**SENATE**

*Friday, June 14, 2013*

The Senate met at 10.00 a.m.

**PRAYERS**

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence to Sen. The Hon. Devant Maharaj who is out of the country.

## PAPERS LAID

1. National Insurance (Contribution) (Amendment) Regulations, 2013. [*The Minister of Finance and the Economy (Sen. The Hon. Larry Howai)*]
2. Emergency Ambulance Services and Emergency Medical Personnel Regulations, 2013. [*The Minister of Health (The Hon. Dr. Fuad Khan)*]

## SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT

**Madam Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from His Excellency the President, Anthony Thomas Aquinas Carmona SC.

"THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency ANTHONY THOMAS AQUINAS CARMONA, S.C., President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. /s/ Anthony Thomas Aquinas Carmona SC

President.

TO: MS. PATRICIA HERRY

WHEREAS Senator the Honourable Devant Maharaj is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ANTHONY THOMAS AQUINAS CARMONA, President as aforesaid, 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, PATRICIA HERRY, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 14th June, 2013 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator the Honourable Devant Maharaj.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 13th day of June, 2013."

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Sen. Patricia Herry took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law*.

**FINANCE (SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION) (FINANCIAL YEAR 2013) BILL, 2013**

Bill to provide for the Supplementary Appropriation for the service of Trinidad and Tobago for the financial year ending 30th September, 2013 of the sum of the issue of which was authorized by the Appropriation (Financial Year 2013) Act, 2012, brought from the House of Representatives [*The Minister of Finance and the Economy*]; read the first time.

*Motion made*: That the next stage be taken at a later stage of the proceedings.

*Question put and agreed to.*

## PAPERS LAID

1. The National Insurance (Benefits) (Amendment) Regulations, 2013.
   [*Minister of Finance and the Economy* (*Sen. The Hon. Larry Howai)*]
2. The Ministerial Response to the Ninth Report of the Joint Select Committee established to inquire and report to Parliament on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 2) on the Trinidad and Tobago Solid Waste Management Company (SWMCOL). [*Sen. The Hon. Ganga Singh*]

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**The Minister of the Environment and Water Resources (Sen. The Hon. Ganga Singh):** Mr. President, we wish a deferral to next week for the three questions listed on the Order Paper for oral answer.

### Clico/CLF

### (Update on Outstanding Matters)

**51.** Would the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy provide an update with respect to all outstanding matters required to achieve a final resolution of the CLICO/CLF matter? [*Sen. Dr. L. Henry*]
*Question, by leave, deferred.*

### Heritage Stabilisation Fund

### (Update on Performance)

**52.** Would the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy provide an update on the performance of the Heritage and Stabilization Fund

(HSF), and state when the review of the provisions of the HSF, as required by section 22 of the HSF Act, will be laid before the Parliament? [*Sen. Dr. L. Henry*]

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**Children's Hospital**

**(Details of Proposed Construction)**

**53.** Regarding the proposed construction of a new Children's Hospital, would the Hon. Minister of Health indicate to the Senate:

(a) how many other sites were considered for the location of the hospital;

(b) was the chosen site the first site chosen;

(c) whether design plans have already been prepared in respect of the hospital, and what is the projected cost of this project;

(d) were any designs plans for this hospital drawn up for any site other than the one identified at (b) and discarded in favour of the current site;

(e) if the answer to part (d) is in the affirmative, whether there has been any variation in the projected costs having regard to the changed location;

(f) what are the financing arrangements for this project, including the repayment schedule;

(g) when is the money to build the said hospital to become available to the government;

(h) what is the anticipated completion date of the hospital; and

(i) the amount of money expended on the negotiation, planning, ground-preparation (including infrastructural work) and other such activities in respect of this hospital to date? [*Sen. F. Hinds*]

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**Finance (Supplementary Appropriation)**

**(Financial Year 2013) Bill, 2013**

**The Minister of Finance and the Economy (Sen. The Hon. Larry Howai):** Mr. President, I beg to move that:

A Bill to provide for the Supplementary Appropriation for the service of TrinidadandTobago for the financial year ending 30th September, 2013 of the sum of the issue of which was authorized by the Appropriation (Financial Year 2013) Act, 2012, be now read a second time.

