up, if he could pay some attention to this matter. I would like the hon. Minister of Local Government to also intervene in this debate, because when we talk about recreation grounds, we have to understand that recreation grounds under the Municipal Corporations Act, No. 21 of 1990 are supposed to be and are supposed to fall under the purview of the municipal corporations, whether you are a regional corporation or a borough. What we have taking place is this phantom company called the Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago emerging and hijacking the responsibilities, and moneys that are supposed to be allocated for recreational purposes via the corporations are being huffed by the Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago.

You know, Mr. President, what has happened with that particular company? That company is now renting a building on Henry Street at the cost of \$245,000 a month. It cost them \$7 million to refurbish, repair and outfit—\$245,000 per month. [*Interruption*] It is located on Henry Street. I do not know the owners. We have the facts on that matter, Mr. President. Okay? So, here it is, you have a situation where the regional corporations are supposed to be responsible for recreation grounds in terms of maintenance, but do you know what they are given for recreation ground maintenance in the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation? The sum of \$150,000! Mr. President, could you believe that? For one whole year you give a corporation that is almost half of Trinidad and Tobago, \$150,000 for the entire region and the Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago is given millions and millions of dollars to hijack and to invade areas without any corporation coming or notification being given to these particular corporations. So we have concerns. We have real concerns about the workings of these agencies.

Mr. President, I want to deal with the issue of this land for natural gas pipeline. The Minister boasted a short while ago, he claimed, I should say, that it is all part of the pillar of Vision 2020 natural gas driven development, and that is why up to this time as I am speaking the Minister has not told this Parliament who is responsible for this particular exercise, which agency of the State has constructed this pipeline, because you want land to lay a natural gas pipeline. He has not told us if the pipeline has already been laid. Has the pipeline been laid,

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hon. Minister, through you, Mr. President? He has not told us. Who is responsible for the laying of this pipeline? In whose interest is it being done? Is the NGC behind it? We do not know. Maybe!

And Mr. Sinanan Ramsubhag—I do not know, the name is somewhere there—he is the owner of the property. Has he been compensated? We do not know! The Minister has not informed us. All he has done is engaged in rhetoric and “ol’ talk”. A bankrupt and intellectually weak Government that has no vision for this country, all we get is “ol’ talk” from them. “Ol’ talk”! A Government in a state of semi collapse. Virtually! I was looking forward to the Minister of Finance coming to cry crocodile tears today. But I do not know. Maybe she runs from us. [*Laughter*]

**2.45 p.m.**

But, Mr. President, the truth is that we are being asked to approve a Motion to acquire lands for a natural gas pipeline and we do not have a clue who is involved, who is behind it. What is the value of this? Have the owners been compensated for the lands that have been acquired? How much was he paid or the family was paid? No information whatsoever from this Minister, who I thought would have been reshuffled. [*Laughter*] I thought you were facing the exit door. I thought so.

**Sen. Piggott:** Try again.

**Sen. W. Mark:** Some of you are living on borrowed time.

So, Mr. President, we must be fair to this Parliament. We must provide this Parliament with information. Information is a currency of democracy. You want to host a summit and all the principles, values and norms of the Summit of the Americas and the leaders are contrary to what you do here in the country. You do not believe in transparency. Ten million dollars was given to Douglas Mendez and up to now we do not know—we have to find that out through the grapevine because the Attorney General said that is secret.

Anyway, Mr. President, let me turn to you, natural gas pipeline. This natural gas pipeline, we need more information on this particular matter. There is a set of DVDs being produced for President Obama by the people of Beetham. This wall of shame that you are constructing, Minister of Local Government, you called a berm.

Mr. President, look at the eighth area where the Government has acquired a parcel of land for the establishment of a recreation ground at Springlands in San Fabien. I do not even know if the Minister who has presented this Motion knows where Springlands is?

**Sen. Piggott:** Do you know where [*Inaudible*] in Tobago is? [*Laughter*]

**Sen. W. Mark:** The hon. Minister gave this honourable Senate the impression that the lands were being acquired in order to establish a recreation ground. This is what he was telling us here this afternoon. Do you know where Springlands in San Fabien, in the ward of Pointe-a-Pierre is located? Have you been to the recreation ground? Have you been to Springlands? You have not been, clearly. So you come today—[*Interruption*] That is a temporary phenomena. History is like that. You all would be swept very shortly from this Parliament. Very shortly!

Mr. President, I want to let you know that the lands that we are going to acquire, that the Government is seeking approval to acquire today, to establish a recreation ground at Springlands, San Fabien has been donated to the people of Springlands in San Fabien, Pointe-a-Pierre. Fifty years ago this land that you are about to acquire and boast that you all are about to pay, you have not told us who the owners of this land are—because once you acquire land, I expect you to pay. You are going to be paying somebody for land that you acquire. But there is a recreation ground in existence for 50 years and people have been playing cricket, football and basketball. I have brought pictures today for you, the hon. Minister, who does not know where that place is.

I have been there, so I know where that place is. I want to circulate for your consumption, pictures of cricket taking place on the ground. I want to show you the same ground that you are about to acquire. Pavilion is established as well, I am going to send it to you. Pass this on to the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, who does not have a clue of the geography of his country.

**Sen. Piggott:** Was it before your time or after your time?

**Sen. W. Mark:** Fifty years ago that was donated by the owner of West Quarry. I did my research. I went on the ground. I spoke with the people. They want to know who you are paying money to. Obviously, if this land was donated by West Quarry, the owner Mr. West, 50 years ago—he has now passed on to the great beyond—why is the Government coming today to acquire lands that were donated to the people of that community 50 years ago? Tell us.

**Sen. Manning:** To formalize it for maintenance.

**Sen. W. Mark:** Well, why did the Minister not say so, hon. Minister of Local Government? You need to get up and speak yourself. These days you are very sad and I hope you will smile. You must tell us why you are so sad today.

**Mr. President:** Talk to me.

**Sen. W. Mark:** Sorry, Sir. Anytime I look at her, I feel sorry because she seems to be sad. Sen. The Hon. Hazel Manning, always looks sad, but I think I know why.

So, Mr. Speaker, let the hon. Minister tell us today in this Parliament—the hon. Minister is asking us to give him the power to acquire these lands, but he did not explain to us that this land was donated to the people 50 years ago by Mr. West, the owner of West Quarry who has now died. Now, if we did not do our homework on this matter, we could not have come here today and explained to this honourable Parliament, that the Government having not done its homework, would have given every single Senator the impression that this land that is about to be acquired to construct and establish a playground, a recreation ground, when that recreation ground has been established in operation for the last 50 years.

**Sen. Rahman:** That is a shame.

**Sen. W. Mark:** Why did you come here to try to mislead the Parliament? This is why I said I was a bit disappointed when the Minister foisted on us, imposed on us, ambushed us this afternoon with two additional description of lands, 13 and 14 to be acquired by the Government and we in the Opposition, lawmakers of this country, did not have the opportunity to do some investigative work and research to determine whether this is real or whether this is unreal. We do not know, but as I said, it is on the table and we have recorded our objection to it being tabled in the way that it has been. Therefore, whenever we speak to the issue of land acquisition, what comes to mind immediately is compensation for the landowners.

For example, I know in Tobago, a former minister of government who was fired by the Government or he left quietly, Knowlson Gift, came here pleading with us, said the Government took his land at Crown Point Airport and the Government has refused to pay him. The Government has refused to pay Knowlson Gift who is now languishing somewhere in Cascade, and I would like to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources what steps have been taken to address this?

So you take people's lands, you construct an airport or you extended the airport in the case of Tobago, and yet still there has been no compensation. Mr. President, it is Knowlson Gift in Tobago, but there are many citizens in Trinidad and Tobago who are still waiting on the Government to compensate them for lands that the Government took under the Land Acquisition Act, Chap. 58:01.

The Government is also seeking to widen, we are told, the Caroni River in order of course to deal with, I would imagine—he said flooding. So you want a more smooth flow of waters there. We do not want to object to the widening of



the Caroni River. If that is necessary, you have to widen it. What I would like to find out is, as you widen the Caroni River, I see you are extending the airport. I heard there is a group called Shanghai and you are paying them \$150 million to upgrade the south Piarco Airport.

**Sen. Browne:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. W. Mark:** No, I just asked a question. I am reading things that you are expanding. So you are widening the Caroni River and you are expanding the airport at the same time. But the only difference this time, Mr. President, they brought in Chinese in order to deal with another area.

So, Mr. President, we also see where the Government is seeking to acquire again, lands for the construction of the Uriah Butler Highway. Has that been done already, hon. Minister, through you, Mr. President? I do not have a clue. We do not know. You see, we do not have all the resources of the State to do all the kind of research that is necessary to really inform the population. The State apparatus, the State machinery has that ability and has the resources available to it to do this kind of investigative work. We do what we can to alert the country and we would hope that a matter like this ought to have been sent to a functioning joint select committee, so that we could have called in the landowners.

We could have called in the landowners and all the people who have been affected by this compulsory acquisition of their lands. But there is no way of us doing that because the Government came directly to the Parliament, introduced a Motion, has a debate, misleads the Parliament at times, does not know what is taking place in some of the areas they are seeking support for, and we are expected to just give blanket approval to the Government on these matters.

Mr. President, Trinidad and Tobago requires as a matter of urgency, a proper national physical development plan. We need a proper land use development policy in this country where we can segregate, delineate and zone lands for agriculture, for industry, for commerce, for housing and for tourism—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Enill:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. W. Mark:** Who Jennifer?

**Sen. Enill:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. W. Mark:** No, she will speak after me.

**Mr. President:** Speak to me.

**Sen. W. Mark:** Yes, Mr. President. As I saw the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, I remember the big picture. He told the country, look at the big picture, Sir. I do not know what picture that was, but he said look at the big picture. He said forget this lady, look at the big picture. Anyway, Mr. President, we will look at the big picture very shortly.

**3.00 p.m.**

Mr. President, I think the honourable thing the Minister must do is to resign.

**Hon. Senators:** Relevance!

**Sen. W. Mark:** The construction of the Uriah Butler Highway—we understand that this new flyover by Vinci is over budget; is it over time? I understand it is over time and over budget. I do not know; I need to get some clarification; that is what I am hearing.

With these matters concerning land acquisition, we want the Government to have a proper approach to that. We would like the hon. Minister to tell this honourable Parliament, before this Motion is finally consumed, what is the total quantum of outstanding moneys you owe to citizens whose lands were compulsorily acquired over the last two to three years. You must be able to tell us that. You must be able to tell this Parliament how much moneys are outstanding and the number of claimants, the number of persons who are owed money in this country. We need to know.

While you owe people money, you are lavishly spending it, as if it is going out of style. You need to settle the debt owed to the people. I have no doubt in my mind—I do not have the figure here—but I am certain that this Government owes large amounts of money to citizens in this country whose lands they have acquired. *[Interruption]* "But yuh building a wall of shame costing over \$5 million." We believe that once the Government has acquired, they have a moral responsibility.

I have no interest, even though I was born in that area, but I may have an interest, so may I declare it. I was born in a place called Carenage and my parents came from a place called Staubles Bay. They occupied, like so many other families, the lands for decades before the Yankees came and invaded the space and peace of the people. *[Laughter]*

They moved the people out of Staubles Bay; land acquisition in a very forceful way. They moved the people of Staubles Bay; they moved the people out of Teteron, and the lands were given to the Yankees and the Americans. We are talking about land acquisition. I believe that the Government has a moral responsibility. When they acquire lands and the lands are given to foreigners,

when the foreigners leave the lands, the Government has a moral responsibility to return the lands to the people who originally inhabited the lands of that peninsula. That is the point I am making, because we are talking about land acquisition. People have been there for centuries. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. President:** Senator, we are talking about the acquisition of lands on the Schedule, that is it. You really need to confine your arguments there, and you are beginning to repeat yourself substantially now. Find something else to talk about.

**Sen. Piggott:** The king is speaking too much!

**Sen. W. Mark:** You know what I like about you, Mr. President, you are always there to guide me. *[Laughter]* Whenever I stray, I can depend on you; depend on the President. You are most dependable. Chanderpaul cannot compete with the President. He is a dependable President. I agree with you. I have said my piece.

**Hon. Senators:** Yes!

**Sen. Piggott:** I think so too.

**Sen. W. Mark:** I am a Democrat.

Mr. President, the key point is that we have matters before this honourable House that, as far as we are concerned on this side, the Government ought to have provided the Parliament with much more information, much more data. We did not get data; we did not get the relevant information, therefore, we are left in a position where we are being asked to support a Motion and we do not have the necessary data and information at our disposal.

It is very sad because the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources was a banker in an earlier incarnation. He understands the importance of data, figures and facts. It is unfortunate that we are being asked to deal with issues that are not provided in the context that we would like, re information and data.

Insofar as these matters are concerned, we would, in fact, be willing to provide the Government with the necessary support, but we would like the Government to provide us with some data, some details on some of the areas we have raised this afternoon. We would hope, at the end of the day, these acquisitions that have taken place already, the Government will be able to speedily compensate their owners. As we continue to develop and transform our country, the Government would be able to develop a system in which compensation for land acquisition would be accomplished and achieved in a speedier way.

I thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to make my contribution.

**Sen. Dana Seetahal SC:** Mr. President, this is a resolution to approve decisions or declarations by the President made under the Land Acquisition Act, that certain lands are to be used for public purposes.

Section 5 of the Land Acquisition Act dictates:

"The President may by Order declare that land is required for public purposes."

Subsection (2) is:

"Parliament may by resolution approve an Order made under subsection (1)."

That is what we are here about, to approve an Order made by the President.

Of course, we know that under section 80 of the Constitution, the President is not acting in his own discretion, so those decisions made by the President, which were published already, would have been on the advice of the Minister to whom land acquisition is allocated; I take it that is the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, since he dealt with the Motion.

It is 40 sets of land we are dealing with in this Motion, ranging from single parcels to three parcels, to 11 parcels throughout the country. Having gone through the description of what the purposes of various cases are, it seems to me that there is no doubt that those are public purposes, clearly: schools, sporting facilities, matters of that kind.

My concern, however, is like that of Sen. Mark: that we have not been told the cost of any of these acquisitions. This is a charge on the Consolidated Fund under section 21 of the Land Acquisition Act. Under section 22 of that Act, there is a provision that once possession has been taken under section 4(1) or a declaration is published under section 5(3), which would be the declaration made by the President, then a request can be made for advanced payments by the person who owns the land. Some 80 per cent of the amount of the value of the land could be advanced.

That was an amendment made under the 2000 amendment to this 1994 Act. It would seem to me that it is reasonable to expect that the Minister, and the Government through him, would tell us what the different costs of the acquisition of these 14 parcels of land are.

In some cases where we are told that the projects have been completed, why we are now coming before the Parliament to get that approval, God alone knows. One would have expected that to happen earlier on, because this is not a long Motion; this does not take long, and we have spent some three weeks already dealing with the Ambulance Bill. We would have expected that some indication of the cost of those pieces of land be given.

