

Leave of Absence

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

SENATE

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The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, I have given leave of absence to Sen. Dr. Adesh Nanan who is ill.

SESSIONAL SELECT COMMITTEES

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, with respect to the Sessional Select Committees of the Senate for the Second Session 2009 of the Ninth Parliament, I wish to advise that Sen. The Hon. John Jeremie SC has been appointed to the Standing Orders Committee in lieu of former Sen. Bridgid Annisette-George, and Sen. Mohammed Faisal Rahman has been appointed to the Privileges Committee in place of former Sen. Dr. Carson Charles.

SENATOR'S 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: MR. RAPHAEL HERBERT CUMBERBATCH

WHEREAS Senator Dr. Adesh Nanan is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of illness:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the 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,

Senator's Appointment
[MR. PRESIDENT]

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

RAPHAEL HERBERT CUMBERBATCH, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with immediate effect and continuing during the period of illness of the said 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 22nd day of June, 2009."

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Senator Raphael Herbert Cumberbatch took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.

PAPERS LAID

1. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on an audit of the assets vested in the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago as required by section 20(2) of the Telecommunications Act. [*The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Mariano Browne)*]
2. Audited financial statements of Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation Limited for the financial year ended December 31, 2008. [*Sen. The Hon. M. Browne*]
3. Audited financial statements of Seafood Industry Development Company Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2008. [*Sen. The Hon. Mariano Browne*]
4. The Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago Annual Report 2008. [*Sen. The Hon. Mariano Browne*]
5. Report of the Task Force on the Trinidad and Tobago – Eastern Caribbean States Integration Initiative. (Volumes 1 and 2) [*The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill)*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

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

5. **Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Minister of Sports 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, question No. 5 is, once again, not ready. It went to the Parliamentary Questions Committee and was sent back for an amendment; therefore, I estimate it should be available on the next occasion.

Sen. Mark: Mr. President, I really want to protest, through you, to the hon. Leader of Government Business, at the consistent and blatant disrespect and contempt for this Parliament. This is going into the fourth month, in addition to the 21 days qualifying period which would take us into almost five months. I want to tell you that we intend to take unprecedented action, consistent with Standing Order 18(1) to get this Government to be responsible to the Parliament. As you know, section 75(1) of the Constitution says that the Cabinet is collectively responsible to this Parliament. We feel, Sir, that we are being treated with contempt and contumely by this Government, and we want to record our protest in this regard.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Mr. President, I fail to understand Sen. Mark's dilemma. We are acting in accordance with the Standing Order. It basically says that if at the time a question is being asked, for whatever reason it is not prepared, then a Minister cannot come here and mislead the Parliament. What we are seeking to do is to ensure, on the same basis that he has spoken, that of collective responsibility, when the answer comes to the Parliament, we are satisfied, as a Parliament, that the answer is correct.

In those circumstances, if the committee charged with the responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of the data is not satisfied, then it will not be approved to be released. That is the circumstances in which we find ourselves, as it relates to this question and many others that I will report on during the course of this afternoon's deliberations.

Question, by leave, deferred.

**Trinidad and Tobago Amateur Boxing Association
(Monetary Assistance)**

31. Sen. Lyndira Oudit asked the hon. Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs:

Could the Minister indicate to the Senate the amount of monetary assistance which was provided individually to female boxers Wendy Alleyne, Ria

Ramnarine and the late Jizelle Salandy, either directly or indirectly, through the Trinidad and Tobago Amateur Boxing Association for the period 2003—2008?

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Mr. President, question No. 31 follows with the same argument for question No. 5. It was considered by the Parliamentary Questions Committee and it was deferred pending an amendment. My information is that this should be ready on the next occasion, as was my information on the last occasion. We will continue to make our best efforts to get it here. [*Interruption*]

Sen. Prof. Deosaran: Could I just make a point, Sir? I wanted to ask the Minister a question arising from his explanation. Would you allow me?

Mr. President: I think not; this is question time. It is not a debate.

Question, by leave, deferred.

HIV Virus (Details of)

80. Sen. Wade Mark asked the hon. Minister of Health:

Could the Minister indicate to this Senate:-

- (a) The estimated number of citizens in this country who may be infected with the HIV virus; and
- (b) What steps are being taken to curb the spread of the AIDS epidemic in Trinidad and Tobago?

The Minister of Health (Sen. The Hon. Jerry Narace): Mr. President, according to the Ministry of Health's Surveillance Unit, as of December 2008, there are approximately 16,459 persons infected with the HIV virus in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, over the last seven years, has committed significant resources towards the development of HIV/AIDS programmes to manage and control the HIV epidemic.

In the first instance, from April 2002, the Government commenced free access to anti-retroviral therapy to treat all persons living with AIDS in order to improve their productivity and quality of life. As of March 31, 2009, 3,270 persons benefited from this initiative. The Ministry has also registered new pharmaceutical products for HIV/AIDS and provided adequate training for staff in

inventory management in order to develop appropriate storage techniques and to improve the distribution and forecasting of HIV related commodities, including anti-retroviral drugs, rapid test kits and CD4 reagents at the Central Medical Stores facility, other pharmacies and laboratories.

In 2004, the Government initiated preparation of a multisectoral National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS (NSP), which has been used to guide the national and comprehensive response to curb the spread of the HIV virus. One of the key components of this response was the creation of the National AIDS Coordinating Committee (NACC), under the aegis of the Office of the Prime Minister, which includes representatives from key stakeholder groups and organizations, such as youth groups, private sector business associations, regional and international agencies and several government ministries.

The National AIDS Coordinating Committee plays a critical role in coordinating the national response to HIV/AIDS by outlining and implementing various strategies to increase awareness and the need for prevention of HIV; to promote the importance of testing and treatment; to allow for greater support advocacy, and the maintenance of human rights, as well as facilitating the development of proper monitoring and evaluation of its various programmes.

Mr. President, the committee employed several HIV coordinators into the mainstream work of key ministries, in order to ensure an effective national response in curbing the spread of the HIV virus.

In addition to educating ministry personnel on the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS, the coordinators have been instrumental in the preparation of sector policies dealing with the issues of HIV and AIDS as well as discrimination. Currently, coordinators are employed in the following ministries: Education; Social Development; National Security; Sport and Youth Affairs; Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development; Health; Community Development; Culture and Gender Affairs and Tourism.

In addition, the implementation of the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission Programme has been very successful in reducing the risk of infants developing HIV. This programme gives an opportunity to all pregnant women to test for the HIV virus in all public prenatal clinics. There has been compliance in HIV testing at a rate of 95 per cent, where approximately 15,625 mothers and 98 infants were tested for the virus in 2008.

1.45 p.m.

Using the dried blood spot method, infants who are suspected of being exposed to the HIV virus are diagnosed from as early as six weeks after birth. Moreover, where there are confirmed HIV cases, infants are immediately treated with anti-retroviral medication and referrals made to HIV and AIDS support groups.

Mr. President, this Government recognizes the high HIV transmission rate among the younger population especially between the ages of 15 to 29 and has initiated various educational campaigns throughout the country focused on the slogans "What's your position" and "Know your status". More importantly, these various promotional and educational campaigns were expanded as a multi-sectoral response to include many non-governmental community-based and faith-based organizations as well as trade unions and other private sector bodies to ensure that the maximum number of citizens is aware of the challenge of the HIV virus.

The main objective of these initiatives is to promote abstinence, fidelity and to encourage our young people and other potential groups at risk in society to be proactive in reducing the overall risk of spreading the HIV virus by changing their behaviour.

Hon. Senators, to encourage and allow for these changes, the Regional Health Authorities in collaboration with CAREC and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) have increased their capacity to deliver same-day visit rapid test results. There are currently 14 HIV testing sites across the country which provide same-day rapid testing service and 11,948 persons benefited from this initiative in 2008.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Health has established an HIV testing policy to provide a framework for effective action to facilitate greater access to safe and ethical testing services for the population in order to decrease the frequency and severity of illness and curbing transmission.

This, together with the advent of improved diagnosis, methods of treatment and availability of anti-retroviral medicines at affordable prices have resulted in a significant improvement in the life expectancy of persons living with HIV and AIDS. Data available from the ministry's surveillance unit has shown that the mortality from HIV decreased from 264 in 2001 to 62 in 2008, a decrease of 77 per cent.

In order to improve sexual and reproductive health and to prevent the transmission of HIV, the Ministry of Health developed and implemented a condom management policy to improve the availability and accessibility of condoms in the public sector clinics.

In addition, the Ministry of Health in partnership with the Faculty of Medical Sciences at the University of the West Indies opened the Trinidad and Tobago HIV and AIDS Training Centre in June 2007 to increase the number of qualified and trained health professionals in the clinical management of persons living with HIV and AIDS.

The major outcome of this initiative is to design effective strategies to curb the spread of the AIDS epidemic by increasing the rate of early detection as well as to treat with persons currently living with the HIV virus.

Moreover, the Ministry of Health, in order to strengthen the surveillance system has implemented a pilot HIV/AIDS/STI information management system in seven sites throughout the country with the expectation of generating accurate and timely data on the detection and the effectiveness of treating the HIV and AIDS epidemic.

Mr. President, the Government is also developing preventive strategies to curb the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Tobago. The Tobago HIV/AIDS Coordinating Committee recently trained 21 persons to deal with the psychosocial advocacy and other HIV/AIDS issues as well as to develop various educational and communication strategies to curb the spread of the HIV virus.

Furthermore, these preventative programmes were supported by various workshops in HIV testing and counselling in order to increase the number of trained health care providers so as to improve the detection rate and reduce the risk of spreading the virus. To date, a total of 26 community groups and organizations were visited and approximately five out of the 800 participants were referred for voluntary counselling and testing.

Over the last seven years, the Government has implemented a multi-sectoral response and increased its institutional capacity to allow for the prevention, treatment, care and support to manage and control the spread of the HIV virus. The main objective of this strategy is to create and sustain a productive and healthy population and to improve the well-being of all citizens.

The Government is confident that the strategies employed over the last seven years are bearing fruit. A diagnosis of HIV/AIDS is no longer an automatic death sentence and we give the population the assurance that this Government will continue to do all that is necessary to ensure the well-being of all persons so affected.

Thank you.

Sen. Mark: Given the fact that the Government's policy appears to be bearing fruit as the Minister has indicated, can he tell us, has there been a noticeable

decline in the number of persons infected with the HIV? Could he provide this honourable Senate with some numbers so that we would be able to understand that all the steps and initiatives taken are really bearing fruit?

Sen. The Hon. J. Narace: Mr. President, two figures that jump at me—I do not have all the data here—but I know in 2003 there would have been 17,000. I know that last year, 2008, it was around 14,000. These figures jump at me, but I do not have a comprehensive set of figures as we speak.

Sen. Mark: Mr. President, could the hon. Minister indicate that given the situation particularly affecting the 15 to 29 age group as he has identified, whether it is the intention of the Government to make AIDS a notifiable disease in the not too distant future?

Sen. The Hon. J. Narace: That, Mr. President, is a separate question and if he poses it, I will be more than happy to answer it.

Retrenchment of VSEP Workers

83. Sen. Wade Mark asked the hon. Minister of Public Administration:

Could the Minister state whether there is any intention on the part of the Government to retrench through VSEP workers currently employed in the Public Service of Trinidad and Tobago?

The Minister of Public Administration (Hon. Kennedy Swaratsingh): Mr. President, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has no intention to retrench any officer or employee currently employed in the public service of Trinidad and Tobago.

A number of transformation exercises involving the reorganization of certain Ministries, entities or functions carried out by respective ministries are currently being undertaken in the public service. In order to facilitate such reorganization, it has been decided that offers of voluntary separation should be made to relevant officers/employees in the affected ministries or entities. Participation by officers and employees in VSEPs, is, as the name implies, strictly voluntary with officers/employees having the option to accept the offer made to them.

Those employees who decide to accept the VSEP are assured of receiving enhanced separation benefits.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Sen. Mark: Could the hon. Minister indicate whether workers who do not accept the Voluntary Separation of Employment Package would be automatically reabsorbed into those agencies or ministries that are undergoing transformation?