Mr. President, this is a Finance Bill and it has been passed in the other place. The Bill provides for the supplementation of the 2013 appropriation in the sum of $2,898,091,400, to fund urgent and critical recurrent and capital expenditure to September2013. Because this involves salary adjustments of just under $1.8 billion, every Ministry is involved. I therefore ask your indulgence as I go through the list of appropriations.

The increase is earmarked for the following Heads of expenditure: Auditor General, $523,400; Judiciary, $10,024,900; Industrial Court, $667,900; service commissions, $839,000; Tobago House of Assembly, $222,818,100; Personnel Department, $4,913,100; Ministry of Finance and the Economy, $75,875,000;Ministry of National Security, $203,751;

Ministry of Legal Affairs, $10million; Ministry of Food Production, $74,937,900; Ministry of Education, $314,676,100; Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, $7,568,000; Ministry of Public Administration, $40,459,700; Ministry of Transport, $136 million; Ministry of Tourism, $8,577,800; Ministry of Public Utilities, $6,300,000; Ministry of Local Government, $257million; Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment, $3,699,500; Ministry of the People and Social Development, $210,438,000; Ministry of Justice, $859,900; Ministry of Tobago Development, $2.4 million; Ministry of Housing, Land and Marine Affairs, $142 million; Ministry of Arts and Multiculturalism ,$15,173,400; TrinidadandTobago Police Service, $661,290,200; Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, $17.1 million; Ministry of Sport, $69,689,000; Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, $104 million; Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, $97million; Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training, $190,187,500; Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration, $9,322,000.

This brings the total to $2,898,091,400. Mr. President, permit to advise this honourable Senate that included under the Heads of Expenditure is a sum of just under $1.8 billion which represents the settlement of industrial agreements for various periods of time 2008—2010, 2009—2012 and, in some cases, some interim settlements for 2011—2013.

The three largest Heads of Expenditure requiring supplemental resources for recurrent expenditure in areas other than personal expenditure are: the Ministry of the People and Social Development, the Ministry of Housing, Land and Marine Affairs and the Ministry of National Security.

The Ministry of the People and Social Development requires an additional $210.43 million to meet the payment of social grants to the end of fiscal 2013.

In the case of the Ministry of Housing, Land and Marine Affairs, the additional resource are required to facilitate expenditure under the Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme for one, the expansion of beautification and landscaping activities, two, the engagement of four additional contractors and, three, the continued development of staff with emphasis on training..

Mr. President, with respect to the Ministry of National Security, the additional funding is required to supplement current transfers and subsidies in order to, one, replenish the Strategic Services Agency's allocation which was utilized to meet interim payments for the training and maintenance support programme arising from the acquisition of four AW139 medium twin-turbine helicopters; two, to strengthen the disaster preparedness and mitigation capacities of the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management in readiness for the upcoming hurricane season; three, payment of arrears to TSTT for the roll out of CCTV cameras in TrinidadandTobago and, four, for the Hoop of Life.

Other speakers will go into detail on these and other related matters later in the proceedings, so I will not detain this honourable Senate in terms of going through all the details related to the supplemental appropriation which we are now requesting.

Mr. President, the country's fiscal position remains strong. [*Desk thumping*] This has been acknowledged by the International Monetary Fund

in its Article IV Consultation Report which was presented to us a short time ago, having been prepared earlier this year, and actually which will be presented to the executive board of the IMF today.

On January28, 2013, the rating agency Standard and Poor's, in recognition of the excellence stewardship of the economy, affirmed its A- rating on both the foreign and local currency sovereign credit rating of the Republic. At the same time, Standard and Poor's reaffirmed its A1 short-term rating with a long-term rating outlook described as stable. The double AA transfer and convertibility assessment remains unchanged.