The last few years saw unprecedented rise in costs in the value of land. The prices were really very high. One would want to know whether or not the prices, the costs or the values that are going to be used by the Commissioner, and if there is a challenge to that, by whoever is valuing these lands, would be, in the cases of those completed already, the previous values or the now values, and what exactly is going to happen in relation to these.

Jointly with that, I would like the Minister to indicate to us the time frame for these projects. It is one thing to say that we are acquiring or have acquired these lands, but it is another thing when you are talking about actually bringing to the fore a school or playing field or recreation centre. When is it exactly that these things are going to happen? Do we know? Seeing that we are supposed to be tightening the belt at this stage, is it likely that we are going to acquire all these pieces of land and then they are going to lay fallow, as it were?

I know of many instances in the past, where land has been acquired, and some 10 years, in instances, have passed and nothing has been done in respect of fertile or valuable pieces of land. It would be incumbent, in my view, on the Minister who is acting responsibly, to tell us what is going to happen here.

It may not have happened in the past, and it may explain why the Minister has not seen fit to let us know these things, but now that we have more value for our money, or at least more respect for the value of our money, the fact that it is going down, we need to have an accounting for this. We need to have specific accounting for expenditure of this kind which includes, in some cases, 39,000 square metres, which seem to be a substantial amount of land.

I want to know how the patrimony of the citizens of this country is to be used and what amount and when can we expect the realization of all these projects that are spoken about.

The Minister spoke blithely of these projects and certain ones specifically, being within the framework of Vision 2020, of which we have had many, many allusions, and which many citizens in this country greet with cynicism really. We do not expect much of that talk of that promotion of Vision 2020, because it seems that a lot of the basic utilities in this country: roads, water and these kinds, are in no better state than they were seven years ago when this Vision was touted.

I would like the Minister to tell us, more specifically, how these matters fit within the framework of the budget, whether it is this budget or the last budget. One would have expected that if we are expending money, whether to build

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playing fields, recreation centres or the like, they would be somewhere in the budget or in the special projects expenditure. Are they contained there? Let us know, and relate, therefore, these acquisitions to the planned expenditure in the budget, so that we could, at least, have some degree of confidence that these things are planned and not just expected to happen by chance.

Mr. President, those are the matters that I would like the Minister to specifically address for us. I know that the Government has the majority, and this is just a resolution and it will go; the majority will win. In fact, the President really has no say in these matters as such, but I think that if one is to spend national—well, our money—that we need to know where it is going.

Thank you.

**3.15 p.m.**

**The Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Emily Dick-Forde):** Thank you, Mr. President. This Motion requiring the honourable Senate to approve the decision of the President to acquire 14 land areas identified in Appendix II and its addendum is a routine procedure that has its roots in the law as we would have heard from both the Motion mover and Sen. Seetahal SC.

I wish to begin by congratulating the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources for providing a thorough and comprehensive presentation of this Motion because I have looked through the *Hansard* over the years and I have seen how it had been done by different administrations and I believe that his linking of the acquisitions to Vision 2020 is quite visionary.

Mr. President, the first thing to which I want to respond as I intervene in this debate is the statement by Sen. Mark that this Government has no vision for the country. That is untrue and it needs to be clarified immediately. I have in front of me the Vision 2020 Operational Plan 2007—2010, it is a considerable volume and one of several Vision 2020 documents that were prepared and I want the Senate to listen to the Vision Statement for the vision that this Government has for the country.

It says:

“Vision Statement

By the year 2020, Trinidad and Tobago will be  
a united, resilient, productive, innovative and prosperous nation  
With a disciplined, caring, fun-loving society

Comprising healthy, happy and well-educated people and built on the enduring attributes of self-reliance, respect, tolerance, equity and integrity

In which...

Every citizen has equal opportunities to achieve his/her fullest potential

All citizens enjoy a high quality of life, where quality healthcare is available to all and where safe, peaceful, environmentally-friendly communities are maintained

All citizens are assured of a sound, relevant education system tailored to meet the human resource needs of a modern, progressive, technologically advancing nation

Optimum use is made of all the resources of the nation

The family as the foundation of the society contributes to its growth, development and stability

There is respect for the rule of law and human rights and the promotion of the principles of democracy

The diversity and creativity of all its people are valued and nurtured.” [*Desk thumping*]

That is the Vision Statement that goes with the Vision 2020 documents of which this is one. In addition, the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment which has oversight for the assessment of the achievement of the vision, continually evaluates the achievements where ministries have reached with their Vision 2020 programme, and soon we should be reporting on the 2008 assessment of achievement of Vision 2020.

Sen. Seetahal SC said that many people greet Vision 2020 with cynicism because the basic utilities in this country are no better than five years ago when the vision was launched. I beg to differ. I think what we have in Trinidad and Tobago is a sense of not really understanding, people do not say what is good, they tend to focus on what is bad.

Today in a meeting with the heads of the different divisions, we heard a report from the Director of Town and Country Planning Department that its work entails going to the different local areas and working with the communities to improve their infrastructure. St. Helena is one example I was given where the drains, the

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roads, and everything that was upgraded with the help of the Ministry of Works and Transport had significant improvements, as well as other areas where they are working. We have seen improvements in our road networks. We do have drainage issues, but it does not mean they have not been improved in other areas and are not being worked on. So we have a perception gap there.

I want to speak to the issue of no land use development policy plan that Sen. Mark kept repeating. That was one of his areas of repetition and he said we need a national physical development plan. I want to explain something about the National Physical Development Plan and the extent to which it relates to these acquisitions of small areas in communities.

The legislation with respect to the National Physical Development Plan requires that you have a status report every five years and not necessarily a new plan and my understanding of planning, especially national development planning, is that you are actually outlining a broad framework; it does not drill down to the level of sites as we have seen here. These site level plans are actually regional and local area plans that would be done. So to speak about a national physical development plan being absent within the context of a Motion for small sites like these is to not understand that aspect of planning.

In addition, we have on the ground—and hopefully we should hear more of that later—a number of planners in the country right now continuing and updating regional plans and also the Town and Country Planning Department has an ongoing exercise of local area planning that provides the framework for a lot of what we see happening in these acquisitions. The notion of a vision for our country is linked to, as well, not just the national physical plan, which is coming, because we are tendering right now for consultants to do our second national physical development plan, but we have ongoing local area plans that involve the communities in detail.

When these plans are done, they involve identification of where recreation grounds should go, they look at population density, the trends in population growth in areas and the extent to which these plans are grounded in those local area plans can be determined from the Town and Country Department. And there is consultation in large part between what the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources does and what the Town and Country Planning Department is doing.

Many times the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources is actually requesting on behalf of other ministries that are following other plans. In addition, the length of the process is certainly something that will be addressed under the public sector transformation. The length of the process means that



sometimes we are finalizing the acquisition that would have been started under the UNC administration, which I think we have at least one parcel of land like that.

So to say that the Minister was going off when he talked about Vision 2020, we link everything that we do to the vision, both from a strategic level and then from an outcome level as well. We look at how our outcomes link to the vision and we are satisfied that these acquisitions are in keeping with developing the kind of society that the national vision outlines.

Mr. President, the issue of no land use development plan for Chaguanas, this is an unusual area with respect to planning, it has expanded in a way that requires significant detail and right now the Town and Country Division is in Chaguanas working with the community and also communities close to Chaguanas like Couva to understand the context in which it is to be developed or continues to be developed.

There is a point I wanted to make about land use planning as well. When we say that there is no land use policy, this was a point again Sen. Mark kept going on about. The land use policy that exists is very relevant even though it is a 1984 policy. You already have the land used in a particular way across the country, you cannot come with a new land use policy unless the Government or an administration comes up with a totally different approach and decides that all the areas where you already have residences are going to be moved and something totally different will be put in. That is not something that is going to happen. So there is a land use development policy in place and that is something people need to understand, and even though it is dated, the fundamentals of planning—and planning theory has not changed that much—all you would need is an update of the land use development plan.

One of the things people do not understand about the National Physical Development Plan is that much of what would have been laid down in 1984, has not been fully implemented over the years, it was such a comprehensive framework. So it is not true to say—as we keep hearing when land acquisition comes up—that you need a National Physical Development Plan because it does not compute, and also the land use development plan is not connected.

So Mr. President, my contribution is going to be very short because it was focused on establishing that there is indeed a vision for the country and it is a comprehensive, well-thought-out one that involves hundreds of stakeholders across the country. It was not done by the Government alone, but by private sector, public sector and civil society, as well as the issue of the development planning aspect which we have indeed covered.

Thank you.

**Sen. Mohammed Faisal Rahman:** Mr. President, I rise to make a short contribution to the Motion before us whereby we are required to validate the acquisition of certain parcels of land as outlined by the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources.

Like Sen. Mark, I am also disappointed, but perhaps on slightly different grounds, although I support the areas where he has expressed his disappointments. When the hon. Minister was preambing this Motion, he mentioned that these acquisitions were being done to advance education, sport, health and road access and I particularly was keen to hear him mention that this was to advance the cause of the health sector in our country. I was very disappointed to see that at the end of the day, out of the several parcels of land, 14 different descriptions, there was really nothing that pertained to health, so I do not know why he included the idea that these acquisitions were to include the development of health. I particularly heard that and I am a bit disconcerted because he went on to say that the Government controls or owns by way of government land something like 70 per cent of the land in the country and this leaves us to wonder why the acquisition of land for hospital purposes is so difficult to be made. I have heard it said that although the Government is acquiring all these parcels of land, it is having difficulties in locating land for the Point Fortin Hospital. [*Interruption*]

**Hon. Senator:** Where was that said?

**Sen. M. F. Rahman:** In the other place.

**3.30 p.m.**

**Sen. Narace:** Would the Member give way?

**Sen. M. F. Rahman:** No, I am now getting in stride, if you do not mind. Let me go on. I am warming up, you know.

I heard the percentage of land that the Government controls, the Government should have no difficulty in locating land for school purposes, for hospital purposes, for essential services and institutions that would advance the benefit of an enhanced lifestyle for our citizens. So I find it a little unfortunate that although he included health in his preamble that it has nothing to do with health. But I was very heartened to hear the last Minister contributing who admitted startlingly—and it struck me like a bomb—that Vision 2020 started in 2001 with one of the projects included here, under the UNC administration. So I would want to think that perhaps they have had their inspiration for 2020 vision from an original UNC development.

I know you would deny that, of course, but I would like to say this, that in addition to that point which I am about to make regarding the relevance of this sort of exercise today which I recognize as a formality to regularize and—how shall I phrase it? This entire exercise today is to meet a formal legal requirement which I find very regrettable in the circumstances, because I find that it affords—I should not say it affords the Government. The Government utilizes these occasions when they are bringing very old projects and in many instances, completed projects—a fait accompli; matter closed—to present it to the nation as a vibrant Government action acquiring land now for the purposes of current development so that the citizens of this country can have an enhanced standard of living.

This is hypocritical. You do not take old projects, come up here, whitewash them, present them as something brand new, when eight, nine, 10 years have gone and half of these projects—I do not know how many because we have not been told how many, but the Minister in his presentation was very clear that several of these projects have already been completed. What is the novelty and newness and the current advancing of benefit to the nation by coming here and using a rubber stamping operation to project yourself as a caring, dynamic, forward-thinking, accomplishing Government? I find that very distasteful.

I would like to say that these acquisitions, such as they are, since they have to come in this particular way, and even with the concerns expressed by Sen. Mark regarding compensation for the owners, I would say that is a matter which, I think, should cause us to revisit the Land Acquisition Ordinance or Act, or whatever name it goes by, because we ought to have a system where a simple legal notice would inform the public, very properly, and all of us, as to the land, the price, the owner, the purpose, and such things, and I would certainly like to see that the time frame from conception of idea to acquire and for purpose intended, to the date when the project is completed, is fast-forwarded.

This lethargic procedure—I mean, one of my colleagues was asking me whether there were certain things—some projects that she was looking forward to seeing, I had to tell her those projects may well be on the way and we will hear about them in 10 years' time after they are completed. There is no way to really gauge anything by the presentation here today. In addition to which, I would say this, that even if we were to use these 14 instances as a profile of land acquisition and works in progress—and I do not know if I am making my point here. If you were to use these 14 projects here as a cross-section of works in general which the Government is undertaking for the benefit of the country at any given time—you

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know, you take a snapshot in time and you got a profile of what is going on—I would like to say that this is a very, very bad reflection of the priorities that are being given to projects. We have half of these things being for recreation grounds.

Not only that. We have recreation grounds being put up in areas where schools are being demolished and children are being accommodated in different places under houses. The Rousillac Presbyterian School has been broken down. It was unfit to be inhabited and many of the children have to be taking SEA exams shortly. They are being housed temporarily in very poor circumstances and we have a piece of land here being acquired—well, it has been acquired already. I am quite confused at this point as to whether the land is a current piece of acquisition or a *fait accompli*, or what. However, the point is that in that area there is a crying need for a school. In all of these 14 instances, there is only one school that has come up as a project to build a school. There was one area where you have an extension.

So I would say as a profile to see what is the performance of the Government, how it is focused and prioritizing, this is a very, very poor projection on the part of the Government insofar as how it is progressing with the affairs of the business. We do not see police stations. I mean, if you look at this thing and you understand what you really require in the country: half recreation ground; one school—and what is the other thing; what is the breakdown? Anyhow, without extracting it all over again, you can see that none of this really shows the dynamism that the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources was seeking to project when he was speaking about the great works that the Government is doing, as reflected in these 14 particular instances of acquisition. I find that to be very, very poor indeed.

You know, the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Affairs was very careful to explain to us that when land was being acquired for the North Coast Road, inadvertently certain parcels were omitted in the formalizing of the acquisition, and we can understand that now you are going to formalize another piece to link up roads that were already well-established. But when we come to the natural gas pipeline, have we got a network of natural gas pipeline in Trinidad and there is just one little piece that is required right now to link up the whole north and south area? Or is it one little piece of pipeline going to be laid down as a start on a project? What is really the status of this natural gas pipeline for which we are acquiring this little piece of land?

I do not understand why this has dropped into the lap of the mix and we are acquiring this piece of land for natural gas. When they were acquiring pipeline to run

from Alaska to the States, you had land really being acquired along the way, but one little tract of land for one piece of pipeline, what natural gas pipeline could you possibly be accomplishing with a little section? It just does not make sense.

Personally, I think that this is a bit of a charade. I had made certain requests the last time we were dealing with acquisition of land in Point Cumana and East Dry River, and so on. I just heard from Sen. Wade Mark, about \$245,000 being paid as rental for a property and we have no figures being given to us here as to what is the arrived-at figure for acquiring these pieces of land. There are areas that corruption has taken place in this country already where premium prices are being paid for things that are not worth the money that is being paid for them. We do not know here today, quite apart from the fear that certain landowners may suffer an unduly long wait to get compensation, there is the other end of the spectrum where certain landowners may be paid very premium figures that never come to the table and we really do not know what is going on.