Hon. K. Swaratsingh: Mr. President, as I indicated, structures like VSEP come from specific ministries which have a programme of reorganization and it depends very significantly on the proposal that comes from the respective ministries which I cannot answer in a generic sense.

Sen. Mark: Given the fact that there are several efforts of transformation as you have indicated involving many ministries and other agencies, is it the intention of the Government to introduce legislation to deal with the voluntary separation of employment by workers in the public service who may wish to go that route?

Hon. K. Swaratsingh: Mr. President, I cannot answer that question at this time but if the hon. Senator poses it, I will gladly consider it.

Manufacturing Sector (Impact on)

84. Sen. Wade Mark asked the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry:

With respect to the present global and regional economic crisis, could the Minister inform the Senate of the likely short and medium term impact on the manufacturing sector as it relates to:

- (i) the size of the sector; and
- (ii) the employment level?

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Mariano Browne): Mr. President, I had initially asked for a deferment on this question, but on reflection I have difficulty in answering it. It calls for us to give a speculative intent as to the future and I am not in a position to answer it with regard to the degree of specificity which is required in the question.

Sen. Mark: I do not understand the language of his response, Mr. President. This is not speculative, I am asking the hon. Minister—you have approved this question, and the hon. Minister is in charge of trade and industry, and he must have some focus on the future. So to say that it is speculative and he cannot answer, I object to that approach, Sir.

Mr. President: Well, you may object to it, and I did approve the question. I think the Minister has been quite clear. Clearly, he does not have the information, it is not available to him and, therefore, the answer from his perspective would be conjecture and speculative and, therefore, he is unable to answer. That is what he has said, so let us move on.

**National Gender Policy
(Implementation of)**

89. Sen. Gail Merhair asked the hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs:

With respect to the National Gender Policy, could the Minister inform this Senate of the time line for implementation?

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Thank you, Mr. President. I am in a position to answer this on behalf of the Minister who is unavoidably unable to be here with us this afternoon.

In September 2002, Cabinet agreed to the development of a policy on gender development. The policy was expected to be a framework for gender mainstreaming in all activities of Government and civil society thereby promoting the full and equal participation of men and women, boys and girls, in the development process.

The Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs, the national focal point for gender and development was the implementing agency. The University of the West Indies Centre for Gender and Development Studies was hired as a project consultant and submitted a report entitled "A Draft National Gender Policy and Action Plan for Trinidad and Tobago" to the Ministry in 2004.

That document has since been revised and refined and a Draft National Policy on Gender and Development of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago will be resubmitted to the Cabinet for its consideration with a view to having it laid in the honourable Parliament as a Green Paper at the earliest opportunity.

**Water Pollution Rules
(Details of)**

102. Sen. Wade Mark on behalf of Sen. Dr. Adesh Nanan asked the hon. Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment:

- A. Would the Minister indicate to the Senate how many industries have complied with the Water Pollution Rules?
- B. Would the Minister also identify the industries that have complied by name?

The Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Emily Dick-Forde): Thank you, Mr. President. The implementation of the Water Pollution Rules 2001 as amended by the Water Pollution (Amdt.) Rules, 2006 has been underway since February 2007. The objective of the rule is to have

clean water nationwide, that is in our oceans, estuaries, rivers, streams and groundwater. Implementation of the Water Pollution Rules is a two-phased approach, the first being source registration and the second being permitting.

The primary purpose of source registration is the compilation and maintenance by the Environmental Management Authority of an intelligent inventory or record of all water pollutant sources in Trinidad and Tobago. A person engaged or who intends to engage in any activity which releases water pollutants in excess of the quantities, concentration or conditions identified in the First Schedule Register of Water Pollutants is required to submit an application for source registration.

2.00 p.m.

Where any person releases a water pollutant into a receiving environment outside the permissible level as defined in the Second Schedule to the Water Pollution (Amdt.) Rules, the EMA notifies the applicant of a need to apply for a water pollution permit. A permit provides for the following:

- Water pollutants authorized to be released;
- The quantity, conditions and concentrations the permittee is allowed to release or continue to release; and
- The exact location where the sampling of the release shall be performed.

The information used to determine who is issued a notice to apply for a water pollution permit is derived from the intelligent inventory established in the first phase of implementation of the Water Pollution (Amdt.) Rules. The Environmental Management Authority is in the process of ensuring that all corporations and individuals in Trinidad and Tobago are compliant with the rules and, therefore, there is no answer to part (b) at this time as people are now being registered so no one can be said to be in compliance.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**Chaguaramas Golf Course
(Time Frame for Expansion)**

104. Sen. Wade Mark on behalf of Sen. Dr. Adesh Nanan asked the hon. Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment:

Would the Minister advise the Senate of the time frame for the expansion of the Chaguaramas Golf Course from nine (9) holes to a thirty-two (32) hole facility?

The Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Emily Dick-Forde): Mr. President, we do not have the answer to this question because we did do the research, it went to the subcommittee of Cabinet and more research was required to answer this question. So we require about two weeks again. Thank you.

Question, by leave, deferred.

**Macqueripe Beach Upgrade
(Status of)**

105. Sen. Wade Mark on behalf of Sen. Dr. Adesh Nanan asked the hon. Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment:

- A. Would the Minister indicate to the Senate any cost overruns on the Macqueripe beach upgrade?
- B. Would the Minister also state if there was planning approval for the said beach upgrade?

The Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Emily Dick-Forde): Similarly for question No. 105, Mr. President. A response was received by the Ministry and we sent it back to the agency to get more details in order to answer the question comprehensively. Thank you.

Question, by leave, deferred.

**Institute of Marine Affairs Building at Chaguaramas
(Status of)**

106. Sen. Wade Mark on behalf of Sen. Dr. Adesh Nanan asked the hon. Minister of Science Technology and Tertiary Education:

- A. Would the Minister indicate to the Senate what is the scheduled completion date for the Institute of Marine Affairs building at Chaguaramas?
- B. Would the Minister also state if there have been any cost overruns on this project and if so, could the Minister state the amount?

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Mr. President, question No. 106 has not been received as yet and, therefore, another three weeks is required for this.

Question, by leave, deferred.

**Tobago House of Assembly
(Subsidy for Airlift)**

110. Sen. Wade Mark on behalf of Sen. Dr. Adesh Nanan asked the hon. Minister of Tourism:

Would the Minister inform the Senate what was the value of the subsidy provided by the Tobago House of Assembly for airlift for the financial years 2007 and 2008 respectively?

The Minister of Tourism (Hon. Joseph Ross): Mr. President, no subsidy was provided by the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) for airlift for the financial year 2007. In 2008, the Tobago House of Assembly provided airlift subsidies to Excel Airways in the sum of £200,000 or TT \$2,430,675 and to Delta Airlines in the sum of US \$796,697 or TT \$5,019,191.

This subsidy was deemed necessary in order to preserve the jobs of over 15,000 persons engaged in the tourism industry in Tobago. This represents approximately 57 per cent of the island's total workforce.

It should be noted that the 2008 subsidy totalled \$7,449,866, representing an average passenger subsidy of US \$25.46. This amount is significantly lower than the subsidy provided by some other Caribbean destinations which were estimated at more than US \$200 per passenger.

Further, it should be noted that the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC), a study of 2005 indicated that the average international visitor spent approximately TT \$10,000 in accommodation, meals, rental of vehicle, tours, local purchases, over an average stay of seven nights. It is estimated that the 46,446 visiting passengers during that period would have spent TT \$464,460,000 on the island.

The bottom line, therefore, is that the THA would have spent TT \$7,449,866 to generate TT \$464,460,000 in direct revenues to the island and to preserve 15,000 persons engaged in the tourism sector.

I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**Shipping Bill
(Reintroduction in Parliament)**

111. Sen. Wade Mark on behalf of Sen. Dr. Adesh Nanan asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

A. Would the Minister state whether it is the intention of Government to reintroduce the Shipping Bill in Parliament?

- B. If the answer to (A) is in the affirmative, could the Minister advise the Senate of the time frame for doing so?

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Mr. President, question 111, the answer has not yet been received. I expect, therefore, another three weeks is required.

Question, by leave, deferred.

**Doppler Radar
(Range of)**

112. Sen. Wade Mark on behalf of Sen. Dr. Adesh Nanan asked the hon. Minister of Public Utilities:

- A. Could the Minister inform the Senate what is the range of the Doppler Radar located in the Central Range?
- B. Would the Minister also advise if the necessary linkage has been established with other radar networks along the island chain?

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid): Mr. President, the Caribbean Meteorological Organization which is the executing agency for the Doppler Radar project has advised that the range of the radar located in Trinidad is 400 kilometres.

With respect to the radar projects in other Caribbean countries, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is unable to give an update on these projects at this time since these projects are the responsibility of the Caribbean Meteorological Organization and Cariforum. [*Desk thumping*]

**Desalination Plant
(Construction of in Moruga)**

113. Sen. Wade Mark on behalf of Sen. Dr. Adesh Nanan asked the hon. Minister of Public Utilities:

- A. Would the Minister advise the Senate if a desalination plant has been constructed in Moruga?
- B. If the answer to (A) is in the affirmative, could the Minister indicate the capacity and areas served?

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid): Mr. President, in accordance with approval conveyed by the board of commissioners of WASA at its 646th meeting on January 14, 2008, a proposal was accepted by the

Korean firm, Hankuk Jung Su Industries Company Limited, (HAJI) to construct a small mobile desalination plant to provide water to the Authority on a trial basis, with the option available to WASA to purchase the plant at the end of the trial period.

In April 2008, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the Authority and HAJI and arrangements were immediately put in place to have the facility constructed. The plant was commissioned on September 09, 2008. It has a capacity of 100,000 gallons of water per day and the communities of La Lune and Marac now receive water three to four days per week.

WASA has advised that at the present time, negotiations are ongoing between the Authority and HAJI for the possible purchase of the plant.

Thank you, Mr. President. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Mark: I do not know if the hon. Minister would have the information with him, but could you tell this honourable Senate what is the cost of this plant?

Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: You are absolutely right, Sir. Negotiations are ongoing. I do not have that information with me, Sir.

Association of Caribbean States (Benefits for this Country)

126. Sen. Gail Merhair asked the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs:

With respect to the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), could the Minister advise the Senate of:

- (1) The benefits this country derives from its membership in the Association; and
- (2) The benefits derived by this country by hosting the Secretariat of the ACS?

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Mr. President, question No. 126 has not yet been received. I, therefore, believe that this should be ready in three weeks.

Question, by leave, deferred.

Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (Details of Firearms Issued)

127. Sen. Gail Merhair asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

Could the Minister indicate to the Senate:

- (i) the number of firearms which were issued to officers of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service for the period January 01, 2007 to March 31, 2009;
- (ii) the categories of firearms issued; and
- (iii) the number of firearms which remains unaccounted for?

Sen. Merhair: Mr. President, regarding question No. 127, I seek the leave of this Senate to have this question withdrawn.

Question, by leave, withdrawn.

Policy Framework (Development of)

131. Sen. Gail Merhair asked the hon. Minister of Finance:

Could the Minister indicate to the Senate whether the Government is in the process of developing a policy framework to recover the outstanding balance of \$9,562,355.22 in overpayment by various Ministries for the period 2007/2008?

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Mariano Browne): Mr. President, the process for the recovery of overpayments is clearly articulated in paragraphs 83—85 of the Financial Regulations to the Exchequer and Audit Act, Chap. 69:01, which state as follows:

- “83. Every unauthorized payment or overpayment of salary, pension, allowance, wages or any other moneys constitutes a debt which is recoverable in full from the payee.
- 84(1) When an unauthorized payment or overpayment is discovered, the person overpaid shall be informed and the incorrect rate of payment shall be stopped immediately.
 - (2) Steps shall be taken to determine liability, if any, of the person responsible for the payment when the sum paid cannot be recovered from the payee.
 - (3) Where expenditure votes are involved, these shall be adjusted immediately.

- 85(1) The accounting officer shall state in his report concrete proposals for the repayment of the unauthorized payment or the overpayment.
- (2) The officer paid shall be informed and steps shall be taken to commence recovery of the amounts due from the officer's salary when the proposals have been examined by the Treasury and the repayment terms fixed.
- (3) The accounting officer may accept payment immediately or may, with the written consent of the officer paid, make deductions from the officer's salary pending the fixing of repayment terms by the Treasury.
- (4) In fixing repayment terms, the Treasury shall take cognizance of any voluntary repayments."