In presenting the 2013 national budget in October2012, the Minister of Finance and the Economy announced total expenditure of $58.4 billion, with revenue of 50.7 billion, yielding an overall deficit of $7.66 billion or 4.6 per cent of GDP.

The adjustments included in this proposed Supplementary Appropriation Bill, and the use of $477 million from the unexpended resources of the IDF at the end of fiscal 2012, will increase expenditure to $3.3 billion. When this increase in expenditure is matched against the projected increase in revenue of approximately $1.5 billion, $1,582 million, and analyzed against the impact of savings and adjustments within Heads of Expenditure, it results in an increase in the projected overall deficit on fiscal operations from $7.6 billion to $9.2 billion or 5.52 per cent of GDP.

If we are to contrast this with our position at the end of the last midyear review, which took place in June of last year, at that time we projected a deficit of $8.99 billion, or approximately $9 billion, the actual deficit at the end of the year was $3.11 billion, substantially less than the

deficit which had been identified at the time. I have no doubt that this year we will again maintain our deficit, within reasonable bounds, and certainly within the originally projected numbers of approximately $7.6 billion.

As at the end of March, the actual figures on recurrent was $2.9 billion—had projected a deficit of $2.9 billion, as at the end of March we actually had a surplus of $731 million on recurrent. Overall, when capital expenditure is taken into account, we had projected a budget deficit as at the end of March of $7billion; we actually were approximately $1.7 billion. So there has been some suppression of expenditure, but there has also been some capacity constraints which we have been encountering, which we are addressing gradually and which speaks to some of the institutional hurdles that one faces as one seeks to amend and adjust and make more effective our public service.

I should say for the information of this honourable Senate that our preliminary revenue figures for the first six months to March2013, exceeded budgetary estimates by 3.4 per cent. A significant part of this came from increased revenues on taxes on income and profits arising from better than expected tax revenues coming to us from the energy sector. In addition, there was a 5.3 per cent increase in revenue from taxes on goods and services reflecting the higher than expected revenues from the growth being experienced in the non-oil sector.

If we were to look at the expenditure side, our expenditure was actually 14.5 per cent lower than budgeted for the first six months. So the results which I referred to earthier came about as a result of a combination of higher revenues and lower expenditure to the end of March.

If I were to put that in the context of the overall cash flows of the country as a whole, what is happening with respect to GDP, total revenue amounted to 15 per cent of GDP as compared to a budget of 14.2 per cent, expenditure amounted to 16.1 per cent as compared to a budget of 18.4 per cent. Overall, the deficit was 1.1 per cent of GDP, as compared to a budgeted deficit of 4.2 per cent.

Mr. President, we have been making efforts to maintain and restrain expenditure while seeking ways to raise additional revenue, and so far we have enjoyed some moderate success in this regard. But nevertheless these are deficits, and we must remain committed to and disciplined in our approach to ensuring that we bring the country's fiscal position in balance, and we get to the position where we can begin to show small surpluses. We need to put our budget in a sustainable place, and to a large extent, as I present during the course of these proceedings, you will see some of the initiatives we are taking in that regard.

Mr. President, the deficits that we are experiencing in TrinidadandTobago are no different from what is being experienced elsewhere; although I hasten to add that we take no comfort from this. But nevertheless, we seek to put the overall position, as far as the continuation of deficits is concerned, in an understandable context for the people of TrinidadandTobago.

For illustration, the major economies in the world are reflecting deficits as follows: the USA showed a deficit last year of 8.7 per cent; the UK at 6.5 per cent and the Euro Zone at 2.5 per cent. In fact, if I may be able to quote from the *OECD Economic Outlook*, last updated on May 29,

2013, which gives the general government financial balance for several countries in the world, you would see that deficits have been experienced in nearly all of the developed and developing world.

For 2014, these deficits are expected to continue. The United Kingdom is expected to show a deficit of 6.5 per cent in 2014; the United States, 5.3 per cent; the Euro area, 15 countries, 2.5 per cent; the major seven industrial countries, 4.7 per cent deficit; the OECD as a total, 3.8 per cent—the OECD being the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development.