I think that the Government exposes itself to all of these charges and suspicions being levelled at it and ridicule, when you hear the presentation from the Minister, boasting and spouting about this grand reflection of the Government's competence and interest, when we are able to pour scorn on the whole matter. This is really very, very poor. I do not know why the Government consistently brings legislation of this sort. It was even suggested by the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources that the Government habitually brings forth such legislation to advance the quality of life to the country, when my entire lament for all of last year was this Government consistently brings look-good legislation rather than legislation to benefit the people.

We have had one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight pieces of legislation here where we simply had to get up and ratify all sorts of foreign agreements that were done 30 and 40 years before. Imagine, Geneva conventions having to be ratified. How can this Government claim that this Motion here today ratifying the acquisition of land is joining a wonderful body, a corpus of law that this Government has been enacting for the last year?

Since I have been here, I have been very ashamed that I had to get up and virtually quarrel about all sorts of little nonsensical things when we have people suffering deprivation in so many areas in this country. Sen. Seetahal SC mentioned something which, to me, is very ironic, that "nowadays when the value of money seems to be more appreciated". I beg to differ! This country is throwing away

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money all over the place. The only people who understand the value of money today is the poor man in the street who can appreciate it. But do you think the Government is concerned about the value of money? It does not seem so to me.

All of these acquisitions being paid in TT dollars are neither here nor there. The Government, as Sen. Mary King mentioned in one of her articles—and I was very happy to see that. She is not concerned about TT dollars. She said very clearly, and this is something that I have been saying since 1994 publicly, that the Government does not have to worry about TT dollars. It can print, issue and remove as it wants; it is foreign currency that we have to be concerned about. Today we are going about expending foreign currency like it is going out of style. Do you know what is going out of style? The resources that produce it! That is what is going out of style, because right now we are heading for a serious crunch and the Government is continuing to head towards—

**Sen. George:** Mr. President, on a point of order; 35(1)—

**Sen. M. F. Rahman:** Mr. President, I am—

**Mr. President:** It is a point of order. Sit down, please.

**Sen. George:** Standing Order 35(1). I think the hon. Senator is being a little irrelevant.

**Mr. President:** Stay close to the point. Okay?

**Sen. M. F. Rahman:** Yes. Sen. Seetahal SC made this point about the value of money in relation to this very Motion that we are dealing with and nobody objected to that. I am showing that that is a fallacy. This Government is not paying attention to the value of money; it is frittering away the patrimony of this country in areas that are totally unrelated to the welfare of the citizens of this country. This is my point, Sir.

One of these days we are going to have a land acquisition thing coming dealing with land from east to west to accommodate a rapid rail and I do not know how we are going to acquire land underground. I hear they want to run the rapid rail underground in Port of Spain, with all the floods taking place. I just do not know.

As I just said the word “flood”, I remembered something else. We have had two pieces of lands being identified here in this acquisition Motion dealing with the widening of rivers and the Minister never said anything about whether those rivers are widened already; whether this is land that was already acquired and the

projects completed, because he is presenting it as a brand new concern for the flooding that is affecting this country, and the Minister of Works and Transport has already been on record as complaining that dealing with floods is a very big and serious matter.

All of these projects here have dates for the plans and the surveys being eight and six years and five years before. I am very, very inclined to believe that the widening of the two rivers that are mentioned have already taken place in the distant past; that the land is now being formalized in terms of acquisition and that nothing is going to take place to alleviate the floods for which these pieces of lands that are being touted as being acquired to serve.

**3.45 p.m.**

As Sen. Wade Mark said, I believe that this is a done matter. On the face of it these projects are for the benefit of the people. For goodness sake, do not come here and pretend that new projects are going on for the benefit of the people and this represents the astuteness, wisdom, caring and foresight of this Government! That I totally rejected.

With those few words, I thank you very much. I am very grateful for the kind hearing of this noble Senate.

Thank you.

**Sen. Basharat Ali:** Mr. President, I will make some comments on the Motion before us on land acquisition. I will not repeat what Sen. Mark and my colleague, Sen. Seetahal SC have said. I have the same reservations as they do about which projects are being completed or where we have reached. I will highlight a few of them as we go along. I think that the hon. Minister should have taken the opportunity to give us more information on these projects. It would serve the Government well because they are in line with Vision 2020.

Item 5 is the widening of La Seiva River, Maraval. This is 247.7 square metres. I have been living in Maraval for 33 years and I am not aware that there is La Seiva River. I know that there is Maraval River. I know where La Seiva Road is but I do not know that there is La Seiva River going along La Seiva Road. I believe it is a misconception. It is not a river. It may be a tributary or a ravine as somebody said. I will not say who told me it is a ravine and subsequently changed the word to tributary, feeding into the Maraval River. I could not figure it out. I now know what it is. It is a tributary that they have widened so there is not much flooding as before.

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A number of people have addressed this question of land for natural gas pipeline. I wish to join them in saying that we should know more about this. Is this pipeline already laid? I have two questions. What is the size of this pipeline? How long is this pipeline? I assume it was a pipeline in progress and not completed as yet. It is important that we know this. When we are acquiring land for a public purpose, for example, laying a natural gas pipeline, we should be aware of where it is and the size, if only for safety reasons and the protection of our people.

I know that the National Gas Company is always very careful. They publish all the necessary information before they acquire land or where their pipes are going to run. They do their homework. I have every confidence that they would have checked this. We are in the dark not knowing why the Government wants to acquire .652 hectares or 6,520 square metres of land which is not much. How wide is this? We do not know if it is a short thick pipeline or a small thin pipeline. I think that we need to know where it is running; its diameter and length. Easy question.

On the question of the establishment of recreation grounds, two are listed at items 7 and 8. I noted that the one on Mafeking Road, Mayaro is an acquisition of 1.622 hectares which is 16,222 square metres, whereas the one at Springland San Fabien which Sen. Mark said is already in operation, is 2.735 hectares, 27,375 square metres. Why are we acquiring almost twice the acreage or square metres of land for one recreation ground compared to the other? Here the question of value comes in. We have a standard size for recreation grounds. Why should one in Mafeking be half the size of the one for Pointe-a-Pierre?

The widening of Caroni River and drainage improvement works are related improvement work to the Caparo River. These projects are being handled by NIDCO. Sometime ago I remember they had published tender notices for these areas. Once again, we know very little of the status. Have they been started? How does it relate to the work to be done in Mamoral Dam? I am sure that the Minister who is waving from side to side will be able to say what that is. We do not know anything about it.

It is a shame that this is how we go along through this process. I hope that in winding up the Minister will provide further information. Whether or not we are in the minority we still have to vote. I do not think that one should assume that if you have the majority you can vote for it. Those are some items about which I had queries in terms of the 14 items before us.

On June 10, 2008, this same Minister piloted a land acquisition Motion with respect to, I believe, St. Paul Street Complex in Port of Spain. I spoke at that time on a simple matter that relates to the question of metric units. I pointed out that in



one document presented to us in the Senate, seven times out of a total of 10 “metres” was spelt “meters”. Seventy per cent of the time this was spelt wrongly. I mentioned then that since we do not go into committee we cannot correct it. I presume that the Minister may have treated it as an editorial change.

I was very disturbed and more than disturbed to see that in the one before us the same thing has occurred again. I hoped that that would have been the last time I would have seen the word “metre” spelt as “meter” which is a device for measurement. It is not a metric measurement. There has been some improvement compared to the previous time. This time it occurred six times out of 34. There is nothing called a “meter” in our English language. In American “meter” is acceptable. The Metrology Act remained there. In June 2004 that was assented to. We are in March 2009 and we keep hearing there must be revisions to it before it can be proclaimed. It is similar to the breathalyser before us of 2007. We are almost two years into it.

There is a good reason. It is that one institution did not do its work properly. When the hon. Minister gave an answer to the question of unproclaimed Acts, the Attorney General said that the regulations were being compiled. The Bureau of Standards was doing it and they made a mess of it. I know because I took my time and went. This Act is still not proclaimed because of the mess that the Bureau of Standards made and people are dying on the roads because the breathalyser Act is not in place. [*Desk thumping*]

Getting back to the question of this spelling of basic things, this morning as I was reading through my document I happened to look at what our children are being taught. I was very pleased to see that in today’s *Express* the *SEA Tuition Guide* gave a little question on a plot of land. That is what we are dealing with here. Question 45 says:

“A B C D represents a plot of land owned by Mr. Jackson.”—The plot of land has an area of 432 square metres.—“The width of the plot is 18 m. He wants to place fence posts 3 metres apart. How many posts would he need?”

I will ask many of my colleagues to try to work out this. It is easy to work out. The point I want to make is that “metres” was spelt correctly. Even the *Express* tuition people did get it right all through.

**Mr. President:** You sit. I have given you five minutes to talk about spelling. I think that is enough. You need to talk about land acquisition now.

**Sen. B. Ali:** Thank you, Mr. President, for bringing me in line. I do not intend to vote for this because so much of the land is described in “meters” which is not a measure. Other things as “center”. We now have a diplomatic “center”. That is published by one of the State enterprises, UdeCott. Look at the advertisement on UdeCott on the cost of the Prime Minister’s residence and diplomatic centre. Time and again in a document published by the Government that is to proclaim the Metrology Act, you would see something referred to as the “Diplomatic Center”.

Thank you, Mr. President. I wanted to get it in because we are not educating our children properly, when the government institutions do not spell correctly. We are still in the business of standard English spelling. I hope that the hon. Minister will react to some of these things.

Where is the pipeline? Is it already in place? Can we find out the length of the pipeline in metres? The length in metres and the pipeline’s diameter could be in millimetres or centimetres, not in metres. I do not think too many of them could be in metres. If we cannot get it right, how do we expect anybody else to get it right? We are the lawmakers. The children have to get it right and they might know more about it than we do. Thanks for your indulgence but we need to say these things as they come along.

Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Attorney General (Sen. The Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George):** Mr. President, not to belabour the point about spelling, but I remember when I was a child my mother used words like “toute monde”. I no longer hear those phrases. If I said that to my children they would not understand.

#### **4.00 p.m.**

I also remember my English teachers being at pains with the difference between “at present” and “presently”. Therefore, I share the sentiments of Sen. Ali, because I shudder whenever I hear “presently” being used to mean “at present”. However, on one such occasion, I decided to consult a dictionary only to realise, with the evolution of language—words that Chaucer used, we do not and words that Shakespeare used, we do not. Coming back to “presently”, to my surprise when I consulted a recent dictionary, it may not have been a standard English dictionary, I saw that “presently” is used to mean “currently or at present”. I want to say the same thing with centre and metre, in terms of whether you are using an American or English dictionary. I want to comfort, Mr. President, through you, the hon. Senator, that I believe we can still make an amendment to have metre reflected in the spelling that both of us recognize metre to be.

Moving on to the matter before us; the Land Acquisition Act, Chap. 58:01, provides a procedure for the acquisition of land by the State. We heard it in the contributions of hon. Sen. Dana Seetahal SC and Sen. Mark, there was an acceptance that the State should have the power to acquire private lands for public purposes. I believe Sen. Dana Seetahal SC pointed out that the purposes disclosed on the annexure to the Order Paper all indisputably establish a public purpose. I think, from the contributions we have heard thus far, it is generally accepted that the State should have this power and that there should be a balancing act between the State exercising this power and also the right of the individual to get just and fair compensation.

When we look at the legislation itself, we have seen that it has provided a right for entitlement before vesting. I believe Sen. Seetahal SC asked about the value that one uses. When we look at the Act in section 5(7), it talks about publication and service of a declaration made under that section, where any person entitled to land becomes entitled to compensation. My view is that the compensation would be at that date, the value that is placed and assessed in accordance with the Act, when one becomes entitled to compensation. It provides compensation. The entitlement arises before vesting.

It also makes provision for payment before vesting; that is section 22, to which Sen. Seetahal SC referred. The amount that the owner or person interested in the lands is entitled to is a sum of up to 80 per cent. In the cases of these lands where the State has already taken possession in accordance with the procedure under the Act, those owners would have already received 80 per cent of the open market value of the lands, because there is provision that tells you about assessment under the Act. Furthermore, one is entitled to the payment of interest from the date of entitlement to the date of payment. That is provided under section 20 of the Act. The rate of interest is 9 per cent.

**Sen. Seetahal SC:** I want to get one thing clarified. My understanding was that the right to get 80 per cent would have been after the publication of this resolution today, one right and alternatively, under section 4. Also, the person must apply and it would depend on the approval, so it is not automatic, if I remember section 22 correctly. I would like also to find out if they have already made payments and on what cases. I would like some details on that.

**Sen. The Hon. B. Annisette-George:** The entitlement arises once the Order, not the order here but the declaration, is made. I cannot say that payment has been made. There is a procedure. The hon. Senator is correct, an application must be made for the actual payment of the 80 per cent, but it does not affect the

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fact that the entitlement has arisen by a particular date and that the interest begins to run at the rate of 9 per cent until the date of payment. I have been advised that 9 per cent interest per annum is higher than what we would get right now on an ordinary fixed deposit.

In terms of compensation, I think the Act provides a mechanism for fair and just compensation for owners and persons interested, because the amendment to the Act in 1994 expanded the category of persons entitled to compensation. Therefore, if one did not necessarily own the freehold but one were a tenant under the Land Tenants (Security of Tenure) Act, one would have been considered a person interested and entitled to compensation under the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act.

The issue also arose in one of the contributions. If I am not mistaken it would have been the contribution of Sen. Mark, when he spoke to the lands at Springlands and indicated that the owner is very likely to be dead and, therefore, to whom compensation would be paid. The Act also provides a mechanism for that and it is under section 21. It states if there is no person able to give a good discharge for compensation payable under the Act, or if there is no person lawfully to receive it, then there is a provision for the commissioner to pay these sums into court, to the credit of the person entitled.

He spoke with respect to the lands being donated. I do not know anything was presented here to show that it was donated. I do not know that lands were donated like the way gifts of watches are donated. There is a procedure by which title passes from one person to another. If you gave a donation of land and the proper procedure for passing of title did not take place, then there really has been no passing of title in the sense of a gift if you had given a watch. Bringing the Motion here today concerning the lands at Springlands is to complete a process. I think something that is missing in the debate here today is that there is a procedure, not just only for the State to provide compensation and to acquire the lands of private citizens. It is also a procedure that at the end, the lands become vested, whether it is in the State, a municipal corporation or whatever entity. This is the process by which the title is transferred.

The Act provides, when we look at section 5(A), that on the date of publication of a declaration, after the President of the Republic declares that the lands are required for public purpose, a notice also goes to the Registrar General. After a resolution is made by this honourable Senate, the procedure is carried through and an order is made, that order also goes to the Registrar General and that begins in train a process which is culminated in section 37A of the legislation, which

provides that lands acquired under the Act must be subject to the Real Property Ordinance, if they were not land already registered under the Real Property Ordinance and that the registration of the lands so acquired would be effected by putting them in the names of various authorities.