As a consequence of these provisions, the Ministry of Finance continuously requests ministries and departments to recover overpayments in accordance with the regulations. In addition to the provisions of the Exchequer and Audit Act, other measures already in place to minimize overpayments are as follows:

- (a) Accounting systems laid down in the Ministry's department by the Treasury in accordance with the following:
 - (i) The Exchequer and Audit Act, Chap. 69:01
 - (ii) The Financial Regulations
 - (iii) Financial Instructions, 1965
 - (iv) Circulars which are issued from time to time.
- (b) The conduct of surveys by the financial management branch of the Treasury Division on the accounting operations of ministries and/or departments with the objective of ensuring compliance with the systems as laid down by the Treasury.
- (c) The issue of management letters to permanent secretaries, heads of departments highlighting the areas of weaknesses identified during the course of the survey and providing recommendations for improvement;
- (d) The provision of accounting advice to ministries and/or departments by the Treasury Division;
- (e) The establishment of internal audit units in the ministries and/or departments to examine accounting records; and

- (f) Requirement for the continuous maintenance of pension and leave records which will ensure the early detection of overpayments.

The implementation of the global payroll system in the public service in 2005 has also improved the efficiency of the payroll process. Each employee is assigned a unique identifier which facilitates the detection of duplicate payments by this system. This has contributed to the reduction in the number of overpayments as reported by the Auditor General, by 50 per cent over the last three years.

Thank you, Mr. President. [*Desk thumping*]

**Police Stations Evidence Rooms
(Items Missing from)**

140. Sen. Gail Merhair asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

Could the Minister indicate to the Senate:

- (i) The items missing from the evidence rooms of police stations during the period January 01, 2007 to March 31, 2009; and
- (ii) What action has been taken to correct the situation?

The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Martin Joseph): Mr. President, in response to question No. 140, the following items of evidence were confirmed missing by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service during the period January 01, 2007 to March 31, 2009:

Twenty-two foil packets containing creamish rock-like solid, said to be cocaine;

One 9 millimetre pistol and magazine;

One Sig Sauer firearm and magazine;

One 16 gauge shotgun;

One air rifle;

Six bread pans;

One gold Almera motor vehicle.

In response to part (ii), hon. Senators are asked to note that these matters have all undergone the procedure stipulated by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service for dealing with missing items of evidence and are all currently being investigated by the Anti-Corruption Investigation Bureau. In addition, as a result of the

disappearance of these items, officers have been transferred pending the outcome of the investigations by the Anti-Corruption Investigation Bureau.

I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

2.15 p.m.

**Ministry of Information
(Details of Port of Spain Property)**

141. Sen. Gail Merhair asked the hon. Minister of Information:

With respect to item 2.72 under Head 57—Ministry of Information at page 110 of the Report of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the financial year 2007/2008, could the Minister inform the Senate:

- (i) What is the address of the property located in Port of Spain for which \$138,000.00 was paid in rent during the period December 18, 2007 to September 30, 2008; and
- (ii) Whether the property was ever occupied during that period?

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Mr. President, I am in a position to report that question No. 141 was in fact considered by the Parliamentary Questions Committee and was sent for an amendment and therefore, should be available the next time we meet.

Question, by leave, deferred.

EXPIRATION OF QUESTION TIME

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, in accordance with Standing Order 18(6), we are not allowed to ask any questions after 45 minutes of the start of the Senate. Clerk, will you please proceed with the next item?

The following questions stood on the Order Paper:

**Uriah Exchange Opening Ceremony
(Details of)**

142. With respect to the opening ceremony of the Uriah Interchange, could the Minister of Works and Transport inform this Senate what was:

- (a) The overall cost of the opening ceremony;
- (b) The cost of confetti and flags for the said opening; and

- (c) The cost of the helicopter that was used to transport “Bunji Garlin” and Faye-Ann Lyons to the opening ceremony? [*Sen. G. Merhair*]

**Fifth Summit of the Americas
(Removal of Homeless Persons)**

- 145.** With respect to the hosting of the 5th Summit of the Americas and the removal of homeless persons off the street, could the hon. Minister of Social Development inform the Senate of:
- (i) The number of homeless persons removed from the street;
 - (ii) The cost of removing these homeless persons off the street; and
 - (iii) The number of homeless persons who have since returned to the streets at the conclusion of the Summit on April 19, 2009? [*Sen. Dr. S. Gopaul-Mc Nicol*]

**Disabled Persons
(Details of Funds Allocated)**

- 146.** Could the hon. Minister of Social Development provide the Senate with the details of funds allocated to each category of disabled persons for fiscal years 2006/2007; 2007/2008 and 2008/2009? [*Sen. Dr. S. Gopaul-Mc Nicol*]

**High School Population
(Details of)**

- 147.** With respect to students who have dropped out of high school during the academic years 2006—2007, 2007—2008 and 2008—2009, could the hon. Minister of Education indicate to the Senate:
- (i) The total school population for each academic year;
 - (ii) The percentage of students that have dropped out in each academic year; and
 - (iii) The name of each school, total student population and number of students that have dropped out in each academic year? [*Sen. Dr. S. Gopaul-Mc Nicol*]

**Red Mite Disease
(Details of)**

- 151.** (A) Could the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources indicate to the Senate the measures which have been put in place,

implemented or proposed to stop the spread of the “red mite” disease that has plagued coconut producing areas in Trinidad, and in particular the South West peninsula of Cedros and Icacos since 2005;

- (B) Could the Minister also indicate the extent of the devastation in financial and non-financial terms of the “red mite” to coconut, bananas and ginger producers of Trinidad and Tobago? [*Sen. L. Oudit*]

**Recreational Facilities
(Details of)**

152. Could the hon. Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs indicate to the Senate:

- (i) The number and geographical locations of full service recreational facilities, that is, facilities containing jogging/field track, covered bleachers, washrooms, children’s park, full lighting and secured perimeters which are either operational or proposed in Trinidad and Tobago since 2006;
- (ii) The number and location of such recreational facilities that currently exist in Central and South Trinidad;
- (iii) The rationale used to determine rural/urban need of full service recreational facilities in Trinidad and Tobago since 2006? [*Sen. L. Oudit*]

**Health Surcharge
(Current Value of)**

153. Could the hon. Minister of Health indicate to this Senate:

- (i) The current value of the Health Surcharge contribution to the national Treasury since 2006; and
- (ii) The ways in which the Health Surcharge has been used to improve health care in Trinidad and Tobago since 2006? [*Sen. L. Oudit*]

Question time having expired questions 142, 145, 146, 147, 151, 152 and 153 were not dealt with.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

The following question was asked by Sen. Lyndira Oudit:

**Beds in Hospitals
(Details of)**

34. Could the hon. Minister of Health inform the Senate of:

- (i) the number of beds purchased and allocated to each hospital in Trinidad and Tobago for the period 2003—2008;

Written Answer to Question

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

- (ii) the number of beds occupied in hospitals throughout Trinidad and Tobago;
- (iii) the existing hospital bed capacity per population ratio;
- (iv) the formula/criteria used in determining the bed per population ratio for the years 2003—2008;
- (v) any proposed increase in the number of hospital beds in 2009; and
- (vi) the proposed allocation of these beds to hospitals throughout Trinidad and Tobago?

Vide end of sitting for written answer.

**EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES
TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE**

Sen. Wade Mark: Mr. President, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

Be it resolved that the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago take immediate steps to give effect to proposals of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) through appropriate legislation and administrative action in respect of statistical reporting of oil, gas and mining revenue payments made to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago by the various companies involved in the exploitation of our natural resources in order to promote energy revenue transparency which has been deemed a non-partisan issue by EITI.

Someone once said that sunshine is the best disinfectant to ensure that there is no secrecy, lack of accountability and transparency in governmental affairs. The sunshine of transparency is certainly needed on our gas, oil, petrochemical and other extractive industries in Trinidad and Tobago. There is a virtual global drive towards energy revenue transparency. It is necessary if we are to combat corruption, improve the investment climate and contribute to genuine sustainable development of our country. Energy revenue transparency depends essentially on three principles.

- (1) Publish what you pay. Oil, gas and petrochemical companies should disclose the revenue payments they make to the Government.
- (2) Publish what you earn. Governments must disclose the revenues they receive from oil, gas and petrochemicals in a disaggregated manner.

- (3) Publish what you spend by publishing government's expenditure in a more detailed and transparent manner than currently obtains.

These measures combined form a formidable package that enables citizens to hold their government to account for use of energy revenues, thereby ramping up government's legitimacy and credibility.

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) was launched in 2002, by the former Prime Minister of Britain, hon. Tony Blair. It was designed to improve transparency and accountability in countries rich in oil, gas and mineral resources, in order to assist these countries in escaping what has been popularly known and described as the resource curse, which as you know has overwhelmed a number of countries specializing in mineral, oil and gas resources.

Trinidad and Tobago is recorded as being one of 29 countries that have publicly endorsed the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative as of November 01, 2007, according to a World Bank Publication entitled, *Implementing EITI Applying Early Lessons From the Field*. This was taken from page 1 of that World Bank Report. I want to indicate to this honourable Senate that the purpose of promoting good resources governance through the implementation of the international criteria and principles of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative is very commendable. This EITI is a globally developed standard that promotes transparency of payments and revenues from the extractive sector of resource rich countries. Revenues must be used in an accountable, prudent and equitable manner. It is against this background and conscious of the knowledge that this Motion has been brought for the urgent and appropriate administrative action, as well as legislative action on the part of the Government in the interest of the people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

At an Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative conference in London dated June 17, 2003, former Minister in the Ministry of Finance, hon. Christine Sahadeo gave the Government's commitment to the principles of the initiative and supported in principle, the actions outlined in support of the said initiative. I have a copy of the minister's statement when she addressed that very important conference in London. I want to quote a few lines for the edification of my colleagues. The minister stated:

“...the issues of transparency and accountability in public life are the tenets by which my Government is guided...”

The energy sector in Trinidad and Tobago plays a pivotal role in the development of our country and it is imperative that we conduct ourselves in

Extractive Industries
[SEN. MARK]

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

this and every other sector in a manner that will redound to the benefit of all our people.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago reaffirms its commitment to the highest standards of transparency, accountability and governance to ensure that the country's resources are employed efficiently for the benefit and welfare of all citizens.”

This was the commitment given by the former Minister in the Ministry of Finance, the hon. Christine Sahadeo at that particular conference. Trinidad and Tobago's commitment and endorsement of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative was further consolidated by the same minister on behalf of the same government, when she addressed the Institute of Internal Auditors, Trinidad and Tobago Chapter on Monday 24 September, 2007. May I quote what the hon. Minister said on behalf of the Government then:

“To take it a step further, being an economy with heavy investments in the energy sector, in 2003 the Government expressed its commitment to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative on the grounds of enhanced transparency and accountability.”

So that Cabinet has taken a decision to do what? The hon. Minister goes further, she states and I quote:

“A decision has been made to:

implement the EITI programme which entails the verification, reconciliation and publication by an Aggregating Body, data outlining payments made to government by extractive companies and revenue received by government based on these payments;”

A decision was taken by the Government to implement the EITI in 2007. The hon. minister, then further indicated that the Government had agreed, a decision was taken to set up a technical committee to review the EITI process and a decision was also taken by the Government to publish the financial data on the extractive industries on an annual basis. The Government had also placed the oil revenues in the public domain and it is published in the estimates.

This is not a matter that is not known to the Government. The Government had taken a decision in 2007 to implement the EITI. What has happened, what has gone wrong two years later the Government would have to answer.

2.30 p.m.

What has happened, Mr. President? I can tell you. Nothing! The Government has taken no action to effect its obligation and commitment given its decision. Trinidad and Tobago has never delivered on its political commitment to the EITI and as such secrecy continues to surround the energy sector in this country.

It is my information that major oil and gas multinational corporations BHP Billiton, BPTT, BG, just to mention three, have all committed themselves to disclosing payments to the Government on an annual basis, Mr. President. Indeed, these multinational corporations seem to be committed to the EITI insofar as disclosure of payments to the Government is concerned in respect of their oil and gas operations on a disaggregated basis.