With respect to developing countries, the OECD goes on in their table to point out that Brazil will show a deficit of 2.2 per cent, China, 1.5 per cent, India, 6.6 per cent, South Africa 4.4 per cent and so on. So overall, in the current global environment where growth has been very slow, anemic in many countries, and there has been consistent decline in others, a number of countries are using the Keynesian Model going to deficit financing, with a view to trying to kick start the economies and to get growth going again.

The IMF itself, which has always been strong on the issue of austerity, if I may be able to quote the Wall Street Journal of Wednesday, April17, 2013, it actually warned Euro area policymakers against focusing too much on hitting tough deficit targets, saying they risk further deepening their own downturns. The IMF went on to say:

> Fiscal adjustments need to proceed gradually building on measures that limit damage to demand in the short-term."

So there is an understanding that economies of the world, in order to ensure that they provide a gentle landing to their economies and they put in place

the requisite mechanisms for growth, recognize the fact that in moving to a balanced budget and moving back their economies into surplus, they must do so on a gradual basis, which is precisely the strategy we have been pursuing over the past 12 months.

Turning now to the performance of the economy, it has shown three consecutive quarters of growth. For the quarter ended September2012, the economy showed growth of 1.8 per cent. For December2012, the economy showed growth of 1 per cent and for 2013 the initial figures we have from the Central Bank shows the TrinidadandTobago economy growing at 1.7 per cent. If one were to consider now, these figures are figures that we will certainly like to see coming in higher, but coming from the position of a world economy which has experienced a significant downturn, these gradual movements up are in fact very positive for the economy.

In fact, if I may be allowed to compare the figures for December2012, which are the latest figures we have for some of the economies, you would see that TrinidadandTobago that quarter, two quarters ago, showed growth of 1 per cent. Jamaica, however, showed a decline of .9 per cent; Barbados a decline of .2 per cent; the Euro area a decline of .6 per cent; the United Kingdom a decline of .3 per cent; the United States showed growth of .4 per cent; Canada showed great of .2 per cent; Brazil shows growth of 1.4 per cent. Overall, the economies of the world have been showing very anemic growth.

The United States economy I am sure would have shown some better figures for the first quarter of this year, and perhaps would show even better figures in the second quarter of this year. The United States as you know

had followed a strategy of very significant deficit financing at very low interest rates with a very accommodative monetary position, which has allowed that economy to begin to show some growth.

I should also point out that not only has the developed countries and our Caribbean counterparts come through some very difficult times, but even India and China today are showing signs of a slowing of growth. India's growth for the quarter ended December, was just about 5 per cent, and this comes down from a consistent high of over 7 and a half per cent. China's growth has also begun to slow.

These are areas of concern for us, because TrinidadandTobago in a global economy which is having difficulty will itself have to consider what are the challenges and the things we need to do to ensure that we continue to provide a reasonable and acceptable standard of living and continuing improvements in the standard of living of all our people.

If I were to look at the performance of individual sectors over the past three quarters, as I said we have shown three consecutive quarters of growth. Our non-energy sector has continued to do very well, and it is important for us to measure this because was one of the key cornerstones of the Government has been its articulation of its position regarding diversification of the economy. The non-energy sector has grown by 2.7 per cent at the end of September of last year; 1.7 per cent at the end of December, 2.6 per cent at the end of March of this year. So there has been consistent reasonably good growth in the non-energy sector.