This process is not just only a question of—Sen. Rahman made the point that these lands have been taken into possession by the State how many decades ago and why are you doing this now; almost as if it was somewhat of a farcical exercise and not recognizing also that this is an important part of the legal process of transferring title from the private owner to the State or whoever is the acquiring entity. It is not at all farcical or any sort of exercise to hoodwink the public to believe that something, a project, is now about to begin.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources was quite forthright in his presentation in establishing those parcels which were already in the possession of the State and put to the particular use and distinguished those from the parcels which were not as yet taken into possession.

The Act provides procedures for different circumstances. It provides that, firstly if the lands are lands that are likely to be acquired, there is a procedure for public notification; not just notification to the owner in a constructive sense, also notification in an actual sense. Section 3 of the Act provides for different scenarios for the notice coming to the attention of the owner of the land. It thereafter provides a procedure to allow the State to take entry, seven days must pass, for a limited purpose. The purpose really is sort of investigatory; you go and see if the land is suitable for the purpose that you wish to use it for. The State could at that stage, either abandon or proceed. It is all set out there in a way to ensure that there is fairness in the procedure. It allows for an owner, after being notified, to make representations to the State, in terms of objecting to the State taking possession of its land. Even after the representations, the State still cannot take possession. The Act provides for under a period of the passage of two months. It is a very clear and transparent process allowing for different scenarios for the acquisition for public purposes.

We have shown that the public purposes advance the development of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. One cannot at all question the importance of recreation grounds, the importance of a proper network of roads and also the education of our children. All of this is tied in to the development thrust that this Government has set out for the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. I am sure no member of the public, hearing the purposes for which these lands have been used, would query this at all. It is all in the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Also, in terms of a point made by Sen. Mark, with respect to his family and lands in Chaguaramas, I think it is well documented that the owners of these lands were paid fair compensation at the time for the lands. I think this should be placed in the public domain. It is not that these lands were confiscated from people. They were paid fair compensation for these lands.

**4.15 p.m.**

Mr. President, I want to lend my support to the Motion to bring these 14 parcels of land to be acquired by the State under the Land Acquisition Act to complete the vesting process in a manner provided by law. I want to commend the purposes for which these lands have already been put or are intended to be put in the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and to also say that what we are doing here today shows that the PNM Government adheres to the rule of law.

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

**Sen. Dr. Carson Charles:** Mr. President, thank you very much. I rise to make a few comments and to add my own perspective to this matter. First of all, I do not think that there is any objection on this side to the Government proceeding with these acquisitions as they stand. I do not think that is the point at all. I think if you are acquiring land for a recreation ground and so on, there is hardly any basis for us to object. We cannot identify specific details to suggest that a particular site should not have been acquired, because some other side was better. I am not going to get into that level of the detail to say that you should not have acquired the land for the recreation ground here and, perhaps, it should have been next door and so on. We cannot really get into that kind of detail. That is left for public officials at various levels.

This begins at an operational level where a particular organization—maybe a regional corporation or a community group—wishes to have the use of a particular ground, and they make a request and it gets to Cabinet and eventually this is generated. The people who want to improve the drainage system or the road system also make a request for land. They know what they want—they know about the designs and so forth—and they would make a request for the land, and when it gets to the Parliament it is almost over.

I do not think it is a case of saying that we object to the Government acquiring these particular pieces of land. I think the problem really arose in the way the Minister made his presentation. The Minister should have provided us with a particular kind of information—information on each acquisition that was presented—as to what was the history of it and what actually took place. For

example, persons want to know how much it cost and at what stage you are. You have to get the valuation done, et cetera, before people can get their money and so on. Even though 80 per cent is going to be paid, you have to go through the process of valuation and survey and so forth. So, you really should have given us that kind of information, but the Minister chose instead to go in a different direction and somehow painted this as part of the Government's grand plan for the country in Vision 2020, and there is where the problem arose.

In trying to paint it as some grand plan and speaking about the caring Government—I cannot remember the term that the Leader of Government Business was seeking to get me to be excited about. It is a particular term that he boasted about—the greatness of the Government. When you start presenting this as evidence of some greatness of the Government or some great work that you are doing—you have acquisitions from way back here.

I do not think the PNM has a good track record with respect to acquisitions. It is so hard to remember everything. I think members of the national community have to be reminded of some things. There is so much happening in the country and the national community cannot remember all of these things. So, we have to remind them sometimes.

It was under the UNC administration that an important amendment was made which allowed for the payment of this 80 per cent. It was really a terrible experience for persons when their lands were required. It took many years, sometimes 10 or 15 years, before they could get their money. They were just deprived of their lands, because it is a long bureaucratic process involving identification and so on—the clarity of the exact area, and then for the surveys and the valuations.

The Government is never anxious to pay out money. It is because of the amendment that was made for 80 per cent to be paid—it is still an entitlement and the Government may pay it, but it still requires you to do surveys and valuations.

So, you still have to tell us: Have you done the surveys? Have you done the valuations? A number of them talked about the survey plan and so on, but have you done the valuation? That is the only way you can actually pay people their money. Have you paid them? That is what we expected from the Minister, and not to present this as if it were some grand plan of the Government towards national development, because that is not what it is.

That is the reason when you go back to the *Hansard*—the Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment talked about researching the records and what a great presentation the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources

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had made. There were brief debates in the past on these matters, and that is because no one tried to present it as some great plan of the Government. In fact, we knew it was just a result of a long process of bureaucratic work that led eventually to this stage, and by the time it gets to the Parliament it is all over, because the plan was implemented five or 10 years ago. You cannot be boasting now about a grand plan that you are now putting forward. Are you speaking of Vision 2020 for a piece of land acquired way back in 2000 or before that? There is where the problem arose.

I have no problem with the Minister giving us a great idea of how wonderful the Government is doing and where it is going to take the country. I am not tempted this afternoon to respond to the comments made by the Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment who took us into the Vision 2020 document. Once you have taken us there you have opened the Parliament to a grand debate on how this is consistent with Vision 2020 and whether you are really implementing it. I am not going to be tempted this afternoon. I want to tell the Minister up front not to get too worried. I am not going to debate that. In passing, I am just saying do not tell us that this is part of some Vision 2020 matter going on here. This is part of a bureaucratic process.

I am happy if you brought all of these things here because there are many pieces of land that you have finally brought to this stage, and that is a good thing. This means that some of the officials have done their work and they have brought it to this stage where it could actually be completed, and people could get their full compensation and you could regularize everything, and that is good. That is what you really need to tell us about.

**Sen. Narace:** You have seen the light.

**Sen. Dr. C. Charles:** Well, everyone sees the things that you are doing. They are not many, so we can see them. We can also see some of the things that you are not doing. I am not going to cheat you. I must tell you that it is a good thing to have brought it to this stage—that is a good thing—but I must also tell you not to tempt me about this Vision 2020 thing. In fact, do not tempt the national community with your Vision 2020 comments, because when people hear about these things and they look around—the circumstances that they are living in—they might really get upset about the great things that you have for them in 10 years' time, because time is counting down. We are in 2009 now, and it becomes more incredible to speak about Vision 2020 in those terms.

I want to make the point that many of these land acquisitions have to do with recreation grounds. I wish the Government would take the matter of recreation



grounds seriously. We should not only hear about lands being acquired for recreation grounds. In fact, this is the only mention we get of recreation grounds in the Parliament, and that is such a central thing and an important thing to national life and the life of young people. We really ought to be having a comprehensive plan for recreation in the country which involves acquisition of grounds wherever you need them and other facilities and so on, and they should be part of a comprehensive plan. Do not mention it so casually. Recreation facilities and recreation in general are very important.

I want to take this opportunity to suggest to the Government that it is really a critical thing if we are going to have any chance of stemming the tide of madness that is sweeping through the country right now with young people. It is the only place where you can really make some kind of impact—the business of recreation and occupying people's time—taking up the time of young people in all forms of recreation. So, I will support you if you are trying to acquire recreational facilities and so on, but this is not part of a plan for acquiring recreational facilities and developing recreation facilities. It is just the request of recreation grounds coming forward. This is one area I would like you to take on as a sort of starting point and to focus on that particular area.

The regional corporations are particularly active in that area, but they are so far from what is required, because all they could focus on is just a little recreation ground—to get the land and to keep it clean. They do not have the wherewithal to take it up as a very serious area of national focus, with the kind of resources that the Government has at its disposal to make recreation facilities and recreational activities a central part of the lives of our young people. That is the only point of detail that I really want to focus you on as far as this matter is concerned.

It is a pity that we only have the central government as the main actor here, because what we need in the country is a whole lot more of decentralization so that these things could take place, especially at the level of the regional corporations, because they are the ones who should be leading the way in respect of the various uses of land that they want. Now, that leads me to a very brief comment made by the Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment with respect to the National Physical Development Plan.

Mr. President, what is the status of that plan? I get the point that we do not need to have a new national physical development plan every time, but that is rather academic. I think the more important part is the fact that you are going to have one, and you are appointing consultants to do one. The last one was done in 1984 and it does not say anything. Theoretically, you can just revise it every five

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years, but when you introduce all kinds of changes over the years you cannot really say that it is consistent anymore after the revision from 1984 to now. So, if you are really going to have a national physical development plan done now, then I urge the Government to do it. Do not just tell us that you have one, but just do it.

We do not really have any grand plan for anything in the country today. The Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister changes all the time. Some time ago, the Minister promised me, in my capacity here, the national transportation plan. This is just a little reminder. The national transportation plan is one of the plans that we should have because we have acquisition for lands for roads and so on. There is no particular context.

The national transportation plan is long overdue. We really would like to have it. We have paid consultants for it and we should have it in the Parliament so that we can actually see where things fall and what is the plan for transportation in the country, and even what is the new plan, unless we are not paying attention to what has been happening in the world over the past year. We must have a new plan with some changes to the old plan. We would be happy to see what the new plan looks like or what the revised plan looks like, and then we are going to have an idea of what context you are talking about with the acquisition of land for expanding this highway or that highway or the North Coast Road. Is it part of a plan to extend the North Coast Road all the way for it to be connected around the coast? We do not know, but it is presented here as acquisition for land along the North Coast Road. I would like to get a little comment on that matter. Is that part of the plan of the Ministry of Works and Transport?

As I said, I only rose to make a few brief comments. I just want to encourage the Government to give us the plans that we have asked for and present them in the right context. Give us the information in the context that we want it, and not about your great plan but rather about what actually happened with these land acquisitions as a long historic exercise.

The Government should focus on recreation as a very serious matter and not as random acquisitions in order to save the youths. Please let us take a decentralist approach to our attempts to salvage what is left here in Trinidad and Tobago. Those are my main points. I do not want to take up too much of the Senate's time on this matter. Once again, it is supposed to be a simple matter, and usually it was presented as a simple matter in the past. I think it should be presented in that way only if you give us the right information.

Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, it is now 4.30 p.m. so we are going to take the tea break. The sitting is suspended and we will resume at 5.00 p.m.

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

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

**Sen. Dr. Jennifer Kernahan:** Thank you, Mr. President for the opportunity to make an intervention on the Motion before us, and the Motion is: “Be it resolved that this House approve the decision of the President to acquire the lands described in Appendix II for the public purposes specified”.

Mr. President, the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources came to this honourable Senate this afternoon to ask us to approve the acquisition of several parcels of land, in order to achieve the implementation of several projects of a public nature. The Minister sought to justify this acquisition in glowing terms. He justified the acquisition of these private lands in the context of achieving the objectives of the various pillars of Vision 2020. He linked the purposes for which these lands are to be acquired under pillars of achieving infrastructural development, development of the environment, sport, health and so on. The whole gamut of social and economic development was linked to the acquisition of several parcels of land.

I believe that any objective observer would agree that these pillars that the Minister spoke about are apparently developing serious cracks, and therefore, this Vision 2020 that the Minister spoke about, is practically falling apart before our eyes. After the Minister spoke about the impacts that the acquisition of these lands would have on our citizens’ well-being, with respect to dealing with the problems of drainage, flooding, and so on, he said that the objective is to achieve healthy lifestyles of our citizens through the systematic provision of facilities and to provide facilities for youths to express themselves in a positive manner.

As Sen. Dr. Carson Charles said earlier on in his contribution, all that is fine, these are well-intentioned objectives, but the issue is, what are the actions that this administration needs to take to achieve those objectives? Even more important, as many of the Senators who spoke before me have stated here this afternoon, we have to deal with the whole question of transparency and the coherence of action by this administration, especially when you are dealing with compulsory acquisition of private lands.

Sen. Seetahal SC spoke to the fact that national resources are going to be used in the acquisition of these lands. Several Senators questioned the cost, the financing of the acquisition, and the answers to none of these questions were forthcoming when the Minister spoke. One of the issues that the Minister brought

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before the Senate in terms of the acquisition of land, is item 5, which deals with the acquisition of a parcel of land comprising 247.7 square metres, situated at La Seiva Road, in the ward of Diego Martin. The use of this is the widening of the La Seiva River in Maraval. The Minister made the point that the acquisition of this piece of land is important to deal with the issue of flooding and improving the quality of life of the residents of that area, points I will elaborate on as I go along here this afternoon.

One of the issues we have to deal with is the overall transparency and coherence of the acquisition of these lands. When I speak about coherence, I speak about the nexus between this particular project—as the Minister referred to all these acquisitions, these particular projects—to the overall national plan at the national level and how they fit in with plans at the regional, local and community levels, and how the national plans impact on the plans that are elaborated at community levels.

This is important because it is quite clear that Maraval is indeed in a very sad situation. When it rains heavily there is extensive damage, extensive flooding, and so on. In fact, on Saturday, December 20, 2008, the *Newsday* reported that:

“FLOOD WATERS rose as high as five feet in...Saddle Road in Maraval,...caused the Maraval River to burst its banks on two occasions.”

This is where coherence comes in, because in this article, it says, and I quote:

“Most residents blamed the flooding on recent housing developments in the area. They said the developers of these projects have not built proper drainage systems, and as a result excess water flowed into the river.”

This is where coherence comes in; this is where planning at the national level comes in; this is where the work of the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment comes in, in dealing with these issues. The Minister of Local Government admitted that these issues exist. Four days later, in an article in the *Guardian* on December 24, 2008, the headline of the article was “Don’t blame me for the cascade, maraval floods”.

While the Minister was saying "Don’t blame me"—this is what he stated in this article—in fact, agreeing with the assessment of the villagers that lack of proper coherent planning at the national level was responsible for these issues in Maraval at the local level, this is what Minister Colm Imbert said, and I quote:

"This is why I have said that this unacceptable situation must be addressed and our building laws need to be changed to punish these errant land

developers, because these badly planned developments are costing the State too much money and causing too much distress to citizens.”

This is the Minister.

“It is also self-evident that the residents of the affected areas simply do not have the capability to take legal action against these errant developers even though they know that the solution lies in the courts.”

Apparently, it does not lie with the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment; it does not lie with the Minister of Works and Transport; it lies with the courts. The Minister went on to say:

"It is thus clear to me that the laws have to be amended to allow swift and effective action including giving the court the ability to easily make quick and timely declaratory orders or injunctive orders, and order compensation, based on a simple application from a state agency. State agencies also have to be given wide-ranging, effective and easily implementable powers to control and stop inappropriate development.”