Why has the Government not stepped forward? I remind this honourable Senate that it was only in August 2008, that there was in the *Express* an article titled "Riley: BPTT pays US \$1.4 billion in taxes". It was dated Friday, August 29, 2008. Here was BPTT taking the leadership role in disclosing its commitment as it relates to revenue payment to the Government, and Robert Riley was prepared, in August 2008, to tell the world how much money BPTT had paid in taxes to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. This was a very important step, consistent with its international obligation and commitment.

This was followed by the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries who, in answer to a question posed by me on behalf of the Opposition, dealing with taxes collected by the Government from BPTT over the last two years, 2007—2009, revealed in this Senate and there was a headline in the *Guardian*, dated Wednesday, May 27: "Government collects from bpTT, \$21 billion in oil taxes".

Now, it meant that the Government had recognized its obligation, consistent with the principles and criteria established under the EITI, to tell the citizens how much money they collected from BPTT in petroleum taxes, royalties, fees for licences and concessions, on a disaggregated basis, not what we receive today. Do not tell us the revenue from oil and gas is \$20 billion or \$30 billion. EITI is saying that you must disaggregate that and you have agreed to do that, but you have failed. I do not know if it has to do with a lack of political will on the part of the Government. Is it a lack of commitment on the part of the Government? Why does the Government attempt to continue to operate in an environment of secrecy when it comes to revenues from the energy sector?

We know that the Government has given an undertaking and we are simply pushing the Government forward in taking administrative as well as legislative

action to give effect to its obligation and commitment as represented by the hon. Christine Sahadeo in 2007, when she told the country that a decision was taken by the Government to implement the EITI.

Mr. President, I have done research on this matter and it reveals that if we proceed to implement the EITI, major benefits could accrue to Trinidad and Tobago. The example of Nigeria and Azerbaijan come immediately to mind. In 2004/2005, when the Nigerian government implemented the EITI, information coming out from the International Secretariat with responsibility for EITI, revealed that the Nigerian government was able to save US \$1 billion in its gas and oil sector because of the transparency, accountability and full disclosure in terms of revenues and payments.

In the case of Azerbaijan, that country was able to enjoy, over a period of three years, an increase of foreign direct investment by over 160 per cent. This was the same Nigeria whose dictator, called Sani Abacha, as leader of that country, was reported to have stolen from the oil and gas sector over US \$4 billion from the people because of the absence of transparency and accountability in that particular area of Nigeria's operations.

Mr. President, it is now abundantly clear that energy revenue transparency, as well as contract transparency—I will have more to say about that—limits the scope for oil- and gas-related corruption through fiscal accountability. It would mitigate the level, extent and scale of corruption in the oil and gas sector. It would contribute to economic development on a genuine and sustainable basis in these so-called resource-cursed countries.

Trinidad and Tobago seems to be one of those countries that are resource-cursed because while we have an abundance of resources in terms of oil and gas and derive billions of dollars in revenues from oil and gas, poverty is still high in this land. Trinidad and Tobago is the murder capital in the region today. Where are the moneys coming from oil and gas going in terms of genuine social development for the people? It is being mismanaged and that is why we have the social and economic problems we have today. We are the classic example of what is a resource-cursed syndrome. It is worse than Dutch disease. That is an aspect of resource-cursed.

This Government has systematically mismanaged public assets. It has abused human rights and fundamental freedoms and undermined the rule of law in this country, hence the need for better resource transparency governance structures in this country. That is what we are advocating today.

We know of a former Minister for the Environment in a country called Equatorial Guinea, whose country we invited recently to an oil conference here. The country came. This Minister for the Environment, who is the son of the President of Equatorial Guinea and who enjoys a salary of US \$5,000 per month, in 2006, purchased an estate in Malibu, California, at a cost of US \$35 million. He was working for US \$5,000 a month and buying a mansion for US \$35 million. You see the embezzlement and looting of the treasury, and the people are in a state of shocking poverty.

As we speak, over 75 per cent of the people live on less than US \$1 while the Minister for the Environment, in 2006, bought a property for US \$35 million in Malibu, California. That is the point I am making. If we are serious about revenue transparency, we need to deal with these matters. It is weak and non-existent laws and poor regulatory structures that contribute to corruption in the oil and gas sector.

Do you remember Tesoro, with O'Halloran “tiefing” the country's resources? Why? No transparency, no accountability in the energy sector at that time and now, in 2009, it is the same. If we want to reduce corruption in the oil and gas sector of our country, we need to do the following things. We need to become compliant; it is critical. This means compliance with the various international initiatives. We must sign on and get on board with the EITI. We must publish what is paid. We must establish international procurement standards and international audit norms—these come under the broad category of compliance—if we want to promote revenue transparency in the energy sector. We need to define laws, rules and regulations more clearly; taxes, royalties and bonuses. These things should not be secrets. If you give a man a production-sharing contract or issue a licence to an individual, tell us how much he paid for the licence. These must be published nationwide. The information must be publicized and disseminated. We need corporate action because it takes two to “thief” and the private sector has a critical role to play in this matter. That is why I was happy when Mr. Robert Riley, Chairman of BPTT, was able to publish in the newspapers the taxes paid to the Government for the last how many years.

I believe this is a very important matter that we have an obligation to address because we are categorized among 50 countries that are resource rich, even though we are small. Therefore oil and gas is what we have to deal with in this regard.

2.45 p.m.

Mr. President, we are already committed as a country, to the implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) because the Government has taken a decision. We are not asking the Government today to take a decision

Extractive Industries
[SEN. MARK]

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

to implement the EITI. The Government has already taken a decision to implement the EITI. We want the Government to put its machinery in order and in motion to get the EITI going. If you want the Opposition's help, we are already prepared to help you.

In Liberia, which I would bring to your attention in a short while, they recently passed an Act establishing the Liberian EITI. The national law-making body of that country has persons in the legislature, lawmakers, who are members of the stakeholders steering committee. You need a stakeholders steering committee to govern this process and legislators are members of the stakeholders steering committee. Parliamentarians can play a role. In fact, there is a text issued by EITI Secretariat dealing with the role of legislators and lawmakers in this whole exercise.

Mr. President, we have endorsed the EITI. I just want to remind the Government that if we have endorsed the EITI, we need to do the following: It requires political and financial commitment from the Government to ensure that the implementation of that initiative is sustainable. Once the country has endorsed the EITI, there are three main stages of the EITI, namely initiation, implementation and review.

There is a text I have to pass on to the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, it is the *EITI Source Book*. This tells you, if the Government does not have a clue, as to how they must go about effecting this measure. Go to page 10 of this source book and it will reveal the steps that you must take to effect this particular measure. Let me just share with my colleagues, in a summary form, what these steps are. I quote from page 10, Chapter 2 of this very important source book.

“Having endorsed EITI,”—Trinidad and Tobago, we have endorsed EITI—“a country then moves—in consultation with key stakeholders—...” from the private sector, civil society.

They have governmental representation and they will constitute a stakeholders steering committee and you engage in consultation.

“towards initiation, by establishing governance structures for decision-making, outlining a work plan, and arranging for capacity building and sustainable financing of programmes. The next stage, implementation—” We start with initiation and we now go to implementation—“forms the core of EITI.”

It goes on:

“Government, companies”—both state-owned Petrotrin, NGC and foreign owned BpTT, BG, BHP Billiton—“and civil society, organizations”—including

the OWTU, trade unions, non-governmental bodies, CBOs have to be included—“all play an important role in disclosing, disseminating and discussing the reported revenues. Achieving consensus from this process is valuable in building trust. The third stage consists of a review of the process of implementation.”

The concerns and opportunities for improvement are outlined. We do not have to reinvent the wheel. It is there in the source book. I was able to download that last evening. You can get it too. It is on the Internet. It is available.

I am giving the Government the benefit of appreciating the simple processes, phases and stages that are necessary to give effect to a measure that they have already decided to go with, but they have failed. I do not know what the reason is. I do not know if it is a political commitment that they are lacking. I do not know what the reason is, because secrecy continues to stalk the entire energy sector as we speak. *[Interruption]*

Sen. Seetahal SC: I would like to ask Sen. Mark, if he can elaborate or elucidate a bit more on the motivation behind the EITI. I am not actually too sure. I know you mentioned it prevents, in the long run, corruption, but I am not getting that clear.

Sen. W. Mark: When the conference was convened by Tony Blair, the former Prime Minister of Britain in 2002, in London, the rationale for bringing all these resource-rich countries that produce oil, gas and mineral resources was to ensure that they use the resources through revenues for the sustainable and equitable development of their countrymen and their country people. It was the question of too much corruption, mismanagement, and misappropriation and this is why the concept of the resource curse involving oil and gas came into being.

The whole initiative on the part of former Prime Minister, Tony Blair was to ensure that the resource coming from the natural resources of the people of those 50 countries that have oil, gas and mineral resources are equitably distributed, so that the people can live a better, more decent and more quality life. That was the purpose. That was the rationale for ensuring that this particular initiative went forward. Our Government, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, supported and applauded that. They actually took a decision to go along. What has gone wrong? I do not know.

I want to tell my colleagues that only in the month of April, I have a copy, I downloaded a copy of what is called the Liberian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Act. This was passed by both Houses of Parliament of

Extractive Industries
[SEN. MARK]

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

Liberia recently and was approved, I understand, by the President of Liberia. In Liberia today, there is a law called an Act establishing the Liberia EITI. It is not many pages. It gives the definitions of certain terms and it tells you the power and the objectives of the LEITI.

I want to share with my colleagues certain sections of those objectives. I would like to call on the Government—if they are getting some difficulty in finding a blueprint to use to replicate—to refer to the Liberian model. I think it is a very useful model. I believe the Government can use it to go full speed ahead in bringing similar legislation to be adopted in this Parliament. One of the things that the Government must establish very early in this EITI, is what I have called the multi-stakeholders steering committee/group. You must establish that very early.

In this particular document that I have here, the Act establishing the EITI in Liberia, there is an entire section that deals with the management. The governing body of the LEITI shall be the multi-stakeholders steering group. There is a governing body called the MSG, that is responsible for governing this whole operation. It tells you who make up this body. There are seven government representatives on it. It gives the ministries that they come from. The civil society is represented on it. You have the private sector, both state-owned operations and privately-owned operations and they have representation on that committee/grouping. Therefore, this is a very important initiative that the Government must take very early. The Government must constitute this multi-stakeholders steering group, which will constitute the governing body represented by the Government, civil society and the private sector.

I want the Government to note in this particular Act, a very important provision under objectives on page 3, which states that one of the objectives of the LEITI is:

“To promote the public disclosure of contracts and concessions bearing relationship with the extraction of forest and mineral resources;”

Mr. President, I want to repeat this, because for years in this Parliament—I have been in this Parliament for almost 19 years, as you know. I think after me it is you—I have been asking this Government to reveal to this Parliament and for the sake of the country how much money, what is the price of natural gas to Alcoa. What is the price of natural gas to Nucor? Do you know what they told us repeatedly? “That is a commercial secret. That is confidential between the investor and the Government.” That is what we got every year from this Government for 20 years and maybe beyond 20 years. What this Act and EITI is saying and what

Tony Blair and all these people who gave this life have said is that contracts must become transparent. You must tell the country and the world how much you are paying for natural gas and how much Alcoa is paying for natural gas. Whoever is coming to invest, we must know how much we are getting in return for what we are giving. It is no longer a commercial secret. In Liberia, Nigeria and Norway it is no longer a secret to keep contracts under your belt and tell this country that we must keep that secret otherwise investors will not come—nonsense. That is a myth that has now been exploded and exposed internationally and, therefore, the Government must realize that old way of thinking has now passed.

A very important point that has been made in terms of his objective in this document is:

“(g) to assist, by working with other relevant institutions of Government and through independent periodic post-award audits or investigations, in ensuring that the process of awarding public concessions,...”—no longer will public concessions be secret. The public does not know. You must be able to—“the process of awarding public concessions, contracts, licenses, permits and any other rights concerning the exploitation of diamond, gold, oil, timber, agriculture any other forest and mineral resources of Liberia is in compliance with applicable laws;”

This is where Liberia has gone; a country that was torn apart in civil war. There is now a woman in charge of that country. She is a very progressive President and she has taken a progressive step to bring into being, a piece of legislation that will bring sunshine into the lives of the people of Liberia for the first time. This is what we are about. We too would like to bring sunshine into the lives of the working class and the oppressed people, as we did when we were there between 1995 and 2001.