The construction sector, after several quarters of contraction, has shown continuing return to growth. [*Desk thumping*] In the quarter ending

September, the construction sector showed growth of 1.3 per cent; in December, it showed growth of 2.3 per cent, and the preliminaries estimates of the Central Bank for the first quarter of 2013 showed growth of 3 per cent. [*Desk thumping*]

The manufacturing sector itself has also shown a return to growth. Again, it showed 1.2 per cent in September, 0.9 per cent in December, and a significant uptick in the quarter ended March. But that is a number that I have asked for us to continue to review, because a big part of it reflected the growth in cement output, which was good, in that, we have TCL back in operation. Last year's numbers would have been affected by the fact that TCL itself was facing significant industrial disruptions and therefore output had been curtailed last year. So we are comparing this year with the company operating at full output, with last year when its output was curtailed. That is a number I have asked for us to probably do a little more research on and do a bit more analytics around it to understand what the numbers would be if we take out the effect of the industrial action that took place last year. But on the face of it, the manufacturing sector showed a significant boost in growth this year, with cement production increasing by 51 per cent, and actually in sales the preliminary number was actually up by 77 per cent, so that may have created a bit of a distortion in the overall numbers.

In finance and real estate, the growth for the quarter ended March, again from the Central Bank, flash estimates showed growth of 6 per cent. That is something again which I have asked that we do some further work on in order to refine those numbers.

What was very heartening, Mr. President, was the fact that the agricultural sector showed a return to growth, [*Desk thumping*] 2.6 per cent in the quarter ended December. With respect to motor vehicles, that also provided a bit of a boost to the distributive trades, with sales increasing by 13.3 per cent in the quarter ended March of this year.

So a number of areas of the economy have continued to do well, have continued to show a rebound, and it points to the fact that we can look forward to further buoyancy as we move forward into the Christmas period..

The energy sector, however, we need to speak to for a little while. When I was in the other place, I got my Ts and Bs mixed up. I referred to $4. 2trillion instead of $4.2 billion and so on. So perhaps I could use this opportunity to correct some of the statements that were made, or to clarify the statements that were made.

First of all I want to say that the energy section has faced some difficulties over the past few quarters, mainly because of the ongoing maintenance programme that is taking place in that sector. That resulted in zero per cent growth in the quarter ended December. I am pleased to say that for the quarter ended March, the energy sector showed a return to growth, with growth of 0.5 per cent. [*Desk thumping*] Again, that growth was affected by the continuing maintenance work that is going on in the sector, very much needed work. Some of that work perhaps had been put off for too long. It is one of the things that, while on the one hand it does affect our economy, it does affect our tax take, it does affect the numbers for growth with the economy as a whole.

I am pleased to note that work is going on, that some of the things that

perhaps had been deferred, is now that work is taking place. Because the last thing we need to see is any kind of major disruption in the energy sector, any kind of a disruption that perhaps could result in loss of lives and so on. That is something that we have to pay attention to and it is something that neither the upstream producers nor ourselves would be willing to compromise, for any reason whatsoever, even if it means that we have to accept the fact that we probably would show some anemic growth figures with the economy as a whole.

During the quarter also I should point out that crude oil output fell by 2.3 per cent; again, this was because of the effects of industrial action in the sector. But I am pleased to note that exploration and production grew by 1.6 per cent and natural gas output increased by 2 per cent. In addition, energy output grew by 5.4 per cent. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** Well done, well done, well done!

**Sen. The Hon. L. Howai:** That has given us a fillip which resulted in positive numbers for the energy sector, which translated into overall growth for the economy, because the energy sector plays a very, very significant role in our economy, contributing approximately 40 per cent of our GDP. It is an area that has a significant impact whenever anything untoward, good or bad, happens in the sector.

I should add at this stage, that while we have been speaking of growth and my expectation is that for the first half of this year—in fact, in this current quarter, we will see an acceleration of growth—barring any unforeseen difficulties—our initial projections actually for this first half is that we can show growth of up to 2 per cent. I expect that the numbers

would be somewhere between 1.7 and 2 per cent growth for the first half of 2013. This is based on the fact that I expect no further disruptions in the energy sector between now and June 30, which will result in the sector showing growth of about 0.8 per cent as a result of that, together with projected growth in the non-energy sector of between two and a half to 2.8 per cent. We expect therefore to show fairly robust numbers for this quarter, which should result in growth for the economy as a whole for the first half of in the region of up to 2 per cent. [*Desk thumping*]

So we are looking forward to that, but the thing is I should mention at the same time that for the third quarter I expect that things will be a bit more difficult, because of the fact there is a significant turnaround that will take place in the energy sector which will result—as I said, I expected the downturn to be 1.5billion cubic feet of gas in the third quarter of this year. For all of September I expect that we probably will have a significant curtailment. We are working now with the upstream producers with a view to seeing how best we can change the configuration of some of the work that is being done, put in some bypasses and see to what extent we can reduce the impact of these numbers on the third quarter. That is something we are looking at.