So, Mr. President, the Minister is clearly very au courant with what the problems are, with respect to the failure of Government to bring appropriate legislation; to bring errant developers to justice; to protect the citizens and the property of citizens in the Maraval area. When the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources comes here this afternoon and says he wants to acquire 247.7 square metres of land in order to deal with widening the river and dealing with the flooding problem, is it really that this acquisition, that this project is going to solve the problem of the people of Maraval? We say, no. We say that this is just part of the issue and therefore, the Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment and this administration must be able to come to this Parliament when they are bringing these bits of programmes, and tell us how it fits in with the wider picture, the bigger picture, the picture that is really going to solve the problem.

That is the problem we have; we just get little glimpses of what is possible and what they are going to do. The legislation for example, where is the actual legislation that the Minister promised in order to deal with the substantive issue, which is the problem of untrammelled development? If you widen the river, and untrammelled development continues, you are going to still have flooding. How far are you going to go with this issue of acquiring lands to widen rivers when you have the basic issue not being addressed? This is our problem with the way this administration approaches these issues.

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This is why we are saying this afternoon, that good governance, due process, is basic to the sustainable development that the Minister said that he would like to see in this country, and it is basic to a coherent approach to development, which is absolutely very absent from the approach this Government has taken regardless of all the pillars, the vision that is clearly disappearing into the sunset.

Mr. President, the Minister has been silent on the question of, for example, how all these projects that he mentioned fit into a National Physical Development Plan, as the laws of this country mandate the Government to update every five years and bring to this Parliament, in order for our citizens, our parliamentarians to be able to get a grasp of where this Government really is going in terms of land use, land development and the use of land. I am saying again, it is even more important when you are talking about people's private land; people's land that you are going to appropriate to apparently develop certain projects, and therefore, it is even more important for us to be transparent about this.

It is not that this is a new issue, the Government has recognized these issues in all the documents that they have published, Vision 2020 document. In this document, "Government at your Service—Vision 2020, 2008, Determined to reach our Goal", the Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment, as outlined in this document, is the central agency for overall responsibility for national, social and economic planning, including national manpower planning, land use planning, public sector investment programming and the provision of national statistics; also the co-operation in other countries.

**5.15 p.m.**

The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, if he had come to this Parliament this afternoon properly prepared [*Laughter*] he would have explained to us how the projects that he brought before us served as important instruments of sustainable development policies—particularly when we are talking about resource mobilization and allocation which is an important issue when the Senator raised the issue of resource mobilization and allocation of resources in these very trying economic times.

So, we are aware, that based on their own documents, that within the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment, contrary to what the Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment would have us believe, there is actually a division called the Socio-economic Policy Planning Division which is responsible for the formulation of national development planning and for undertaking social and economic research for this purpose. We are aware through their own

documents that this Socio-economic Policy Planning Division has commenced the development of socio-economic profiles of communities in Trinidad and Tobago and the objective of these profiles are several. It has to do directly with the projects that the Minister has brought here this afternoon because this is where all the central planning of these projects in these communities would have started.

I believe that in their document they have said that this Central Planning Agency—Socio-economic Planning Division in the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment—would then liaise with the different ministries, agents and so on, with respect to what is the overall vision and then deal with planning at the levels of communities and so on, to integrate what is happening at the level of the communities with the national vision. So, in their document—the Government at your Service—and in the draft National Strategic Plan which I have before me, what are the objectives of this particular division in the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment? Because the tone that the Minister took here this afternoon that the National Physical Development Plan is really a national approach and therefore it has very little to do with communities and specific development plans and projects in communities, but that is not so at all. We are seeing that this particular division has to do specifically with the development of community planning. It says here that the objectives are:

1. To improve allocation efficiency under the Public Sector Investment Programme—and I think this was a concern raised by Sen. Seetahal SC in terms of the efficiency and allocation of resources;
2. Provide an improved framework for articulation of intervention strategies for promoting the sustainable development of communities and for assessing the impact of national development at the level of communities.

This is what we are asking here this afternoon.

In their own document—these Vision 2020 documents that they have put out—this is what they promised to do, to have this division do profiles on communities and undertake to assess how national development is going to impact at the level of the communities. This is where the Minister failed in his presentation this afternoon. He failed to make that connection and the Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment apparently denied that there was a connection. One of the objectives of this division in the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment is to propose new policies and strategies where necessary and to advise other ministries and agencies on policies and strategies in meeting their needs at that level of the national community.

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This is why it seems to us this afternoon that the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources had absolutely no connection with the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment, and there is provision for that connection through the division of Socio-economic Planning and Development in the ministry. In fact, what I would have expected the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources to tell us this afternoon, out of the 68 community profiles which this particular division in the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment—they said they have completed community profiles on 68 communities—if one hand knew what the other hand was doing, the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources would have been able to tell us, well listen, out of the 68 community profiles that have been completed by this Socio-economic Planning Division in the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment, these communities that we have brought here this afternoon, two, three, four or all of them, fall under a planned profile; we understand the profile of these communities, therefore, we have a community plan as mandated to this division to develop this particular community in the framework of national development. Therefore, what we are asking, the acquisition of land resources this afternoon, is fully in sync with the Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment—that Socio-economic Planning Division—and we are very well aware of what the impact is going to be, the national development plans that the ministry has on these communities and how this local acquisition and planning will fit into the whole concept of national development.

I do not understand why this connection was not made. In fact, this draft National Strategic Plan apparently was done since 2005. They said this was completed in 2005. We are in 2009, so you would have expected any administration that is serious about sustainable development, as the Minister claimed to be here this afternoon, these things would be up and running. What are you doing? Why do we get the impression here that the Minister is washing her hands of any knowledge of any local and community development projects, that is not within the ambit and that is not the function of her ministry, and why is the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources not able to tell us how it fits in?

**Sen. Dr. Dick-Forde:** Could I interrupt you? Senator, could you allow me to clarify? I have been listening and trying to understand what it is you are really saying and now I get it, and that is not what I said. I said the national development plan as discussed by Sen. Mark in his contribution spoke about the national development plan as if it spoke to the community and I said the national development plan is a bigger framework and that we do have local and regional



plans. In fact, I said that we have regional planners out there. I said that as well and I said Town and Country Planning is responsible for the national development plan, it also does local area plans and I gave an example of the work done in St. Helena. So what you are saying is not what I said. Thank you.

**Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan:** Mr. President, the Minister is saying that is not what she actually said, but that is the implication of what the Minister was saying when she said the National Physical Development Plan is an overall national objective and it has very little to do with these issues; and she said that this is something that will be dealt with at another level. But I am saying that there is a specific division within the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment which is supposed to deal with the issue of the developing profiles into communities. They said they have completed 68 profiles and are dealing with specific planning at the level of communities. This is what I am saying.

The draft National Strategic Plan which this administration has brought to the attention of the national community, specifically spoke to a section that was called, “Framework for Action, Regional Development and Sustainable Communities”; the goal of this particular draft National Strategic Plan, under this framework for Regional Development and Sustainable Communities; and this is what the Minister spoke to this afternoon. He specifically said that these are projects that speak to sustainable communities, dealing with youths, sport, health and everything under the sun. This is the goal of the draft National Strategic Plan, under the Framework for Regional Development and Sustainable Communities. What is their goal? “To ensure every citizen within every community has fair access to resources and facilities for living a satisfying life.”

This concurs very well with what the Minister said this afternoon, so fine. What the Minister said this afternoon concurs with the goal of the draft National Strategic Plan. How do they propose to implement this plan? What are the objectives of this plan? It concurs again with what the Minister said here this afternoon. Objective four of this plan is very specific to the issues that we are dealing with here this afternoon with respect to acquisition of land. Objective four of this Draft National Strategic Plan is to use the land use planning process and its outputs to facilitate the creation of sustainable communities. So, they are on target. They know there is coherence, there is a nexus between what the Minister said, what they want to do and what they have outlined in their documents. The problem is that the realization—as the old saying goes: “There’s many a slip b’tween cup and lip”. [*Laughter*]

**Mr. President:** Senator, I have really given you a lot of latitude in terms of talking about planning and so on, but planning really is not the issue before us this afternoon, the issue really is the acquisition of 14 pieces of land. I think I really want you to try to confine yourself to that. I have given you enough latitude to talk about planning, but I think you have exhausted that. You spent 15 minutes talking about this national 2020 plan, or something of the sort, and you just kept repeating yourself over and over again. I think we have had enough of that. I think you can now talk about the 14 matters before us.

**Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan:** Thank you, Mr. President. I was merely trying to reply to the Minister when he spoke about sustainable development, when he spoke about the actions that the acquisition of these lands would impact on health, would impact on sport, youth and all of these issues.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** I think you did that already.

**Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan:** I am making the point, that you have to take actions after acquiring these lands, after having that vision for what the acquisition of these lands would achieve and then you have to take specific action in order to ensure that your objectives are met.

The specific action that you have to take to ensure that your objectives are met is to deal with how you plan to upgrade and improve the quality of life in these communities and the citizens of these communities. How are you going to now achieve the implementation of the objective of the acquisition? The acquisition is fine and we have said so. There is no problem in the Minister coming to this Senate and asking for the approval for acquisition of lands, but when you are dealing with the question of defined objectives that the Minister has raised in this debate—

**Mr. President:** We are not really dealing with that. We are dealing only with the acquisition. The Minister has explained some of the reasons behind it and the specific purposes, not to the long-term objectives of this. Just deal with the acquisitions, please!

**Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan:** Well, Mr. President, we can talk about acquisition, we can talk about whether or not the lands that are purported here for acquisition within the purview of the Minister, and that is clear—

For example, we have no problem with item 7, the establishing of recreational grounds and so on. We have the issue of item 8, the establishment of recreational grounds in Springlands; well, Sen. Mark spoke to that. We have no issue with

item 9, widening of the Caroni River, [*Interruption*] but the issue that we have is how are you going to translate these acts of acquisition into real benefits in terms of improving the quality of life of our people? We are saying, unless you do take certain steps and certain actions, the Minister would have gotten more support on this side, and many Senators have made that point.

**5.30 p.m.**

If the Minister would have come here with a more complete picture and with more information on how these acquisitions fit in to the national purpose and the national vision, and how these lands are actually going to be developed in terms of what the stated purpose of acquisition is, we are saying that in the absence of the implementation and the apparent inaction of the very agencies which this Government has established to do the work that the Minister has outlined in terms of developing the quality of life for our people; there is an apparent lack of inaction on those funds and we are saying it is very difficult for us to support the Motion before us.

It is very difficult to understand the connection between the different government agencies. It is very difficult to understand why responsibility for community development at the level of the regions and so on, has not been made clear by the Minister in terms of his connection with the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment. This is why it is so difficult to support this Motion, because we are supporting it in a vacuum and if we are not able to make that connection and make that nexus, it is very difficult to deal with this Motion, other than to repeat what other Senators have said with respect to the whole question of compensation and how it is done and so on.

Mr. President, these issues we believe are vital. When the Minister comes here, he must give us this sort of information because the Minister himself made the point that the widening of the Caroni River which is item 9 on this Schedule, is very important to avoid salination of wetlands, salination of agricultural lands, the intrusion of salt water into agricultural lands and so on. The Minister made this point and when the Minister made this point, we immediately understood that while the Minister is saying these things and is making this particular point, the action of intrusion of salt water, the salination of agricultural lands is an ongoing process as we have seen in research work done by the University of the West Indies, and specifically by research work done and presented on Thursday, February 12, 2009 which is called the "First Annual Geography and Environment MPhil PhD Conference". So, it is very alarming to us, Mr. President, when research work is done, the Minister is speaking about widening the Caroni River to avoid certain ecological disasters and so on.

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We understand that the ecological disasters which the Minister spoke to here this afternoon, are actually ongoing and are happening as we speak. We want to understand and to ensure that when the Minister says that this is going to have a certain result, we want the Minister to understand that we have a bigger problem and a serious problem because the actual event is taking place. I am reading from an abstract by one of the PhD students, Melissa Atwell, who outlined and I quote:

“The wetland ecosystems are facing unprecedented degradation and loss in the face of anthropogenic land use change”.

This is what the Minister says he wants to prevent, why he is bringing item 9 to this Parliament this afternoon.

We are seeing that in February 2009, from studies that have been done at the level of the university, that we have a serious problem already. The salination of agricultural land and the wetlands is actually taking place. So we want to understand from the Minister here, how does that fit in to the national development, the lack of zoning, the lack of protection of our environment by these errant developers that the Minister spoke about. Where is the legislation? So, you have to tie it in!

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** On a point of order, Mr. President. I question the relevance of the contribution. I think the Senator, having been in Government, is well aware that the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources is the means by which lands are acquired. The questions that have been put to the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources are really questions that the individual ministries would have the answer for. The Ministry of Agriculture is told, we want to acquire this land, and following the procedure of the land acquisition on that, proceeds to acquire. So I question the relevance now of this contribution to the Motion before us.

**Mr. President:** Senator, the issue before us is one of land acquisition. I did not hear the Minister talk about salination of the land, something that I do know a little about. I do not think we want to get into the issue of global warming and rising sea levels which could also be brought into it if you really want to go there. I think that you really need to try to get down to some of the issues of land acquisition with the 14 parcels in front of us.

**Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan:** Mr. President, thank you for your guidance, but the Minister did mention the objective of item 9. The objective is to prevent salination—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** To acquire land.

**Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan:**—to acquire land, to widen the Caroni River in order to—We are just not doing it in a vacuum. We are doing it for a specific purpose and this is what I am saying. I am making the point to the Minister, that he must be aware that the purpose for which he is acquiring this land, the issues that he is trying to avoid, events have already overtaken us and these are serious issues which he has now to liaise with the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment to understand how we are going to solve these problems.

Mr. President, this is not a perception gap. This is a reality check that we are trying to bring to the attention of the administration this afternoon, because we are debating this issue as if acquiring land is the be-all and end-all of the exercise.

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

**Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan:** No, but the Minister came here this afternoon and said why he was acquiring these lands, and therefore, it is legitimate to deal with, if the objectives are legitimate or not. The Minister did not just come here and say that he wants to acquire these lands, he said the purpose. And if we see the purpose is being defeated or the events have overtaken the Minister, it is our duty to point out these issues and the national community must understand that these are serious issues that we are raising. So saying that this is—

**Sen. Piggott:** Would the Senator give way?

**Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan:** Mr. President, I would like to finish my contribution. When the Minister is winding up he will deal with the issues. So, in summing up my contribution here this afternoon, I am saying that these projects, as the Minister so clearly defined them to be this afternoon in the acquisition of certain parcels of lands, are not projects because they just feel to do these things. They did it with an objective, with certain specific sociopolitical objectives, and the objectives are basically as the Minister said, to improve the quality of life of our citizens.

We are saying that unless you do it within the context of holistic planning, with a close consultation with the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment and the implementation of the Sociopolitical Planning Division's objectives and plans, then it is all in vain. You are going to acquire private properties, you are going to take people's private property and you are not going to achieve the objectives which you set yourself. This is the point we are making.