3.00 p.m.

Mr. President, I want to let my colleagues on the other side know that this is a very important matter and the Government must adjust. The Government must not continue to hide or to remain in its own cocoon and continue to use the grounds of confidentiality. You see, confidentiality and secrecy are grounds that provide futile roots for thieving and corruption, and that is why Transparency International and EITI have said that we must have contract transparency—let everybody know what is on the table. Do you know what? Azerbaijan has now been able to attract more investors to their country through foreign direct investments as a result of being open and allowing sunshine to enter their

Extractive Industries
[SEN. MARK]

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

country—everything is open; everything is on the table; and nobody has anything to hide. That is why we are calling on the Government to follow in the footsteps of Nigeria, Liberia, Norway and other progressive countries.

Mr. President, not only we in the Parliament must have access to the information, but the public must know. Transparency is about giving the public access to information. If the public do not have access to information, how are they going to make decisions in a proper manner? The Government has a duty to get the information out to the public, and not to put on an information section on the television a lime they had on the Waterfront. Imagine Calder Hart is spending \$200,000 of our taxpayers' money to hold a lime every month at two empty buildings so that people would feel that something is going on there! We understand that he spent over \$200,000 for this lime, and Jerry Narace was there giggling and laughing on TV at the expense of the people. [*Interruption*] Was it you? [*Interruption*] I am going to take it back if it was not you. Sir, I withdraw that. He said it was not him.

Mr. President: I was wondering whether I heard you correctly when you called the hon. Minister by his name. That is considered disrespectful in the Senate. I do not want to have to remind you. You just reminded us how long you have been here, and you will treat hon. Ministers with the respect that the Standing Orders require.

Sen. W. Mark: I think his name is Ramnarine Jerry Narace.

Mr. President: You will not make a mockery of my ruling. You will treat this Senate and me with the greatest of respect and deference. Do you understand?

Sen. W. Mark: Certainly, and the Senate should treat me similarly.

Mr. President: And we are.

Hon. Senator: Your time has expired.

Sen. W. Mark: My time has not expired. Today, I have an uninterrupted 60 minutes. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. President, I thank you for your guidance and let me refer to the hon. Minister by his full name, Minister Jerry Narace.

Mr. President: You know, as well as I, that the Standing Orders require that Ministers be referred to by their portfolios, so it is the hon. Minister of Health.

Sen. W. Mark: I am guided, Sir. I was making the point that the public must have access to information, and not the bogus information that the Government is advancing using taxpayers' money to promote personalities; using taxpayers' moneys in the sum of \$200,000 to promote a lime on the promenade in front of

two empty buildings. We should be using these facilities that we have at our disposal to educate our people and tell them about transparency, accountability and this whole initiative. That is what I am saying the Government must do. The public must have access to information which must be timely, reliable, economic, social and political and it must be accessible to all the relevant stakeholders in our country.

Transparency will mitigate and ultimately eliminate political corruption which is widespread in our country. May I remind you that political corruption is the abuse of public office by those who make the rules of the game and those who decide on laws and regulations? There is also something called “bureaucratic corruption” which takes place at the implementation end of public policy.

So, if we effect transparency and accountability in the energy sector—oil, gas and other petrochemicals and minerals sectors—do you know what it will do? It will eliminate political corruption which is widespread in this administration and it will eliminate bureaucratic corruption which seems to be rooted in this administration. It will also reap result in moneys being returned to the people so that we can get better health care, better education and better transportation and people will be able to live a decent and quality life in this land.

Mr. President, it is clear that the experience is there for all. I want to also bring to the attention of the hon. Minister, the first report, which is the final report of the administrators of the First Liberian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Reconciliation. It is dated February 09, 2009. This EITI report represents the first for Liberia. It has 76 pages and it disaggregates all the payments made by all the companies whether they are in timber production, forestry production, agricultural production, oil production, gas production, coal production or diamond production.

Mr. President, it is disaggregated here in this report, and you see how much fees they pay, how much taxes they pay, how much they pay for licences and what concession was given to them. It is open and it is clear for everyone to see in Liberia how their moneys are being taken; how revenues are being collected; what payments are being made; and the last factor is to ensure that the government spends that money in a prudent, accountable and manageable way where the people can get rewards in a positive way for their natural inheritance which is their natural resources.

The experience and the evidence have revealed to us as a nation that there are more benefits to be derived than losses incurred if the Government were to pursue an urgent and immediate adoption of the stages of the endorsement process, which I indicated a short while ago is the initiation, the implementation, as well as the review.

I also want to advise the Government that I did some extensive research on this matter and I want to refer the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries to the EITI rules. I want to refer you to page 9 which deals with the principles; page 10 which deals with the criteria; page 11 which deals with the validation guide; and page 12 which deals with the continued validation guide. These are four critical pages that you need to take on board if you have to get this thing going. We do not have to reinvent the wheel. There is literature available. I have done the research and I can make the literature available to the Government, because I believe that it is in the national interest of this nation for us to be transparent in energy revenue. Whatever we collect, we must know how much was collected, and whatever we pay, we must know how much was paid.

Mr. President, the principles and the criteria of the EITI have already been accepted and approved by the Government, so there is no equivocation. There is no ambiguity insofar as that is concerned. The Government has accepted the principles. I must tell you that there are some very instructive principles governing this particular EITI arrangement. There are 12 principles and it says in principle 6:

“We recognize that achievement of greater transparency must be set in the context of respect for contracts and laws.”

So, they have recognized that you have to be careful with contracts, but they are also telling you that you have to give the people of the nation the benefit of the doubt, and that is what they are doing in Liberia. It continues:

“We underline the importance of transparency by governments and companies in the extractive industries and the need to enhance public financial management and accountability.”

These are the principles. Sen. Dana Seetahal SC was asking earlier what was the rationale for this. If my hon. colleague looks at the principles that give rise to this as well as the criteria, I think that therein further lie the rationale for the establishment of the EITI.

So, there are many literatures available on this very important matter. I want to reiterate that in Liberia the lawmakers are members of the multi-stakeholders' group. We have a duty as lawmakers and a responsibility to ensure oversight as well as representation of the people. This is a non-partisan issue, as far as the EITI International Secretariat is concerned. We will cooperate and give the Government the assistance, because we believe that this is in the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Whatever is in the interest of the people of this country, we will support, and this EITI is in the interest of the people. [*Desk thumping*]

The Motion is simply calling on the Government which has already endorsed the EITI, to take immediate steps to give effect to proposals of the EITI through administrative action and legislation in respect of annual statistical reporting of oil, gas and mining revenue payments made to the Government by various nationals; both private and state-owned companies and international companies involved in the exploitation of our country's natural resources. That is to promote energy revenue transparency which has been deemed by EITI as a non-partisan issue.

I hope that the Government will appreciate the wisdom of this particular Private Members' Motion and they would take urgent steps to address an obvious wrong which has been allowed to go on too long without redress.

I was embarrassed when I attended an anti-corruption international conference in Athens, Greece, in October. I was told by a panel that Trinidad and Tobago had not met its political commitment to the EITI.

3.15 p.m.

I could not answer and Trinidad and Tobago was embarrassed as a result of this. I hope that we would be able to make up for this embarrassment by allowing this Motion to get the full support of the Senate so we can go forward with an EITI Act of Parliament to give effect to this very important measure.

I beg to move.

Mr. President: The Motion requires a seconder.

Sen. Dr. Kernahan: I second the Motion and I reserve my right to speak.

Question proposed.

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Thank you Mr. President. This particular initiative, EITI, and this particular Motion, is something that I am able to speak on, simply because at its very formative stages, I was involved in its architecture and therefore, I am in a position to talk to this issue from two perspectives.

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

From the perspective in the first instance of why it was necessary, in the context of the issues relative to the Ministry of Finance, and in the context of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, I wish to indicate from the very onset, that we support the principles. We support the principles because it is very similar to how we have conducted our business. I would demonstrate that the principles as they have been expressed, and the systems that we have, are in fact similar.

Extractive Industries
[SEN. THE HON. C. ENILL]

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

There is one point of departure though, in Sen. Mark's presentation, which I wish to deal with up front, because Sen. Mark gives the impression—and I do not know why that should be so—that what the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative seeks to do is to disclose on a company by company basis information. In the reporting guidelines at section 8, specifies very specifically that what this body would seek to do is to aggregate information, and it has the aggregating guidelines defined.

Before I go there, let me say that Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, as you correctly said, was launched in September 2002, by former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Tony Blair. At the time, he indicated that the objective was for increasing transparency in the systems used for recording payments made by companies in the industry and revenues received by governments. He said all the things that you said.

What has not been said is that the origins of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative were based on Nigerian experience, which had a significant amount of corruption attached to it. In fact, it was the energy companies—because I do not know if you are aware of it, with the organization bp, is really owned by the British government—that went to the government and said to the government that we really did not know what was taking place with the revenues that we were paying and we want to find a mechanism by which we could understand that, because we felt that a significant amount of the revenues were not going into the public Consolidated Fund.

It was on that basis, in situations where there was absolutely no accountability for revenues received, that this initiative was launched and it was supported. Trinidad and Tobago at that time had a role to play in formulating this, because Trinidad and Tobago, as a country, had over 100 years of oil and gas history.

Let us fast-forward to today, and talk about the result. There are 29 countries that are what we call candidate countries; they are at some stage trying to put in place the mechanism, and there is one that is compliant and that one is Azerbaijan. Let us understand where Trinidad and Tobago sits as a hydrocarbon province in the context of the global sector. We sit with the United States, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Russia, Venezuela, Canada, Brazil and the United Kingdom; that is where Trinidad and Tobago sits. When Trinidad and Tobago for example, is evaluated and considered in the context of the petroleum sector, that is where it goes.

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

Look at the countries that were involved in this particular initiative; look at the countries that have been targeted; look at the countries that are required to be

here, because you need to understand something. The energy sector is a global sector and the rating of Trinidad and Tobago on its sovereign issues, to a very large extent, has to do with how revenues are dealt with. These countries that I would name in a few minutes, are countries, possibly with the exception of Norway, that have major difficulties in convincing international investors to come into their country.

Here are the countries that we are talking about, and here are the countries that we are seeking to rank Trinidad and Tobago in the context of this particular issue: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Niger, and Nigeria—you understand that those countries are in Western Africa, they have serious challenges as it relates to the way they do business; we know that—Peru, Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Tunisia, Yemen, Albania, Burkina-Faso, Mozambique, Zambia.

Sen. Rahman: What is the inference?

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: The inference is very simple. We are talking about the system of governance—[*Interruption*] no, no—and where Trinidad and Tobago as a developed society fits in the context of the business it is in and we are talking about it in the context of similar— Mr. President, we are talking about energy. If it is that we would like to understand how the sector works so that we could add value, then the issues that we are talking about, to seek to place Trinidad and Tobago in the context of a revenue earner that is large, that is significant in a particular place.

The question that arises in this discussion is whether or not Trinidad and Tobago is placed within the context of developing societies and within the countries that are involved or whether it is placed in a different place. I would get back to that in a minute. Here are what EITI principles, a total of 12 in number, say:

- "1. We share a belief that the prudent use of natural resource wealth should be an important engine for sustainable economic growth that contributes to sustainable development and poverty reduction, but if not managed properly, can create negative economic and social impacts."

We agree to that.

- "2. We affirm that management of natural resource wealth..."

Sen. Ali: Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether Trinidad and Tobago has ever been a candidate country on the EITI, and if they are presently not, because I do not see them on the list.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Yes, Trinidad and Tobago in 2003 or 2004, was in fact, a country that was a candidate, and we decided not to pursue it. I will tell you why in a minute. [*Interruption*] No, I will tell you why in a minute.

- "3. We recognize that the benefits of resource extraction occur as revenue streams over many years..."

The point I am making is that, everything that is being said here, Trinidad and Tobago has achieved. For example, it says:

- "6. We recognize that achievement of greater transparency"—let me deal with that—"must be set in the context of respect for contracts and laws.
7. We recognize the enhanced environment for domestic and foreign direct investment that financial transparency may bring."