I should point out, as I tried to do in the Lower House, the total output of gas for the economy is about 4.2 bcf a day, of which about half, a little less than 2 bcf, actually goes to the downstream sector with the remainder going to the liquefied natural gas sector. This means that if we went with the extent of the reduction in output, we would probably have something like at least a 25 per cent reduction in output in the energy sector in the third

quarter. Therefore we are working at speed to ensure that we could take some particular measures to reduce the impact of the downturn, that we will have to do, or the additional maintenance work which we will have to do in the energy sector in the third quarter of this year. So that is likely to affect our numbers this year. Again, we need to understand what is causing this downturn, because we are likely to take macroeconomic policy measures to deal with what is an engineering problem.

If there is maintenance work to be done, and this is going to have a significant effect on the economy, we have to recognize that and put engineering solutions in place to deal with that. That is why we are looking at creating alternatives for getting gas output to the downstream sector and to the LNG sector, and bypassing some of the maintenance work that we are required to do in the third quarter of this year.

Mr. President, the overall performance of the economy is taking place also in a context of a very positive macroeconomic environment locally. The latest data for inflation shows that inflation as at the end of April was 5.5 per cent. [*Desk thumping*] Lending to the private sector has continued to increase. Our foreign exchange reserves have measured $9.2 billion as at the end of April. [*Desk thumping*] I should add that those figures of course do not increase the Heritage and Stabilisation Fund, which has a balance of approximately US $4.8 billion. [*Desk thumping*] The overall financial and economic buffers continue to remain strong, continue to remain good, good import cover. Our debt to GDP remains measured, in that, three years ago debt to GDP was approximately 39 per cent. As I indicated during my budget speech, I brought to book some of the support which had been to be

put into the CL Financial group. The loans that had to be recognized, we brought those to book, and the debt to GDP figures had gone up to approximately 47 per cent. As at the end of March, these numbers amounted to approximately 49 per cent debt to GDP; still very, very well controlled.

Unemployment remains also well controlled. Let me say about unemployment that I want us to be careful about, in a sense perhaps being too overly optimistic about where the unemployment figures are. They are very good in relation to the rest of world. The Bahamas is at 11 per cent unemployment; Jamaica at 13 per cent. Some of the other islands in the Caribbean are as high as 18 and 19 per cent. The US is at 8 per cent. The Euro Zone is at 12 per cent. We are at about 5 and a half per cent. [*Desk thumping*] So our overall numbers look good, but I want to say that the whole issue of continuing to create meaningful employment remains a challenge, remains a goal, remains something that we continue to commit ourselves to, because we have to continue to put the changes in place that would ensure long-term, sustainable, meaningful value-adding employment being created on an ongoing basis in our economy.

The macroeconomic environment is good; the macroeconomic indicators are excellent. The thing is that there are a number of things we need to do and a number of areas we need to address to ensure that there is self-sustaining growth in the economy. The structural reforms that we need to put in place, some of which I will speak to, we continue to focus on them because those are the changes that will ensure that when the oil and gas are no longer there, we will have an economy that is vibrant and sustainable. [*Desk thumping*]

Particularly, Mr. President, the issue of diversification remains an area that we continue to focus on. I will speak a little more to that as I speak on my own presentation. Innovation and entrepreneurship are two areas that are very important. Our Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development I know will have a lot to say about what is happening in those particular areas. I have lamented in other areas that while we spend approximately $9billion on the education sector on an annual basis, I am not impressed with the level of innovation, with the level of new ideas, with the level of creativity that is coming out of the investments that we are making. This is very, very important for the sustainability of our economy, and it is an area that we continue to put focus on. I want to give the commitment to this honourable Senate that we will continue as a government to place attention on this area, to ensure that we could build a sustainable economy, an economy that continues to be self-sustaining.