**Sen. Rahman:** Well said. Well said.

**Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan:** Mr. President, we are saying that this whole attempt to shut down the issue for this narrow question of acquiring lands is null and void

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because the Minister came here and elaborated. He went into a whole sociopolitical development plan. Every area of our national life is going to be impacted by this acquisition: health, sport, the youths and crime. Everything is going to be impacted by this so-called acquisition. So, why are we being limited to talking about acquisition in the absence of these stated objectives of the Minister?

Mr. President, I believe that the national community will understand what I am saying, and the nexus between these issues, the importance of these issues and the fact that many of the events that the Minister has purported here to avoid, have already taken us by bad planning, bad land use and the absence of a National Physical Development Plan.

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

**The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Sen. The Hon. Arnold Piggott):** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Sen. Dr. Kernahan has been somewhat contradictory in her statements and comments to that which Sen. Dr. Charles has said on the one hand, where she had spent all of this time asking for us to link the presentation of the acquisition to Vision 2020 National Strategic Plan, when on the other hand, Sen. Dr. Charles says that I tried to link it to Vision 2020 when they have nothing to do with that.

Perhaps I should say firstly, thanks to all the Senators in the Senate who have made a contribution to this Motion, and say to them that we are happy that they are committed to the developmental thrust of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

I want to say also, that except one is blind, one cannot make a comment that projects such as those we are engaged in, will not be leading to informing education, informing sports, informing healthy lifestyles, recreation, access roads, flood prevention and drainage. They are all linked to those types of projects. I would also like to make the point which the hon. Senator, seemingly, was seeking to establish, on the issue of developments that we are pursuing.

Mr. President, it would be misleading for Sen. Mark to conclude or give the impression, that by including two acquisitions or two sets of properties for acquisition that we are seeking to ambush anyone in this honourable Senate, and Sen. Mark knows that this Minister will never be engaged in any element of ambush. For exactly the same reason that Sen. Mark speaks to the issue of ambush, is the reason why we added the two pieces of land or parcels of land to the Motion today. Had we not done that, a Motion for the acquisition of those

two parcels might have been delayed substantially, and we thought that it would be in the best interest of the national population to add the two parcels of land to this Motion today, and expedite them.

As I said before in my opening, I made the point that the Parliament received the two files for those two parcels on Friday, March 13, 2009. So I think Sen. Mark should be applauding rather than crying or denying the fact that we brought these two parcels of land to be included in the Motion very rapidly. Had it not been for foresight, we would have left it there and it would not have come up on the agenda for a Motion to acquire lands, for sometime yet to come. So I think we should be applauded for that. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, it is not correct to say that lands are being used for everything except agriculture. Lands are being used for several things in Trinidad and Tobago. The Government is seeking to use a judicious mix of the land resources for a variety of development needs of the country, and we shall continue using a judicious mix of land in Trinidad and Tobago for the benefit of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

#### **5.45 p.m.**

I was happy to note that Sen. Mark had no issue with the acquisition of land for recreation, as indeed he should not, because we would like to encourage our youths and all the people of Trinidad and Tobago to pursue healthy lifestyles. They must find a place for recreation; they must find a place for community development. I am so happy that Sen. Mark is agreeable to that.

In response to Sen. Dr. Kernahan, there is no failure on the part of the Government to deal effectively with the development issues as they relate to flooding. Bringing legislation to deal with errant developers is not in conflict with widening river courses or clearing river courses. Sen. Dr. Kernahan must know that flooding is not derived by one thing; it is a variety of things that would trigger flooding. Her colleague and my colleague on the other side, Sen. Dr. Charles, would know much more about this, that any number of things could create flooding; it is not only caused by errant developers. It could be by carelessness on the part of a number of people; it could be excessive rainfall over a very short period of time; it could be a whole range of things: squatting, any number of things.

I wish that Sen. Dr. Charles would whisper to his colleague next to him and advise her on how flooding is caused in several areas. [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Dr. Kernahan:** I quoted the Minister; I did not take that from my head!

**Sen. The Hon. A. Piggott:** I want to make sure that it goes into the record that I did not say that we were doing these projects to prevent saltwater intrusion. I want to say exactly what I said before:

“Three of these projects, the widening of the La Seiva River in Maraval, the widening of the Caroni River and the drainage and improvement works to the Caparo River are intended to reduce the incidence of flooding in these areas and to minimize the consequential damage and inconvenience caused to the population of these areas...”

I do commit to doing that which I have to do. I was sworn at President’s House and here to do and deliver to the people. I do not get somebody to write my speeches and then divorce myself from them. I can find what is written. [*Laughter*] I get married to my speeches.

What I said, Mr. President, was that:

“As stated by the hon. Minister of Finance in the 2009 budget speech, the Government will continue...”—You want to hear it again?—“...the Government will continue to invest in first-class drainage and irrigation infrastructure to reduce the frequency and severity of flooding and erosion, to eliminate the consequential health and environmental hazard and to end saltwater intrusion in agricultural areas.”

That is what I said; it is a totally new point. I am sure that we have brilliance on that side, persons having done dissertations and so on, to understand the English language when I speak it.

Mr. President, I wish to advise this honourable Senate that there were some other issues raised; I shall seek to research them. I shall seek, in any other motion that I bring to this House, to clarify a number of the issues that were raised, if I do not have the opportunity to do that in another place.

Therefore, as I wind up this Motion, I wish to reassert—and I want Sen. Dr. Jennifer Kernahan to listen to me carefully, because I want my English to be fully understood and appreciated. As I close, I wish to reassert the commitment of this Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, serving under the leadership of the hon. Patrick Manning, that this Government is committed to the realization of its Vision 2020 objectives. I wish to reassert that this Government in managing the country will continue to govern effectively. I wish to make the point that as we proceed with our programme of sustainable national development, as well as



building communities for the improved life and quality of life of our people, this Government will pursue its plans for—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Mark:** Are you reading a speech? Mr. President, on a point of order. I believe that the Minister is reading his speech. I believe that you have ruled on this matter. I seek your guidance. [*Laughter*]

**Mr. President:** My rules are very clear. Ministers may read their briefs when they present the Bill, thereafter they must debate. At this point, I am quite satisfied that the Minister is referring to handwritten notes from one of these memo books. [*Mr. President displays notepad*] [*Desk thumping*] [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Mark:** I will seek guidance. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. A. Piggott:** It is a vision that you "fraid" to see. [*Laughter*]

**Hon. Senator:** No vision!

**Sen. The Hon. A. Piggott:** In proceeding with our programme of sustainable national development, as well as building communities, we shall pursue— [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Dr. Kernahan:** Minister, look at me. [*Dr. Kernahan motions to Sen. Piggott*] [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. A. Piggott:**—with our programme to govern effectively. We shall continue to use the pillars to build national development in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] We shall pursue nurturing a caring society.

**Hon. Senators:** Yes, man! [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. A. Piggott:** We shall pursue enabling a competitive business environment; we shall invest in sound infrastructure and the environment. [*Laughter*] We shall continue to develop innovative people. These are all plans of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago now, Vision 2020.

**Sen. Mark:** We shall overcome! [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. A. Piggott:** Mr. President, I beg to move. [*Laughter*]

**Mr. President:** I thought your closing would have started with the word "great". [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Mark:** I feel you practising for your exit.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Resolved:*

That this Senate approve the decision of the President to acquire the lands described in Appendix II and the addendum as well as the variation to the Order Paper as revised for the public purposes specified.

## APPENDIX II

DESCRIPTION OF LAND	PUBLIC PURPOSES FOR WHICH TO BE ACQUIRED
<p>1. The parcel of land comprising 1,909.3 square metres more or less, situate at Moruga Road, in the ward of Ortoire, in the county of Victoria and described in the Schedule and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated 2nd July 1996 and filed in his office, is required for a public purpose: extension of the St. Mary's Recreation Ground.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>A parcel of land comprising 1,909.3 square metres more or less, situate at Moruga Road, in the ward of Ortoire, in the county of Victoria and said to belong now or formerly to Bridgelal.</p> <p>This parcel of land is more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a survey plan filed in book 1140 as folio 190, survey order 64/1994 in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Division, Old General Post Office Building, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.</p>	<p>Extension of St. Mary's Recreation Ground</p>
<p>2. Eleven parcels of land comprising 3,252 square metres, more or less situate at Las Cuevas and La Fillette, in the ward of Blanchisseuse, in the county of St. George, and described in the Schedule and colored raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated 6th August, 2004 and filed in his office, are required for a public purpose: extension of the North Coast Road.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>Eleven parcels of land comprising together approximately 3,252 square metres, more or less, situate at</p>	<p>Extension of the North Coast Road</p>

Las Cuevas and La Fillette, in the ward of Blanchisseuse, in the county of St. George and further described as follows:

- a) 364.6 square metres said to belong now or formerly to Thomas Rudolph and Valerie Meyers;
- b) 196.4 square metres said to belong now or formerly to John David Whiley;
- c) 187.6 square metres said to belong now or formerly to person unknown;
- d) 151.7 square metres said to belong now or formerly to Thomas Hermagild Meyer;
- e) 237.1 square metres said to belong now or formerly to Lionel Roberts;
- f) 261.7 square metres said to belong now or formerly to Hafeeza and Desmond Ali;
- g) 438.4 square metres said to belong now or formerly to Mode Alive Limited;
- h) 447.8 square metres said to belong now or formerly to Phillip Lawrence;
- i) 554.5 square metres said to belong now or formerly to Glen Regist, Edward Miller and Fitzroy Dyer;
- j) 36.5 square metres said to belong now or formerly to Conrad Lee Pack and Joan Lee Pack; and
- k) 103.3 square metres said to belong now or formerly to Conrad Lee Pack and Joan Lee Pack.

These parcels are more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a survey plan signed by the Director of Surveys on the 6th August 2004, filed as JD 289 order 217/2000 in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Division, Old General Post Office Building, Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain.

<p>3. The parcel of land comprising 1.9976 hectares, more or less situate at the southern extremity of the Endeavour Estate Development, at the corner of Tenth Avenue and Michael Street Chaguanas, in the borough of Chaguanas, county of Caroni and described in the Schedule and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated 30th November, 2001 and filed in his office, is required for a public purpose: the construction of the Chaguanas North Government Primary School.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>A parcel of land comprising 1.9976 hectares, more or less situate at the corner of Tenth Avenue and Michael Street, Chaguanas, in the borough of Chaguanas, county of Caroni and said to belong now or formerly to Colonial Homes and Commercial Properties Limited.</p> <p>This parcel of land is more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a survey plan filed in Book 1269 as folio 103 in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Division, Old General Post Office Building, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.</p>	<p>Construction of the Chaguanas North Government Primary School</p>
<p>4. The parcel of land comprising 1,368.1 square metres more or less, situate at Culloden Road, in the parish of St. David, in the ward of Tobago and described in the Schedule and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated June 13, 2005 and filed in his office, is required for a public purpose: improvement works to the Providence/Culloden Road.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>A parcel of land comprising 1,368.1 square metres, more or less, situate at Culloden Road, in the parish of St. David, in the ward of Tobago and said to belong now or formerly to Harold Sebro.</p> <p>This parcel of land is more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a survey plan filed in book 1290 as folio 195 under Survey Order 233/2003, in the vault of</p>	<p>Improvement work to the Providence/Culloden Road.</p>

<p>the Lands and Surveys Division, Old General Post Office Building, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.</p>	
<p>5. The parcel of land comprising 247.7 square metres more or less, situate at La Seiva Road, in the ward of Diego Martin, in the county of St. George and described in the Schedule and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated 18th June, 2004 and filed in his office, is required for a public purpose: the widening of the La Seiva River, Maraval.</p>	<p>Widening of the La Seiva River, Maraval.</p>
<p><b>SCHEDULE</b></p>	
<p>A parcel of land comprising 247.7 square metres more or less, situate at La Seiva Road, in the ward of Diego Martin, in the county of St. George and said to belong now or formerly to Johnson.</p>	
<p>This parcel of land is more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a survey plan filed in book 1243 as folio 172, in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Division, Old General Post Office Building, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.</p>	
<p>6. The parcel of land comprising 0.652 hectares more or less, situate at the eastern side of Kanhai Trace in the wards of Naparima and Moruga, in the county of Victoria and described in the Schedule and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Survey and dated 5th May, 1987 and filed in his office, is required for a public purpose: construction of natural gas pipeline.</p>	<p>Land for natural gas pipeline.</p>
<p><b>SCHEDULE</b></p>	
<p>A parcel of land comprising 0.652 hectares more or less, situate at the eastern side of Kanhai Trace, in the wards of Naparima and Moruga, in the county of Victoria and said to belong now or formerly to Sinanan Ramsubhag.</p>	
<p>The parcel of land is more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a Survey plan filed in the book 1243 as folio 174, Survey Order 47/2004 in the vault of the Lands</p>	

<p>and Surveys Division, Old General Post Office Building Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.</p>	
<p>7. The three parcels of land together comprising 1.6222 hectares more or less, situate along Inner Mafeking Road, Mayaro in the ward of Cocal, in the county of Nariva and described in the Schedule and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated 5th March, 2002 and filed in his office, are required for a public purpose: the establishment of a recreation ground.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>Three parcels of land together comprising 1.6222 hectares more or less, situate along Inner Mafeking Road, Mayaro, in the ward of Cocal, in the county of Nariva and said to belong now or formerly to the heirs of William Taylor and further described as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. a parcel of land comprising 0.519 hectares known as Lot 5B;</li> <li>b. a parcel of land comprising 0.9276 hectares known as Lot 6B; and</li> <li>c. a parcel of land comprising 0.1747 hectares.</li> </ol> <p>These parcels of land are more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a Survey plan filed in book 1243 as folio 51 in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Division, Old General Post Office Building, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.</p>	<p>Establishment of a recreation ground.</p>
<p>8. The parcel of land comprising 2.7375 hectares, more or less, situate at Springlands, San Fabien, in the ward of Pointe-a-Pierre, in the county of Victoria and described in the Schedule and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated 15th August, 2001 and filed in his office, is required for a public purpose: establishment of a recreation ground.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>A parcel of land comprising 2.7375 hectares more or less, situate at Springlands, San Fabien, in the ward of</p>	<p>Establishment of a recreation ground at Springlands, San Fabien.</p>