In other words, it is making the point very clearly that for your country to attract foreign investment, which is really, what we are talking about, there should be some reporting. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago supports the principles of EITI. These principles, of course, are not new to Trinidad and Tobago. While the language used may be different, it nevertheless conveys the same sentiments and practices that we adhere to with respect to transparency and accountability.

In that regard, we have attracted foreign direct investment based on a respect for law and the sanctity of contracts. As you would note, or if you do not know, Mr. President, our Vision 2020 energy document statement says that:

"The energy industry will be sustainable, operating transparently with the full support of the government (through effective governance)..."

3.30 p.m.

In June 2003, Trinidad and Tobago participated in a multi-stakeholder conference in London and pledged support to the statement of principles and agreed actions of the EITI.

Subsequently, the Ministry of Finance circulated draft EITI reporting guidelines to companies involved in the extractive industries in Trinidad and Tobago. In particular, multinationals who had expressed an interest to participate in the initiative, either at the local or international level—consequent on our participation on July 31, 2003, I think it was. The Government agreed that the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries would develop an implementation programme with respect to EITI and a decision was

taken that a pilot project should be undertaken to address certain concerns. In April 2006, a steering committee for the EITI was established to implement the initiative in Trinidad and Tobago as a pilot project. The committee's members which comprised representatives from the Ministry of Finance, included the Board of Inland Revenue and the energy sector.

In the interim, Mr. Peter Igen, chairman of the EITI wrote to Trinidad and Tobago indicating that in order for Trinidad and Tobago to be upgraded from an EITI candidate country to a compliant country, four sign-up indicators should have been met. These included:

1. Expressing firm adherence to EITI principles;
2. Naming a public official in charge of coordinating implementation;
3. Committing to work with civil society; and
4. Approving and funding an action plan for implementing of this process.

On August 31, 2007 the Government agreed to implement EITI based on a plan of action derived by the steering committee. We informed EITI that we were committed to this, including the four sign-up indicators. Despite that, Trinidad and Tobago was removed from the group of countries listed on the official website for failing to meet the deadline. Following this, the decision was taken to place Trinidad and Tobago on a pending list until December 31, 2007, after which the country would be compelled to reapply to be part of EITI.

It should be noted that, to date—and we talked about this—the only compliant country is Azerbaijan and that there are 29 countries—I have just read them—that would have been as candidate countries. In addition, the United Kingdom, the country which has launched this initiative is not interested and is not included in the list of candidate countries nor is the United States or any of the other developed countries. It is also apparent that none of the oil rich countries that are highly developed has really signed on to the EITI. The recent membership of Norway, of course, is the only exception. The main objective of EITI is transparency through publication of taxes paid by oil companies and government revenues derived from payments under petroleum operations.

Now, in Trinidad and Tobago's case, we have a situation where the Parliament has determined how these resources are going to be utilized and how they are going to be dealt with. What we need to understand in Trinidad and Tobago is that the revenues that we receive in the energy sector are as a function of profits. It is a

Extractive Industries
[SEN. THE HON. C. ENILL]

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

function of taxes paid. Because unlike some years, these other countries that are actually involved in the business and that are actually producers—as in the case of Petrotrin, for example—many of the companies that are here are simply business organizations and they run their business in accordance with the laws that have been passed.

The Petroleum Taxes Act, for example, indicates among other things, how petroleum operations in Trinidad and Tobago would be governed. You would have computation of profits; how, you would deal with issues that are very specific to the industry. For example, how do you deal with work-overs? How do you deal with heavy oil allowance? How do you deal with the computation and application of capital expenditure in the production business? How are signature bonuses and production bonuses to be dealt with? What are the conditions as they relate to licences and contracts? What are the situations as they relate to provisions under the Income Tax Act? How is that to be dealt with? What are the geological and geophysical allowances that you would have done?

In other words, we have an entire machinery set up by two different Government agencies whose job it is, whose full-time responsibility within the public service is to simply ensure that in the calculation of revenues for the State it is done in accordance with the principles, with the guidelines that we have set up. In those circumstances, we have already determined on what basis the revenues that we get from the oil sector will be determined. That is so and from time to time, the Government comes to the Parliament and effects changes to these through the annual budget process.

Two years ago, for example, we came to the Parliament and we indicated that in a time when we were having extremely high oil prices we were receiving less revenue. The reason for that is that the law that we had set up simply suggested that the allowances that would have been available to you, when you apply them in a time of high oil prices you gave up too much to the companies and we changed that.

The other thing we changed was as it related to gas; because when you start to look at managing this particular business you have two characteristics that are different. The oil characteristic is different to the gas characteristic. Oil is very simple. You pay for it, there is a WTI price and you calculate on the basis of that. Gas on the other hand is slightly different. Gas talks about net-back at the well head and you start at the market and you go through the value train negatively and then you impact it.

So, these issues require people who understand all of it and who are in a position to tell us. We change for example, the provisions in the law which did not allow us to get the upside on any revenue. For example, you had a situation where a company would set up in a particular way and they would transfer that to another person and you would not be able to get any additional value; on the basis of this we changed the law. We said that when the Board of Inland Revenue looks at your books it will take into account whatever you get into the marketplace. Therefore, we have put mechanisms in place to target that and to track those contracts throughout the world. But on an ongoing basis, that data, as it relates to Trinidad and Tobago is published in the Draft Estimates of Revenue under Head 1—Taxes on Income and Profits, Item 01—Oil Companies, Item 06—National Recovery Impost and Item 07—Business Levy.

The Board of Inland Revenue is the authority responsible for computation and collection of oil and gas taxes. Such revenues are determined under the provision of the Petroleum Taxes Act. However, disaggregation or disclosure of the details of petroleum companies' accounts with respect to revenues and taxes are guided by section 4 of the Income Tax Act, and I will quote what section 4(2) says:

“Any person...”—and this is in respect of specifics—“...who at any time communicates or attempts to communicate such information or anything contained in such documents, returns, lists or copies to any person—

- (a) other than a person to whom he is authorized by the President to communicate it; or
- (b) otherwise than for the purposes of this Act”—or any other written law administered by the Board—“is guilty of an offence.”

That is in the law.

It is clear, therefore, that the law does not contemplate public disclosure of individual companies' oil and gas payments made to the Government. It is in the law! Now, it is true that I reported in this place about an individual company, but the disclosure was already in the public domain and therefore, once the information was in the public domain it did not seem that it was—

Sen. Mark: I just want to, through you, Mr. President, inform my hon. colleague that in the case of Liberia, when they recently passed the Act, they recognized that same point and they have amended the revenue code in Liberia. So it could be done if the Government is willing to do it.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: I am aware of that, Mr. President, but I am also aware that in doing that we face a different challenge.

Extractive Industries
[SEN. THE HON. C. ENILL]

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

We face the challenge of interfering with Trinidad and Tobago as a country—let me put it differently. One of the things that companies like is to be able to maintain some element of information that is commercially sensitive to them. This is a commercially sensitive business. This is a business that when investments have to be made, when you lose investments, you lose large amounts of money. Therefore, as it relates to the position that we are taking now, we are saying that we have in place something that has worked. The principles of EITI we support. The information that is required even by EITI in its document suggests aggregate information and it is the aggregate information that we have that is currently reported.

We also have within the system safeguards so that the information as given to the State is kept in a particular way, much the same as we have with the Central Bank and the information from banks and so on, because we do not want in any way to create any situation in which the major earner in the economy starts to suffer because of the way in which we handle it. Mr. President, maybe another Government will do it. But we do not believe that it is in our interest in circumstances where the system has worked well. There are no reported instances of companies corrupt in the manner in which it was reported in the African experience; it has not happened and therefore in those circumstances the prescription for something that has not happened must be to maintain what you have.

First of all, we have an arrangement that says, you cannot do it because you are guilty of an offence and therefore if we have to change that that is something else. But as we speak now, that is the law! Therefore, royalty payments by oil and gas companies are collected and published by the ministry.

The other point is that it is not true to say that there is no information. Royalty payments by oil and gas companies are collected and published by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries in the ministry's annual administrative reports that come to the Parliament and Sen. Mark knows those.

Sen. Mark: But when last have you published that? It is about 10 years now or five?

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Yes, five. [*Inaudible*] No, we have a commitment. It is going to be ready by September. I made that commitment and we are working on it, but I am saying the information is available. The BIR is also responsible for the audit and verification of accounts of the companies involved in oil, gas and petrochemicals in this country.

The Government also has a number of legal and administrative procedures in place which are consistent with that of the EITI principles to promote transparency as follows: the budget statements.

It should be noted that the Government's policy initiatives are spelled out in great detail in the annual budget statement delivered by the Minister of Finance. During the presentation, the national community is given precise figures relating to income expenditure. Furthermore, the presentation is subject to intense scrutiny from all. Line Ministers are called to account and must give detailed explanations for the past performance of their ministries and plans for the future.

The interaction takes place in the full glare of a very discerning public and a demonstration of democracy and transparency at work. The information is there.

3.45 p.m.

In the Review of the Economy, the economic performance of the economy is analyzed on an annual basis in the associated budgetary documents to the Review of the Economy. In that, for example, we talked to the issues of pricing, we talked to production, we talked to all kinds of things inside there, we talked to wells being drilled and, therefore, one can look at it and come to conclusions about the particular activity. But what one cannot do, is one cannot determine on the basis of the work programmes of the companies—which is something that the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries has responsibility for—exactly what the capital expenditure will be, what the work programmes are going to be and what are the costs associated with that. That information is available in aggregate and it is dealt with in the context of the laws that we have in place, and that is a responsibility that currently resides in the Board of Inland Revenue.

The Review of the Economy provides us with information on the domestic economy, public sector activities, banking and finance, trade and payments. Insofar as it relates to the extractive industries, the publication provides for statistics on domestic crude production and development and exploratory drilling; natural gas production and utilization; petrochemical production and exports; and the sector's contribution to the gross domestic product, both in constant and market price terms.

Mr. President, we are all so very familiar with the operations of the parliamentary oversight by the Public Accounts Committee and the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee, which present yet another opportunity for the disclosure with respect to the companies and state agencies in the sector.

Extractive Industries
[SEN. THE HON. C. ENILL]

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

The Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has established the Public Accounts Committee and the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee. These committees are charged with the responsibility to examine the appropriation accounts of moneys granted by Parliament to meet the public expenditure, and to examine the audited accounts of all state enterprises. Therefore, it is in this regard that you have a level of transparency and accountability in the process. It is subject to review by parliamentarians.

In the performance of its work, the PAC calls to account many Permanent Secretaries—I saw that two weeks ago—heads of government departments and has been instrumental in a large part in getting a more responsive attitude on the part of administrative heads and ministries, and on the advice of the Auditor General's Department.

Mr. President, I am not going to continue on that, but let me make a couple other points. The measures undertaken by the Government to satisfy—let me put it differently. The EITI is a voluntary programme. It is really a programme in which, if you are looking for the things that make your country attractive to foreign investors, then you voluntarily go into this particular programme. It is like an Article IV consultation when you are not into an IMF Programme. And not being part of the EITI Initiative which is a voluntary programme, in no way interferes with Trinidad and Tobago's determination, to as far as possible, provide transparency in the oil and gas business. In fact, the Government has put in place, and it is bound by existing legislation and regulations for reporting on revenues and taxes from the energy sector, and indeed, we continue to, as far as possible, promote that particular agenda.

With regard to revenues occurring under PSCs which is another production sharing contracts, there are obligations by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries that we basically follow as it relates to audit and reporting procedures under the terms and conditions that govern the contracts of the energy companies. There is a dedicated in-house audit unit that monitors the operations of these companies, to ensure that the State receives its share of its revenue from production.

The final operations of these companies are also subject to audit by the Board of Inland Revenue. Moreover, in accordance with the terms and conditions of these production sharing contracts, the companies must report to the ministry at quarterly coordinating meetings, where accounts are provided on the level of expenditure undertaken on the projects and statistics or the status of development.