Another area that we need to focus on, and perhaps we will expand on it a bit later on is the brain drain and the demographic issues that we need to address. One of the big issues we face is that we have an ageing population. Our population has not been growing very dynamically over the past few years. We are still 1.3 million people, and we have been 1.3 million people for the past decade or so. What is happening is that the age configuration of our population is changing, and that has very serious demographic implications for us, and serious social and economic implications for us, as we seek to deal with an ageing population.

We also need to consider and debate and have a healthy think national debate on the issue of immigration policy. In a sense immigration has tended

to happen a little, I should say, perhaps not in sync with overall socioeconomic policy. Perhaps we need to line these up in a better way than has been in the past. Of course, the system of transfers and subsidies is an area that I have been focusing attention on. It is an area that I continue to take specific measures, as we seek to bring down the growth that we have seen in that area, and to get to a level that is self-sustaining.

Finally, Mr. President, the efficiency in the public sector to ensure that we produce as effectively and efficiently as possible the goods and services which the people of TrinidadandTobago demand from us . [*Desk thumping*]

While we are delighted at the whole economic performance of the economy and the good macroeconomic indicators, particularly in a world which is mired in so much bad and negative news about economies elsewhere, we have to address the area that I had identified. A number of activities is taking place in parallel with this growth in the economy. I want to point particularly to development of the financial services support services subsector. This is an area that we have committed to focus on in order to accelerate the diversification of our economy. I was very pleased when in November of last year in this fiscal year Royal Bank opened its operational and service delivery centre, which is a back office operation, which will be processing in TrinidadandTobago the back office support requirements of 22 countries around the region. [*Desk thumping*] We will be bringing the operations of 22 countries into TrinidadandTobago. Scotia Bank has signed an MOU, and they have already started work on their regional back office [*Desk thumping*] and Pan American Life has already also started work on their back office. [*Desk thumping*]

So we have seen a number of initiatives starting to take shape. Over the next five years, as I said, we will look to the creation of 3,000 new jobs in specific area—3,000 value adding jobs that will provide some meaningful employment for the educated people of TrinidadandTobago. [*Desk thumping*]

We are also putting the architecture in place to strengthen our financial services industry. This is very important for us because our vision for our financial services sector is to see it develop. This is not just my own vision or just the vision of this Government; I think Members on the opposite side had also seen this as an area they would like to see developed in the future. We have been putting in place the architecture to ensure that we can create the kind of environment that would see the investments made in this sector that we would like to see. Those investments that I spoke to earlier are just the nascent investments that we expect to see, that have been made, but we expect to see this accelerate over time. Therefore, we have spent a lot of time on the FIU Act and with the support of the Opposition we have moved Trinidad and Tobago out of the grey list. I want to particularly congratulate the Hon. Attorney General for the work he has done in this particular area. [*Desk thumping*]

We have laid the Securities Act and will be coming forward to this honourable House in another few weeks with some of the changes which we had promised some six weeks ago, [*Desk thumping*] in keeping with our commitment in this regard.

The insurance legislation has been tabled and will be debated in a few days in this honourable Senate. The Credit Union Act we expect to be able

to lay, if not at the end of this year, by early next year, as well as the Occupational Pensions Bill, which we expect to lay during the course of next year. [*Desk thumping*] So what we are doing is laying a strong foundation on which the capital markets can begin to develop in TrinidadandTobago. The vision is to make TrinidadandTobago a regional exchange for capital markets activities, both debt activities as well as equity investments on the stock exchange, and therefore it is an area on which we have been paying particular attention.