<p>Pointe-a Pierre, in the county of Victoria and said to belong now or formerly to V.O. West.</p> <p>This parcel of land more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a survey plan filed in book 1243 as folio 47; Survey Order 81/1998 in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Division, Old General Post Office Building, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.</p>	
<p>9. The parcels of land containing together 39948.9 square metres more or less, situate at St. Helena Village, Piarco in the ward of Tacarigua, in the county of St. George and described in the schedule and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated 4th April, 1995 and filed in his office are required for a public purpose: improvements to Caroni River, Phase III.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>Two parcels of land containing together 39948.9 square metres more or less, situate off Kelly Road, St. Helena Village, Piarco, east of the Golden Grove Road, in the ward of Tacarigua, in the county of St. George and comprised as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a parcel of land comprising approximately 339.0 square metres belonging now or formerly to Eddy Bachan; and</li> <li>2. a parcel of land comprising approximately 39609.9 square metres belonging now or formerly to Frederick Sui Butt.</li> </ol> <p>The parcels are more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a survey plan filed as JB 89 in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Department, Red House, Port of Spain.</p>	<p>Widening of the Caroni River.</p>
<p>10. A parcel of land comprising 583.2 square metres more or less, situate at No.19 South Street, Mon Repos, San Fernando in the ward of Naparima in the county of Victoria and described in the Schedule and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated 4th May, 2000 and filed in his office, is required for a public purpose: establishment of a playing field.</p>	<p>Establishment of a playing field.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>A parcel of land comprising 583.2 square metres more or less, situate at No. 19 South Street, Mon Repos, San Fernando, in the ward of Naparima in the county of Victoria and said to belong now or formerly to Rampersad Maharaj and others.</p> <p>This parcel is more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a survey plan filed in book 1243 as folio 35 in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Division, Old General Post Office Building, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.</p>	
<p>11. The three parcels of land, together comprising 1,929.7 square metres more or less, situate along the Caparo River in the borough of Chaguanas, in the county of Caroni and described in the Schedule and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated 20th March 2002 and filed in his office, are required for a public purpose: to facilitate drainage improvement works to the Caparo River.</p>	<p>Drainage Improvement works to the Caparo River</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>Three parcels of land comprising together approximately 1,929.7 square metres more or less, situate along the Caparo River in the borough of Chaguanas, in the county of Caroni and described as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) 58.9 square metres said to belong now or formerly to Samatie;</li> <li>b) 1,824.2 square metres said to belong now or formerly to Subhadra Chankadyai; and</li> <li>c) 46.6 square metres said to belong now to Ramasar and Soogan.</li> </ol> <p>These parcels are more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a survey plan filed in book 1243 as folio 52, in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Division, Old General Post Office Building, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.</p>	



<p>12. The parcel of land comprising 647.2 square metres more or less, situate at Munroe Road, in the ward of Chaguanas, in the county of Caroni and described in the Schedule and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated 16th January, 2004 and filed in his office, is required for a public purpose: the construction of the Uriah Butler Highway.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>The parcel of land comprising 647.2 square metres more or less, situate at Munroe Road, in the Ward of Chaguanas, in the County of Caroni and said to belong now or formerly to Salamat Khan and Twazul Khan.</p> <p>This parcel of land is more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a Survey plan filed in book 1243 as folio 149, in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Division, Old General Post Office Building, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.</p>	<p>The construction of the Uriah Butler Highway.</p>
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**ADDENDUM TO APPENDIX II**

<b>DESCRIPTION OF LAND</b>	<b>PUBLIC PURPOSES FOR WHICH TO BE ACQUIRED</b>
<p>13. A parcel of land comprising 3,362 square metres more or less, situate at St. John's Road, South Oropouche, in the county of St. Patrick, in the ward of Siparia and described in the Schedule and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated 3rd June 2005 and filed in his office, is required for a public purpose: establishment of a playfield for the South Oropouche Government Primary School.</p> <p>The parcel of land comprising 3,362 square metres, more or less, situate at St. John's Road, South Oropouche, in the County of St. Patrick, in the ward of Siparia and said to belong now or formerly to Sumintra Partap.</p>	<p>Establishment of a playing field for the South Oropouche Government Primary School.</p>

<p>This parcel of land is more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a survey plan issued under Survey Order 97/2004 and signed by the Director of Surveys on 3rd June, 2005 and filed in book 1243 as folio 181, in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Division, Old General Post Office Building, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.</p>	
<p>14. The parcel of land comprising 0.5201 hectares, more or less situate at Icacos Erin Beach Road, in the ward of Cedros, in the county of St. Patrick, and described in the Schedule and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated 2nd September, 2004 and filed in his office, is required for a public purpose: extension of the Icacos Government Primary School.</p>	<p>Extension of the Icacos Government Primary School</p>
<p><b>SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>A parcel of land comprising 0.5201 hectares, more or less, situate at Icacos Erin Beach Road, in the ward of Cedros, in the county of St. Patrick, and said to belong now or formerly to Agostini.</p> <p>The parcel of land is more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a survey plan filed as AN 82A in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Division, Old General Post Office Building, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain</p>	

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill):** Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, March 24, 2009, at 1.30 p.m., which would be a continuation of the debate on the Private Members' Motion of election financing.

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I have given my permission for two matters to be raised on the Motion for the Adjournment.

#### **Worsening Economic Crisis (Negative Impact of)**

**Sen. Wade Mark:** Mr. President, the first Motion deals with the worsening economic crisis and its negative impact on employment levels in Trinidad and Tobago.

Over the last two months the banking sector has been experiencing a reduction by as much as 40 per cent as it relates to credit requests.

[MR. VICE-PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

In other words, persons are borrowing less. One of the consequences of this development is that the banks, in particular, are now experiencing some excess liquidity.

Mr. Vice-President, wherever we turn the economic crisis which the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance has now admitted, has crept on us and the economy has begun to slowdown. He has indicated that we are not yet in a recession, which is totally unfortunate. Nobody can predict that at this time; only data can support such a position.

Wherever we turn we see screaming headlines: Massive job losses expected in the manufacturing sector as a result of the worsening economic crisis. Government plans to VSEP 2,175 workers; the economic crisis worsens.

The South West Regional Health Authority has had a cut in its allocation, according to newspaper reports, amounting to \$44 million, possibly impacting over 300 temporary and contract employees, including foreign doctors.

Mr. Vice-President, 50 workers have been laid off at Digicel. The construction industry is in a state of massive decline; lay-offs are the order of the day. Bat and Ball Restaurant, a dining pub, has been closed down, and 50 workers are now on the breadline. The Admiral Nelson Restaurant has been closed down, 40 workers have been sent home; over 300 temporary workers at Trinidad Hilton have been sent home. Tony Roma closed down, scores of workers gone; 500 workers employed by contractors at Arcelor Mittal "gone home"; 200 Clico sales agents have either been retrenched or will be retrenched; Schlumberger has sent home over 60 workers, and many more to go. The Mittal Steel Plant has sent home 120 workers on 40 per cent pay. The crisis is about to hit Petrotrin, NGC, NP, T&TEC, TSTT and the hospitality industry.

The situation is dire for workers. Mr. Vice-President, "ol' talk" is over. The money has run out. The mismanagement and squandermania and open theft of our resources is now open to the public. There can be no question that the Government did not know a crisis was coming. The Government did not care and the Government did not prepare for the crisis that is now gripping our country.

Car sales are down, whether it is at McAl, whether it is at Neal & Massy, all car companies or assembly plants in this country are now experiencing lower

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sales. There is a fear of investing. People are not spending; people are not borrowing; the economy is in a steep decline. It is predicted that by the last quarter of this year, Trinidad and Tobago will be in full-fledged recession. Regardless of what you want to think, that is the reality that could emerge.

**6.00 p.m.**

We are going to experience a long and deep recession when it hits us because of the mismanagement and squandermania of our resources by this Government. Whilst workers are being sent home, a Government mansion was constructed at the cost of \$244 million; drapes were purchased at \$3 million; a door was purchased for \$47,000; a bed sheet was purchased for over \$9,000 and people are dying and losing their jobs in this country and it continues, and the Government is in a state of denial, it is not levelling with the people, it is not telling the truth to the population.

Cost overruns are the order of the day: The Brian Lara Cricket Academy started out in 2006 at \$166 million, today it is running close to \$1 billion; the Chancery Lane Project in San Fernando started at \$100 million, it is now over \$720 million, and so it goes on. A summit that was supposed to be \$630 million, we are estimating after the Heads of Government Conference it will be over \$1 billion. So the poor, the downtrodden, the unprotected in our country are the ones who are open to the callous brutality of this regime. Layoffs, retrenchment and attrition continue unabated and we have to deal with the reality, we have to deal with what is facing our people because there are social consequences to this particular reality with which we are faced.

Crime is mounting, just read the *Sunday Guardian* and see what the youths of the Beetham are saying. A wall of shame is being constructed—they call it a berm—to hide the Beetham from the summit leaders, which is costing the taxpayers over \$5 million, I understand. I want the Minister of Finance to tell us today whether Brian Mac Farlane has been contracted at a price of \$17 million to prepare for the opening and the closing of the Summit. I want information on that today. I want to know if the Government has contracted Brian Mac Farlane at the cost of \$17 million. Tell the country, if it is not \$17 million, tell us how much it has allocated.

Mr. Vice-President, when children are dying in this country and are in need of US \$16,000 to undergo an operation, all this Government can offer is \$10,000. I understand the Prime Minister's bullet-proofed Mercedes Benz PCL 1 which costs US \$1 million came into the country yesterday. Crime continues to mount, broken homes continue to develop, families are being separated, and children are unable to attend school since their parents have been laid off by this Government.

Mr. Vice-President, there is social instability, not because I want it, it is in the air because you have brought it in this country; social instability and possible unrest face us at this time and rampant poverty is on the rise. So I raise this Motion to wake up this Government, to bring them back to reality; it is sleeping; it does not understand what is facing our country and our people and, therefore, we have to deal with the reality and the most serious reality facing our country is massive, large scale unemployment and underemployment.

The Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association has recently predicted that by June of this year it will be retrenching close to 10,000 persons because the competitiveness—

**Sen. Browne:** Competitiveness? First time I hear that one. It is competitiveness.

**Sen. W. Mark:** —is getting more and more keen because what is happening right now is that there is a situation in our country where purchasing power is down, people are only buying what is necessary for them to exist, they are not borrowing from the banks therefore the banks have excess cash on their hands. I am saying in the days of plenty the Government of this country did not save, and the Heritage and Stabilisation Fund which ought to have US \$20 billion in it today, if this Government was saving properly in the interest of the country, it would not have US \$2.1 million or US \$2.8 million in the fund.

So this Motion that I have raised today—and there will be many more coming because I want to alert the nation. I think we have to wake up this nation and the people since the Government is in a state of denial, it is not levelling with the people. I understand that the Minister in the Ministry of Finance is saying there will be no recession; the economy has now slowed down.

Every day he is singing a different tune, they do not know what is taking place in the country but people are hurting. The Tobago House of Assembly under the Chief Secretary lied to the people in Tobago and told them not one worker will be retrenched and today over 1,700 workers have been retrenched in Tobago and the Tobagonians are mad and they are protesting and burning tires because they feel they have been betrayed by the PNM.

Just as the workers of the Board of Inland Revenue (BIR), the Customs Department and the VAT Office feel the same way, it is the same way all the workers of this country would feel, and that is why I call on this Government to tell us what steps it is taking to stimulate the economy. Is it going to put forward a fiscal stimulus package? Is it going to ensure that it amends the law so that

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workers who are retrenched get a soft landing through severance payments? It needs to ensure that the safety and security of the people, especially the working people of the country are protected.

I therefore call on the Government to provide this country with a dose of reality. Talk the truth, stop living in denial and tell the country what it is going to do to save them from this debacle with which we are now faced.

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Mariano Browne):** Thank you, Mr. Vice-President. Mr. Vice-President, listening to Sen. Mark, I am reminded of the *Newsday's* editorial in October which indicated that Sen. Mark is more often wrong than right. [*Desk thumping*] I am also reminded of Sen. Mark's desire to be an actor, which is the only other way I can put it, and my references to Shakespeare and a character in the *Midsummer's Night Dream* are entirely appropriate today.

Sen. Mark has asked me this question and has raised this question on the adjournment, but I can equally answer by referring to my responses to the questions which were posed and which I answered last week. It is almost as though everything that has been said today—barring the elaboration of companies that have indicated that they would have difficulties in maintaining employment levels—in that question have been repeated today by way of a Motion.

The whole world is in a different situation, every major economy has clearly indicated that it is in recession. One year ago we were faced with the argument that Government was spending too much money and its development programme was a waste of money, these were the two allegations. Also, the rate of inflation was entirely as a result of Government's expenditure profile. But in looking at a recent statistical update in particular, the cost of agricultural commodities which is published, and just to compare where we were, the benchmark prices in March of 2008, the price of a barrel of oil was \$102, the current price is \$44.80. The price of natural gas, Henry Hub in March 2008 was US \$9.10; it is now US \$4.00.

The price of wheat was \$1,000 a bushel in comparison to its current price of \$494; the price of corn, \$576 in March in comparison with its current price of \$343; the price of soya beans, \$1,400 in comparison with the current price of \$848. The inflation we experienced was as a result of inflation taking place in other countries, not as a result of Government's expenditure, and certainly not as a result of Government's wastage.

Inflation has moved from 15.7 per cent to 11.4 per cent in the space of three months and we expect it to be in single digits by June 2009. The point I am

making, Mr. Vice-President, is that the world's economic environment has changed substantially. The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) projection of 4 per cent growth for 2009 had been revised downwards on three occasions and the growth rate for 2009 is now estimated to be at half per cent, the lowest rate of growth in the last 25 years. In other words, it is a worldwide phenomenon and has nothing to do with the actions or lack of actions on the part of the Trinidad and Tobago Government.

Far from misleading this population, the Prime Minister has come to Parliament on two occasions and said that the country needs to tighten its belt, but we will do what is required to manage our expenditure in such a fashion that it will limit its impact on the level of employment.

What are the levels of employment and what do our numbers look like in comparison to other countries? The growth forecast on the unemployment numbers would indicate that Trinidad and Tobago's unemployment numbers at today's date are considerably less than unemployment numbers which stand for the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany; all of those numbers are somewhere between 7 per cent and 9 per cent. The unemployment rate for Trinidad and Tobago is approximately 5.5 per cent.

So, far from being in a position where we are in the middle, or, as I have indicated before, the rate of growth has started to slow, we have been impacted and we have been affected. I have said it very clearly. Natural gas prices have fallen and we had indicated before, it is a natural gas economy and the impact of those prices has impacted our income, but let me repeat what I have said: "The global recession has led to a fall in global aggregate demand which has negatively impacted all commodity prices everywhere" and that was the evidence I said which, of course, led to a decline in Government's revenue position. And I have indicated that the Government has said what the decline is and we also said that we will borrow when necessary to maintain our expenditure profile and we have also said—and I repeat what I said to you last week—"that this situation would be further exacerbated should the Government's purchase of goods and services decline further when coupled with falling exports. Notwithstanding the projected decline in revenue, the Government has opted to maintain a critical level of expenditure that would sustain economic growth whilst minimizing the impact on unemployment."

Sen. Dr. Adesh Nanan asked me to explain what I meant and I did that, and furthermore, expenditure on selective capital projects will be reduced and special care will be taken to ensure the preservation of our social expenditures; those on

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the Senior Citizens Grant, disability grants, training programmes, social assistance programmes of all types, and there will be no cuts in salaries and wages. We set that out as a matter of Government's policy.