Similarly, annual technical meetings are held with all the energy companies for the benefit of both the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries and the Board of Inland Revenue, at which time the performance of the companies are in fact reviewed. So there is an extremely robust process of monitoring. It should be borne in mind that while we could monitor the operations of these companies and we do that, there are obligations in the contracts to observe confidentiality clauses. For example, Article 28(1) in the PSC says—and we are bound by that—:

"That all data shall be maintained by the parties as strictly confidential and should not be divulged by either party during the term of the contract without prior written consent of the other party, except to the extent required to comply with applicable law unless such data becomes part of the public domain."

Mr. President, we need to be aware of the fact that if we have been successful to date, it is because we have over time exhibited our desire to maintain sanctity of contracts. Because in other jurisdictions where this is not so, we understand the impact, capital simply moves to other jurisdictions. Article 28(5) says and gives the Minister some discretion:

"The Minister shall be entitled at any time to prepare and publish reports or studies, using information derived from any informational data related to the contract area."

So there is a provision in our jurisdiction in the law where notwithstanding this, we can in fact provide information to the public as we determine it to be necessary.

On an ongoing basis as well, the Ministry also under the Freedom of Information Act has certain responsibilities, and while the Freedom of Information Act is an Act to give members of the public a general right of access to official documents of public authorities and for matters related thereto, the information that we provide on an ongoing basis provides the public with information about the general way in which the sector is dealt with, and with information that we consider to be appropriate.

EITI is a voluntary organization. It has a number of principles. It requires that you publish what you pay, publish what you earn. It requires that you set up a body— Let me talk about our experience in this particular matter.

In trying to implement this particular activity, this is what we found. You were required to set up an almost identical unit with the same kind of skill sets to take data that the companies will give you voluntarily, aggregate it and determine whether that aggregated data in some form or fashion can be reconciled with

Extractive Industries
[SEN. THE HON. C. ENILL]

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

some state resources. That posed a number of difficulties. The first one being on what basis you would do this. Is it the basis of law? If it is the basis of law, you already had in place the Petroleum Taxes Act which covered in very, very technical details all the issues relative to upstream operations, midstream operations, the downstream operations and the petrochemical issues. And even as you looked at that on the up streamers, for example, the taxes that they pay, approximates close to 60 or 70 per cent of their profits. Because we take 55 per cent off the top, we take some additional as it relates to unemployment levy, and if there is a supplemental piece in that on the basis of price issues, then you pick up a portion on the other side.

When it gets to the situation with petrochemicals, you have a 35 per cent tax rate, and it is this revenue in aggregate form that finds itself into the disclosures that we have, and the revenues that we use for the purposes of running the country. But all of that, all of that information, all of that activity is on an ongoing basis, on a daily basis, on a month by month basis, monitored by individuals whose only responsibility is to manage that. What we do as parliamentarians, is that we set in place the rules by which this will happen. What we do, is we determine how this resource is going to be managed. What we do, is we determine on what basis are the companies going to use this resource. We looked at depletion rates, we look at all those kinds of issues and at the end of it all, we try to ensure that we get the best value to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, while at the same time maintaining the competitiveness of the said terms.

During the course of this year, we signed a number of contracts with individuals and then we had a downturn, or we had situations changed. What we found is that our system could not respond as quickly, and therefore, they simply went to other jurisdictions. So there was some lost opportunity as a result of us trying to determine on the basis of what we currently have. How do you move to make the provisions more attractive in the context of the business that you are in? Mr. President, it is very clear that as far as we are concerned, this sector will continue and will be able to provide Trinidad and Tobago with the revenue that it is required for dealing with our developmental programme.

Sen. Mark in his presentation talked about the Government not delivering, the Government spending badly and so on. Mr. President, if you look at what the Government has been able to achieve in the context of what is available to us, you will see a couple of things. The first thing that you will see is that notwithstanding the challenges that we have had, we now have a situation where our foreign

reserves stand at about 11½ months, covered. We have a situation where we have resources that we have saved in the Heritage and Stabilisation Fund. We have a situation in which the developmental programme that we currently have, continues, and in spite of reductions, we are still able to achieve some level of economic growth where other countries around us are having negative or none at all.

Mr. President, the issue of the Government looking at the EITI Programme, the issue of the Government having reviewed the programme, we have come to the conclusion that the present system for oil revenue collection, possesses the characteristic of transparency and accountability. Mr. President, it has an adequate audit trail and, more significantly, in terms of its aggregate capability, which is what the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative is suggesting, the information is already in the public domain.

4.00 p.m.

In examining the EITI issues, the following points must be borne in mind: one, the Board of Inland Revenue is the competent authority to deal with taxes, public servants. The relevant legislation is the Petroleum Taxes Act; we have put that in place, and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago does not have to be a member to support the principles. [*Interruption*]

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Mr. President, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago does not have to be a member to support the principles, as enunciated by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. The Government has a number of legal and administrative procedures in place which are consistent with that of the EITI principles; namely, the budget reports; the Review of the Economy; the parliamentary oversight and budget debate; the Public Accounts Committee; the audits by the Board of Inland Revenue of oil companies' tax statements; the Auditor General's report; the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries audit of production sharing contracts and the Freedom of Information Act; being mindful, of course, of confidentiality with respect to tax returns and contracts provisions which could hamper companies' competitive positions.

In view of this, we must conclude that there is no need for the Government to take immediate steps to give effect to proposals of the EITI through appropriate

Extractive Industries
[SEN. THE HON. C. ENILL]

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

legislation and administrative action, in respect of statistical reporting of oil, gas and mining revenue payments, made to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago by the various companies involved in the exploitation of our natural resources, in order to promote energy revenue transparency which has been deemed a non-partisan issue by EITI.

We believe that we already have a system in place, far beyond what EITI requires us to do. We have had it for a very long time; we have it in law; we have a system that works. We have the disclosures that can be made, and we are in a position, at any time, on the basis of the legislation that we have in place and on the basis of the process that we follow, to indicate to all that the principles of the EITI are already being implemented by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. The data, information, audits and all the processes that are required, are, in fact, contained in our system and, therefore, this voluntary application of a particular system is not required.

If you look at the countries that have been involved in this process and those that have not been involved, and you ask the question why it is so, it is because they have similar jurisdictions to Trinidad and Tobago. The United Kingdom, for example, Canada, for example, and many of the countries that we have spoken about are, in fact, governed by similar legislation and have similar views to that which I have just expressed.

Out of an abundance of caution, before adopting this particular position, the Government consulted with many of the large major corporations to get a view as to whether Trinidad and Tobago should participate and, if so, how. The view that was expressed in that discussion and deliberation support the position that we have taken.

It was in those discussions that we understood why the companies went to the British Government with a view to controlling the revenue issues. Trinidad and Tobago was not one of the countries for which those companies had any challenge at all, as it related to transparency issues with the energy sector in Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you.

Sen. Dana Seetahal SC: Mr. President, I have to confess that I was a little concerned when I heard Sen. Enill repeat the same thing three times. I am not sure if he thought we did not grasp it the first time, but to say three times that the reason why we do not essentially need the EITI is because we have other forms of transparency—I have it written down here and then I heard it again, the same exact thing: budget; the Review of the Economy; the PA(E)C; the Freedom of

Information Act; reporting on revenues and taxes, obligations in auditing and so on. Those are the things of which the claim is made that they are almost better than the EITI.

I would like to know, in 2004 when the decision was made by the Government and announced that we were going to follow the EITI, did the Government not know these things? At that time, in the 2004/2005 Budget, there was an underlying, a common thread through it of transparency and that this Government was obligated to be transparent and was engaged in that kind of activity, that kind of functioning. So it seems to me that the proposal stated by the then Minister of Finance, Christine Sahadeo, was in keeping with that trend at that time.

I have heard nothing from the Minister to explain—the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries—why there is the change. The Minister just said that the Government took a decision to renege, essentially, based on some advice that the Government got. So in 2004, is it that there was no advice forthcoming or that the then Government, on its own natural initiative, in the desire to pursue transparency, took a decision, subsequently was advised, and changed its mind based on that advice, on the basis that it then felt it had all these requirements, these systems, in place?

I am not convinced by the arguments of the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, not because he had to repeat them twice; that is not the only reason, but that is one of the reasons. Anytime someone repeats something so many times, you have to wonder why there is this big intent to persuade you by repetition. [*Interruption*]

The Minister is also suggesting, implicitly or indirectly, that the number of 29 countries which are in line to be approved—one country has already passed, so to speak, the test, and the others are candidates—may be deemed, it appears to be what he was saying, countries with corrupt situations that we do not have. We were compared to the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, that are not seeking candidacy in the EITI. It should be apparent to all and sundry that those countries are developed countries.

Despite what the Minister said, I am not sure if it was a slip of the tongue, but he said that Trinidad and Tobago was a developed country. I am not aware of that. It is not yet 2020 and we are not moving in a spiralling rate to that First World status, which we have been talking about. So we might have more in common with those countries that were mentioned by the Minister—in a disparaging tone—rather than the three developed countries.

Extractive Industries
[SEN. SEETAHAL SC]

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

Peru is a country out of those 29 and so is Norway; the Cameroons is also a country. My understanding is that these are countries with natural resources or rich in natural resources. It may have something to do with the size of these countries too, which is why they seek to adopt this initiative. This is an initiative which is boasted online that would seek to ensure the prudent use of natural resources. How can we gainsay that? It is also geared towards generating a public understanding of government revenue and expenditure and, in this way moving towards sustainable development.

Mr. President, I do not share the opinion of the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries that we do not need this. This was what he said; he was saying, "We have everything already; we do not need this EITI; that is for those little corrupt countries, mainly in Africa." "We got advice and we took a decision that we would not do what we were going to do in 2004, and we are not going to do it."

We had, and still have, legislation in the form of the Central Bank Act and the Insurance Act, and we had systems in place that we thought would ensure that certain things would not happen. What has happened? Now the very same Government is talking about figures, something in the line of \$30 billion. That should have been a wake-up call. We cannot say that everything is fine; everything is not fine [*Desk thumping*] because we do not know what is going on. We do not know for sure what is going on, and the EITI is one of the means of ensuring that we know.

It is not perfect, but why, if the Government is all for transparency, is it against doing what it said it would do? Nothing has changed since 2004—2009, except maybe we have to be less trustful of companies now than then. So it would seem to me that there is all reason to go the other way.

My final point is to point out that Nigeria in its EITI Act has stated that one of the functions of their body—there is a body, the NEITI Initiative in Nigeria—one of the purposes is to:

“Monitor and ensure that all payments due to the Federal Government from all extractive industry companies, including taxes, royalties, dividends, bonuses, penalties, levies...are duly made.”

I would just repeat that point, to:

"Monitor and ensure that all payments...to the...Government...are...made."

Is there anyone in this country currently doing that? I am not aware, and the Minister never mentioned. It would seem to me, having regard to our history with oil companies in Trinidad and Tobago, and other countries, that we need to have that assurance.

Thank you, Mr. President.

4.15 p.m.

Sen. Raphael Cumberbatch: Mr. President, I am honoured to follow Sen. Seetahal SC, since the very thoughts she just enunciated, I too had some concerns while the hon. Minister was speaking.

The legislation of which he spoke, the Income Tax Act, the Appropriation Act, the Exchequer and Audit Act, the several times amended Petroleum Taxes Act, and the Annual Review of the Economy, these things have been with us for the longest while; the issue here is not whether the Government has been collecting these taxes in revenues, but whether the extractive industries have been paying these revenues to the Government as it is due. [*Desk thumping*]

I could not understand why the hon. Minister would tell us that the United States of America is not pursuing membership. Shortly after I took the oath, one of my colleagues passed a document to me: "Senate hearings on natural resources highlight need for extractive industries transparency legislation". With your permission, Sir, could I quote a few extracts very briefly?

"The United States Senate is holding..."

And this is September 2008.

"two hearings today on the issue of natural resource extraction and accountability. The Publish What You Pay (PWYP) United States coalition, which calls for more transparency in the oil, gas and mining sector... and encourages the Senate to pass legislation mandating better disclosure of information in these industries."

It continues.

"Oil companies do not disclose payments in their annual reports, and governments do not disclose receipt of the payments in their budget reports...no transparency about the billions of dollars exchanged for oil and minerals, and no accountability for these revenues because no one knows how much actually exchanged hands.

The first step toward ensuring the billions of dollars...Senator Charles Schumer. The Extractive Industries Transparency Disclosure Act would

Extractive Industries
[SEN. CUMBERBATCH]

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

require oil, gas and mining companies to publish their natural resource revenue payments to foreign governments as part of their annual filing to the Securities and Exchange Commission.”

I wondered how then could it be that subscribing to EITI would somehow act as a disincentive to foreign investment in Trinidad and Tobago and to capital investment, which as we all know is medium and long term.

Let me point to another matter that came to my attention. This is not an area that is my specialty, but among the benefits of the EITI as I understand it, is that countries have an improved investment climate, it sends clear signals to their investors and international financial institutions that government is committed to strengthening transparency and accountability over our natural resource revenues. The Minister as much as said that, he told us they are committed and they have been working hard in this area. I have no reason to doubt but, we do not in my very humble submission, have the institutional capacity to deal with the monitoring of what these companies are doing, as Sen. Seetahal SC pointed out. [*Desk thumping*]

The companies and the investors themselves by supporting the EITI can help mitigate investment risks bearing in mind—it appears that is a dirty word in the Senate—that corruption creates political instability which can lead and in turn, threaten investment. Companies need to know what we are really committed to and it is one thing to say: Well, we have a recognition of all these principles and we understand and are trying to do our best. But quite apart from having a recognition and subscribing to the principles, you must put the institutional framework in place in order to deal with it. [*Desk thumping*]

Minister Sahadeo was very clear in June 2003 as Sen. Mark quoted. Minister Sahadeo also spoke on Monday, September 24, 2007 just prior to the last general election. She is no longer with us, I do not know whether these policies have gone out with her. [*Laughter*] The question is, what has changed between September 2007 and now? What new information? Surely, we always had the Petroleum Taxes Act, the Exchequer and Audit Act, the Appropriation Act, and the Income Tax Act, and we have always had Reviews of the Economy and that did not prevent the Minister from committing to the EITI.

I ask any Member on the Government Bench when they address this House to kindly indicate to this Senate what has changed in their minds. I listened intently to the goodly Minister, he is very knowledgeable about the subject, but from a perspective that suggests we like how it is, and we do not want to change it. [*Desk thumping*]

I have a problem with that kind of approach, civil society appears to have a problem with that kind of approach and this debate must be a clarion call to civil society, trade unions and to the private sector to support and call on the Government to subscribe and to keep faith with its international commitments. Far too often we send representatives to international fora and they make commitments.

Sen. Narace: What about the CCJ?

Sen. R. Cumberbatch: Well, we will deal with the CCJ in an appropriate debate.

Hon. Senator: “Don’t be distracted.”

Sen. R. Cumberbatch: I know, maybe I should intervene at this stage and say for myself, hon. Minister, that this is a happy homecoming, temporarily although it may be. [*Laughter*] I spent 19 years sitting there and I have been absent for 14 years, so distracting really—I know the strategies and I do not have a problem with that, that is par for the course in here. I do not have a difficulty with that.

What I want to say is that the EITI is a well-respected international institution, it is supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, they do not compel a “one cap fits all” solution because they understand that in different jurisdictions you will have different concerns like the hon. Minister said; Africa has their concerns, here in Trinidad and Tobago we have ours and for those of us—and as you will well appreciate, I have just come off the streets; I have not been in this august Chamber like my colleagues for so long, we have our own realities that we live with and the word out there is that this country is too rich for the people to be enduring the shortcomings that we have to endure. [*Desk thumping*] That is the problem. The word out there, they do not know much of what the Minister spoke. The people out there do not know a lot of these ideas and so forth, but they are feeling the pain and they know that this country is an extremely wealthy country and they feel that they should be enjoying more of that.

It raises the other matter because much has been said about declaring revenues and so forth. One of the purposes of EITI as I understand it, is to promote sustainable development and poverty reduction by bringing this kind of information so people's expectations can be realized when they understand what we have. This is our natural resources we are talking about here, this is not any book figure somewhere down in the Monetary Fiscal Trade Unit of the Ministry of Finance, this is our business here; extractive industries and we must know what is happening. A ballpark figure in an estimate of expenditure once a year is not going to cut it.

Extractive Industries
[SEN. CUMBERBATCH]

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

BPTT, conscious of its corporate responsibility, implements best practices and as an international company, came out in the open and said: We pay so much in taxes to the Trinidad and Tobago Government. And I can assure you, that you can expect more of that to come because the effects of globalization and the more recent meltdown that has taken place will demand more accountability and transparency in all these areas. [*Desk thumping*]

I would imagine Trinidad and Tobago had expressed its position in 2007 very clearly, and I would have been much happier to get up this afternoon—on this my first time, I do not know, it may be my last to be able to say I do not want to preach to the converted. The Government has been on record time and again about transparency and accountability so it came to my attention.

Minister Sahadeo speaking sometime ago in one of these fora on the Draft Report of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative said:

“...we have also enacted the Freedom of Information Act which provides the legally enforceable right to members of the public to gain access to information from public sector entities.”

Well, I take it that when she said “we”, she was speaking of Trinidad and Tobago, she could not have been speaking of her own administration since that was put on the statute by this administration when they sat there. [*Desk thumping*] Yes, I am sure about that.

We also know—and I am sure Members will bear me out, that we have witnessed a diminution of the areas into which members of the public can enquire by putting into the Schedule of the Act areas that we can no longer ask about. They have truncated the Act rather than promoted it and we are still in the backwater of legislation. [*Desk thumping*]

Two measures in the United States Congress are being pursued at this time; the extractive industries transparency disclosure—and these are developed countries, plenty money, in charge of everything—and the Publish What You Pay. We have just witnessed a significant revolution in thinking in terms of governance in the United States of America. We should be ashamed to say that we are not bothering with that because this archaic legislation we have is good enough. No, no, no. [*Desk thumping*]

I would be very grateful if the Government will do a little better than that and give this Senate the benefit of their wisdom, Minister—I am not here to preach to the converted. I know that the Government is on record being committed to transparency and accountability.

Again I quote my status, those of us on the road have our doubts, but I will leave it to the hon. Minister and subsequent speakers to see if they could persuade the Government that there is no harm in strengthening the legislative capacity of this country to protect our resources. It is for us you know, it is not for the Government, it is not for the PNM you know.

When you make laws, Mr. President, through you, it is for the general public, it is for the future. So if we know, we are confident that the Government is acting in good faith, subsequent governments may not, we must strengthen the legislation now. All those bits of legislation can be amended to accommodate the Transparency International initiative.

I thank you very much, Mr. President, and honourable Senators for your support. [*Desk thumping*]

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 June 30, 2009 at 1.30 p.m., where we will discuss an Act to vest jurisdiction for all family matters and juvenile matters in a Division of the High Court to be called the Family Court and to make provision for matters connected therewith.

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, I will like to congratulate Sen. Cumberbatch on his maiden speech.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 4.29 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

The following question was asked by Sen. Lyndira Oudit:

Beds in Hospitals (Details of)

- 34.** Could the hon. Minister of Health inform the Senate of:
- (i) the number of beds purchased and allocated to each hospital in Trinidad and Tobago for the period 2003—2008;
 - (ii) the number of beds occupied in hospitals throughout Trinidad and Tobago;

Written Answer to Question

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

- (iii) the existing hospital bed capacity per population ratio;
- (iv) the formula/criteria used in determining the bed per population ratio for the years 2003—2008;
- (v) any proposed increase in the number of hospital beds in 2009; and
- (vi) the proposed allocation of these beds to hospitals throughout Trinidad and Tobago?

The following reply was circulated to Members of the Senate:

The Minister of Health (Sen. The Hon. Jerry Narace): In order to reduce the shortages of beds and improve the quality of care at our public hospitals, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago purchased 2,956 beds during the period 2003—2008. In order to adhere to international best practices, most of these beds were replacement beds equipped with the standard safety features to improve patient's safety and comfort while at the hospital. More importantly, some of the beds were used to increase the existing ward capacity in order to bring urgent relief to patients in critical care areas at our hospitals. During the period 2003—2008, the number of beds purchased and allocated to each hospital in Trinidad and Tobago was based on the changes in the demographic, epidemiological profile and geography of the population. The details of these purchases are as follows:

HEALTH INSTITUTION	NUMBER OF BEDS PURCHASED AND ALLOCATED
Port of Spain General Hospital	608
St. James Medical Complex	142
St. Ann's Hospital	1,000
Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex	386
San Fernando General Hospital	602
Sangre Grande Hospital	171
Point Fortin Hospital	04
Tobago Hospital	43
Total Number of Beds purchased	2,956

Written Answer to Question

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

The number of beds occupied in hospitals throughout Trinidad and Tobago is as follows:

Health Institution/Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Port of Spain General Hospital	396 out of 558 = 71%	442 out of 538 = 82%	425 out of 559 = 76%	390 out of 559 = 70%	384 out of 559 = 69%	422 out of 559 = 76%
Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex	81 out of 132 = 61%	106 out of 165 = 64%	121 out of 189 = 64%	177 out of 229 = 77%	210 out of 267 = 79%	228 out of 267 = 85%
Mount Hope Women's Hospital	76 out of 131 = 58%	70 out of 131 = 53%	75 out of 131 = 57%	79 out of 131 = 60%	81 out of 131 = 62%	84 out of 131 = 64%
St. Ann's Hospital	871 out of 958 = 91%	853 out of 958 = 89%	578 out of 958 = 88%	847 out of 958 = 89%	830 out of 893 = 93%	795 out of 893 = 89%
San Fernando General Hospital	391 out of 664 = 59%	452 out of 664 = 68%	483 out of 653 = 74%	501 out of 660 = 76%	491 out of 675 = 73%	521 out of 633 = 82%
Sangre Grande Hospital	74 out of 90 = 82%	78 out of 104 = 75%	72 out of 104 = 69%	65 out of 99 = 65%	69 out of 99 = 68%	70 out of 99 = 70%
Caura Hospital	124 out of 124 = 100%	124 out of 125 = 99%	124 out of 125 = 99%	124 out of 125 = 99%	124 out of 125 = 99%	124 out of 125 = 99%
Point Fortin Hospital	12 out of 51 = 24%	9 out of 51 = 18%	13 out of 51 = 26%	12 out of 51 = 24%	12 out of 51 = 24%	11 out of 48 = 23%
Tobago Hospital	63 out of 108 = 58%	59 out of 108 = 55%	66 out of 108 = 61%	65 out of 108 = 61%	70 out of 108 = 65%	72 out of 108 = 67%

Total Number of Beds	2,088 out of 2,816 = 74%	2,056 out of 2,844 = 72%	2,216 out of 2,878 = 77%	2,257 out of 2,920 = 77%	2,015 out of 2,908 = 70%	2,319 out of 2,866 = 81%
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(iii) The existing bed capacity ratio per thousand population ratio is as follows:

Year	Total Beds per 1,000 population	Acute Beds Only per 1,000 population
2003	2.19	1.35
2004	2.20	1.37
2005	2.23	1.39
2006	2.26	1.45
2007	2.24	1.46
2008	2.20	1.42

(iv) The formula used is as follows:

$$\text{Bed Capacity per population ratio} = \frac{\text{Number of hospital beds}}{\text{per thousand population}}$$

This formula is an international standard that is used as a health planning tool to compare the availability of beds for the population in countries such as Switzerland, Japan, Norway, Holland, Ireland, Canada and Mexico.

- (v) In keeping with the current institutional changes such as the expansion of the Bed Bureau Management System and the use of Universal Standard Operating Procedures to improve the services at our hospitals, the Ministry of Health is in the process of increasing the number of hospital beds by two hundred and fifty (250) by the end of 2009.
- (vi) The Ministry of Health proposes to increase the number of beds in the following hospitals:

HEALTH INSTITUTION	ADDITIONAL NUMBER OF BEDS IN 2009
Port of Spain General Hospital	100
National Radiotherapy Centre	28

*Written Answer to Question**Tuesday, June 23, 2009*

HEALTH INSTITUTION	ADDITIONAL NUMBER OF BED IN 2009
Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex	42
San Fernando General Hospital	30
Sangre Grande Hospital	50
Total Number of Beds to be purchased in 2009	250