**6.15 p.m.**

To come here today and to throw the VSEP for the Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority in the mix is an attempt to obfuscate and confuse our actions and to indicate that the Government is laying off people is to mislead. That is not what the Government intends to do. Since 2002 it is a matter of stated Government policy that in an effort to maximize, to create efficiencies in our revenue function, in how we collect our revenues and how we administer our taxation position, we indicated that, like 45 other countries in this world, we would establish a Revenue Authority.

I think that was agreed to in principle by the Opposition. As part and parcel of moving to create a Revenue Authority, we want to start an institution that will not suffer from the ironies, the inefficiencies of the institutions which we are currently replacing. That requires us to effect a new institution with a different culture.

There were a number of options available to us, but all of those options would put us in the difficulty that to transfer individuals or to select individuals moving into the new institution, will expose us to charges of bias, political interference and litigation. As a result of that, in an effort to ensure equity to all existing employees of the various entities that will be merged into the Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority, Cabinet made a decision to put everybody on an equal footing by offering them VSEP and by allowing everyone to reapply for their jobs or comparable positions in the new entity. That was the cleanest way to get the job done. [*Interruption*]

You are standing here today to complain about the Regional Health Authorities, how inefficient they are; how this has happened and that has happened. One of the reasons we still have difficulties in the culture of the health institutions and we have had to bring different types of Bills and different types of regulations here to try to spruce up and to make those organizations more efficient and to bring them into the modern world, is because we did not make the clear distinction of bringing on people with a new attitude in a new institution to make that new institution work in a different way, and that is what this is about. This is not about putting 2,000 people on the breadline; this is not that.

**Sen. Dr. Charles:** "v" is not for "voluntary"?



**Sen. The Hon. M. Browne:** “V” is voluntary. But at the same token, Sir, I need to make it abundantly clear to you that the Civil Service Regulations contain privileges which belong to members of staff which will not be taken away and cannot be taken away. Let us get that very clear. We are not firing people. The Civil Service Regulations do not allow for that. Understand that. That is an announcement on a matter of policy. So there is still a lot of room in terms of the required negotiations from where we are to go.

The Government has made it clear; the Government has said where we stand in relation to an economic situation that affects the world. It does not affect Trinidad and Tobago only. Everybody has difficulties everywhere in the world. We are no different.

**Sen. Mark:** The world “ain’t tief as much as allyuh”—

**Mr. Vice-President:** Excuse—

**Sen. Mark:** Sorry, sorry, Sir.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Would you withdraw that statement?

**Sen. Mark:** I withdraw “tief”. Yuh going good—

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. Mark, you are not going too good right now.

**Sen. Mark:** I am very upset, Sir, with this vicious Government—callous!

**Sen. The Hon. M. Browne:** I was at the airport today when we were looking at the refurbishment of the runway, I know that the construction standard or the asphalt on the top of the concrete is meant to be 16 inches and what I saw today when a cut was layered, it was certainly less than eight. So be very careful what you say on the other side. Photographic evidence!

The World Economic Outlook has predicted that rich countries will have a combined fiscal deficit that will amount to more than 7 per cent of GDP. What did the IMF ask for in October? They asked for 2 per cent. What are the projections? Seven per cent for 2009. By the end of 2009 the developed world’s gross government debt as a share of GDP may be 15 to 20 percentage points higher than it was two years ago. Emerging economies will move from budget surplus to a potential deficit. That is not the position for Trinidad and Tobago. And overall, global public sector debt is rising at its fastest pace since the Second World War.

So it is not a Trinidad and Tobago phenomenon. What can Trinidad and Tobago do? The same way that there are difficulties around the world, we must face our issues and we must make the decisions which we have to. Nobody is

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going to save us. We are an independent country. We must make the necessary economic investments in our country as we speak and Government must spend its money in such a fashion that will help move the country forward.

That is the commitment that we have given and that is the commitment that we have demonstrated. It is a little known fact that I often repeat here, while we were taking a lot of criticism in terms of how we manage our expenditure, more than 40 per cent of Government's budget was directed to social expenditure, to helping the very same people that you are saying that we are moving to hurt. [Desk thumping]

We have put into position a regime to help build this country and we will do what is required to help move this country forward and we call upon the private sector to do so as well. Ladies and gentlemen, this country is led by a Government that cares and a Government that will do what is required.

Thank you very much. [Desk thumping]

### **Downturn in the Energy Sector**

**Sen. Wade Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, I deal with the energy sector now. The energy sector is the lifeblood of this nation. This sector is in dire straits as we speak and needs to be rescued. Information has already reached me that the Government of Qatar is now selling its LNG to the United States at a much cheaper price than what we are exporting in Point Fortin. This is going to be a major challenge.

Information has reached me that, EOG Resources, BHP Billiton and Repsol have reduced significantly their drilling activity. These three companies are not drilling development wells at the rate and pace that they did one year ago. We understand that there is little drilling being done in the area of development wells. Whether the Government intends to offer further incentives to these companies to pursue development wells works, we do not know. We understand that BPTT has also significantly reduced its drilling operations. Rigs are now waiting to be placed on the Savonetta platform to drill some six development gas wells, but we understand that the company might be inclined to only drill two out of the six wells.

We understand Petrotrin is also not doing very well as it relates to drilling. As a result, thousands of jobs could be at stake and at risk. Thousands of workers' jobs are now threatened. We understand close to 2,000 workers are going to be affected as a result of the downturn in drilling activities. In fact, it could be much more than 2,000; it could be more like 4,000 workers.

Therefore, it is my duty and responsibility to bring to the attention of this honourable Parliament, information that has reached me concerning British Gas (BG) and BPTT. My information is that they have both put on hold the construction of two offshore platforms which were supposed to produce gas. As a result, some 500 to 1,000 workers who were involved in fabrication works at Labidco now face danger. Over 2,000 offshore workers, as I said, could be affected as a result of this reduction in drilling activity in the energy sector.

Drilling energizes the economy of Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore, any reduction in drilling activity will have a devastating impact on the economy and economic activity throughout this country. We understand that all contractors associated with BPTT and who have worked for it in terms of offshore drilling and work-over operations, that because of the low price of oil at some US \$40 to \$45 a barrel, as well as low prices for gas, is causing great challenges in that aspect of the industry. We are told that companies are now saying to contractors that if the price of a barrel of oil does not rise to US \$70, many of their operations would be put on hold in the coming months. In fact, some of their wells will be shut down.

Therefore, it is my responsibility and duty to bring to the attention of this Parliament the severe threat posed by the global economic crisis to the energy sector in this country. Whether the Government intends to offer better incentives to encourage activity in the energy sector is a policy decision the Government would have to make. What I can tell you is that there has been a remarkable slowdown in activity in the energy industry in Trinidad and Tobago. And whereas at the end of September, Trinidad and Tobago got a fat cheque from the oil sector, by the end of December they got a very thin cheque, and we believe, based on activities now, by the end of March they will also get a thin cheque.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to deal with the reality, to deal with the issues and if you have to deal, come straight, come clean and let us revive what can only be described as a dying energy sector in Trinidad and Tobago. We are very worried as to what can take place in Petrotrin. We know that Petrotrin has close to 6,000 workers and we know, given what is taking place at Petrotrin today, you may have to have a lot of dislocation in the coming period.

I raise this matter of the energy sector and the question of the impact of the global crisis on the energy sector and how that is hurting the industry, how companies are cutting back on their operations and how eventually it would impact negatively on the economy of Trinidad and Tobago, not to mention, as I said, employment levels.

**6.30 p.m.**

Again, it is my duty. I serve notice to the Government that we intend to raise motion after motion after motion, week after week after week, until we get it right. We are prepared. I have always indicated that I have a duty and responsibility to ensure that when information reaches me on certain developments, to bring it to the attention of the Senate to get answers on behalf of the people. The people are looking forward for answers and they want answers that could give them hope. I am a lawmaker and therefore, I would be here bringing the information.

At times, I have to indicate that I am informed. I may not have all the facts as I would like to have them. Do you know what? It is my duty to put them on the table and if they are wrong I expect the Government to correct me. Do you know why? Because the people are worried. They are depending on the Government to speak the truth and to give them some reassurance that it is on top of the situation in the energy sector.

My final point has to do with the incentives that the Government intends to pursue in seeking to revitalize that critical energy industry in the economy of Trinidad and Tobago. I would like the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries to share with us the Government's policy measures to revive the dying energy industry and sector in Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you.

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill):** Mr. Vice-President, it is not normal for me to say what I am about to say, but I will say it. I think for the very first time Sen. Mark got most of it right. I thank him for putting it in the way in which he has put it so I do not have to deal with matters that are not correct.

The fact is, as he has indicated, that the global economic situation has created for us a situation where in the energy sector, the prices that we currently are receiving for oil and gas are not what they were a year ago. The fact is that we have seen prices, certainly for oil, move from a high of \$120 to \$130 down to US \$30. Depending on which consultant/agency you speak to, there are projections where some think that they have bottomed out and some think that they will go longer. Last week, in discussing with a global investment banker, he said to me that they are able to place in the Asian market at US \$60 to \$70 per barrel. We have seen a situation where the price having come down, we believe that it is just about stabilizing. We expect that it will move positively in a direction that would allow us to respond in a way that creates economic activity for the sector.

Let me make a couple comments. The oil business is not an annual business. When we sit with the oil companies and look at planning, we look at 10-, 15-, 20-, 30-year planning because of the nature of the business. Therefore, one has to look at trends to understand whether this is a temporary or permanent situation. It is our view that there is a balancing mechanism within the system called OPEC. They get together to look at production and price issues and move to protect the industry, by determining how much and what type of production. They are planning to meet in two or three weeks' time and they would be looking at production issues as well. That would create a situation in which there will be less supply on the market.

Let me put something on the record. We are aware of the issues that you have raised. There are a number of things that we look at almost on a weekly/monthly basis. For example, we look at crude oil production; exploration and development activity; crude oil prices and refinery throughput. That impacts as it relates to refining petroleum products and the margins on that cost. We look at natural gas production on sales and therefore, we are able to deal with more production or less sales marketing. We also look at natural gas prices and gas usage. We look at LNG production, petrochemical production and prices on market performance. We also look at the projects in the sector as the Pointe-a-Pierre refinery, NGC, NP, the whole gas station issue, other energy sector projects, industrial states and the state enterprises results as Petrotrin, NEC, NGC and NPMC. We take action as is required.

Let me deal with an issue that you talked about specifically. It has to do with Qatar, the United States of America, cheap prices and Henry Hub. We have known for a very long time about Qatar's intervention in the marketplace. Qatar has put into the marketplace tankers that allow them to have a similar transportation advantage based on the location of Trinidad and Tobago. For a long time, we have said that our preferred market is the US market. The benchmark in the US market is Henry Hub, but it is not the only price in the world for the product.

The way that the Henry Hub price is set out is by taking a mix of a number of locations, price samplers and using them on average. For example, if we sell the product on the Canadian border for \$628; Nova Scotia, \$654; Iraqi Mountains, \$273; Chicago, \$620; Colombia, \$674; Waha, \$343; El Paso, \$284 and take all those and put them together, you would get a Henry Hub of about \$647. The Henry Hub is related to activity taking place within that jurisdiction and pricing it in a particular way.

We have usually done our budget projections on the basis of a Henry Hub. It is quite reasonable that as we track Henry Hub prices and see the prices going down, you would have some difficulty with it. We have in our contractual

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arrangements the ability to divert cargoes. On the basis of looking for the best prices we have been able to divert cargoes now. There are four different gas pricing formulas in the global market. There is the United States of America in which the reference price is Henry Hub; the United Kingdom with something called the national balancing point; in Europe, the Zebrege, it is referenced by a price in Belgium and in Asia, the Japanese crude cocktail. The Zebrege and the Japanese crude cocktail are linked to fuel oil and gas oil. There are different price parameters and price associations. In some instances with a lower price you can get a differential on the gas price.

I want to share some information about exports by destination. In 2006, our exports to the US market was 89 per cent. It meant that 90 per cent of our revenues would have been affected by Henry Hub. In 2008/2009, because the US market was depressed and we were not getting the type of prices based on the same things that we have considered, we shipped 39 per cent of our exported gas to the US; 28 per cent went to Spain; 4 per cent to Puerto Rico; 3 per cent to the Dominican Republic; 11 per cent to Mexico; 1 per cent to Argentina; 5 per cent to Japan; 4 per cent to Korea; 1 per cent to Taiwan and 2 per cent to India.

As it relates to LNG cargo, look at it in the context of prices, the highest price sold in the world market last year was a Trinidad cargo that fetched a price in excess of US \$2,347 when it was sold in Korea. The point that I am making in the management of the revenue streams, notwithstanding the fact that we had the best prices in one market, is that because the commodity is now being traded globally and there is a requirement for it, our marketers on the basis of the contracts we have with them are able to put products into locations in the world for which we get a significantly higher price. The effect of that is we are able to maintain some revenue that is different from what you will calculate if you use the information that has been made available in the budget process.

In those circumstances, the reduction in revenue, although severe is not on a one-on-one basis on the information available. In fact, we are able to do some things that are consistent with what we have said on the developmental programmes. When the Prime Minister says that Trinidad and Tobago is in a better position than most other jurisdictions, in the context of how we are able to do our business, these matters support the statement. You are correct. At this point in time no investor is prepared to invest. We have had four production sharing contracts which we signed earlier this year where the promoters have come to us and said that they are no longer prepared to move forward. There are two reasons for that. One is that they cannot make it work economically and two, our fiscal regime needs to be reviewed.

The review exercise was taking place. A report was presented, but it was for a \$120 price of oil environment. We had taken the view at the time in looking at the exercise that companies would be making some degree of margin at a \$70 price. Therefore, we were in the process of dealing with a fiscal regime to support that. The world collapsed and we have to go back and look at a regime to respond to the current situation.

**6.45 p.m.**

There are two other things that will happen, you are going to see a shutdown of some of the activities in the energy sector. The reason for that is not because there is not enough activity, but because it is a strategy to reduce the cost of the operation.

Today, for example, some contractors are not reducing their prices for oil rigs. You have a situation of US \$147 or US \$120 per barrel with rigs on demand going into Brazil, which was costing you US \$95,000. Today, with the demand/supply situation as it is, nobody is prepared to pay that, but nobody is prepared to reduce the prices without coming out of the contract. What I expect to see is a shutdown and a renegotiation at a lower cost.

I think there is going to be a period in which, what would appear to be no activity would be so, but shortly thereafter, there would be a re-entry into the marketplace at lower costs. That will cause the business to be a lot more sustainable. The strategy now is for the sector to contain cost, because right now the cost of bringing one additional barrel of oil into production is astronomically more than the price of reducing \$1 of expenditure. Therefore, what we are doing is working to see how to do that particular mix, so that the Government's revenue is protected on the basis of less revenue, less activity and less cost. This also gives us some flexibility.

I can go on, but I am sure he is going to bring the other Motion next week and I will respond to it in due course. I want to thank him for the opportunity.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Senate adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 6.47 p.m.*