The PPP's is another area—public/private partnerships—that we had started to do some work on. I have to confess that perhaps at the time when I read the budget, the institutional support mechanisms and arrangements were not as far ahead as I had anticipated at the time. But over the past few months we have done a lot of work in putting the framework in place. I think we are ready to start very soon with the signing of an agreement with respect to one particular public/private partnership, which I expect to get going very shortly.

What we have down is canvassed all of the Ministries over the past few months, and we got something like about 80 projects which had been identified for public/private partnerships. We streamlined them down, and we did a very detailed analysis and came up with 10 projects that we thought could be properly managed and implemented. We started the process of identifying the consultants who would ensure that the entire process is very transparent, as we move to identifying the partners who would work with us in these particular areas. The two specific areas of priority which we have identified will be health and transportation, although there are a number of

other areas, such as tourism and some areas of infrastructure development, which we have identified.

In terms of capital market activity, one of the key things that we had committed as a government to focusing on was getting capital market activity going in TrinidadandTobago again. The Clico Investment Fund allowed us to be able to do that. As at the end of May—certainly let me go back a bit—as at November 01 last year we launched the CIF, and at May 09 there were 6,553 CIF active unit holders, holding approximately 67 per cent of the issued shares. As at June09, the market capitalization was $4.3 billion. In fact, there has been significant growth on the stock exchange over the past year. If you go back, and I am sure some of our colleagues on the other side will be able to speak to the fact, that over the past few years the stock exchange actually shrunk rather than grew. The listing of the CIF has allowed us the opportunity to reverse that and start to show some growth. Actually average daily trading volume of the CIF is now 124,000 units. [*Desk thumping*]

If I can quote from the *Business Express* of May 29, page 4. The CEO of the stock exchange went on to say that:

> "In the five months since we had listed the CIF"—at the time, because we launched on November 01 and listed it in early January—in five months we had transactions amounting to 12.6million units with a trading value of $279million."

So we were able to add that volume of trades and that value of trades to the stock exchange over the first five months of this year, which is a significant growth for the stock exchange.

We also launched the TrinidadandTobago Tourism Business Development Company to revitalize the business sector in Tobago. We have received about 26 applications and a number of them have been approved, valued at approximately $40 million. A number of them have been approved and we are just finalizing some final negotiating points before we start the process of seeing some of these businesses accessing the financing that they would want to access from the banking system, and seeing the Tobago economy starting to be revitalized and grow again. So there are a number of initiatives taking place. We have also made available another $100million to Board of Inland Revenue to facilitate VAT refunds.

I want to also congratulate in particular the Hon. Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment, [*Desk thumping*] who has also been doing an excellent job on the ease of doing business. He has been the driving force in trying to make some of these things happen. We have amended the Value Added Tax Act to effect registration for VAT in one day, similarly registration for NIS in one day. We have removed a number of sort of nuisance items which one had to surmount in order to register a company. We have also put business registration and company incorporation online through the single electronic window at the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment. We have also put a number of other initiatives in place for construction permits and trading across borders.

As you know here, Mr. President, a few weeks ago, we also put measures inplace via the Customs (Amdt.) Act to allow for the electronic transmission of passenger and cargo information to customs and border control, in order to ensure that we could speed up the process of clearing

both people and goods as quickly as possible, when they come to our shores.I am hopeful that within the next few months we would see the time taken to clear cargo on our docks being reduced from days to hours.

In summary, our economy is strong. Our financial and economic buffers remain solid and measures are gradually being implemented to address the structural issues that we face. We do have a budget deficit, but that is underpinned by solid economic and financial buffers, by a good theoretical construct and underpinning, and we have made a commitment to have this budget deficit managed in the most manageable way over an acceptable period of time that would ensure we do not cause any dislocation to our economy.

With those foregoing details which I have given to this honourable Senate, what is clearly underlying is this Government's commitment to delivery. Mr. President, it was the hon. Prime Minister who had said in one of her earliest speeches that her commitment is to serve the people. This mandate has evolved to deliver to the people and it has further evolved now to implement for the people. This is a significant area of focus for us over the coming year. Implementation will be the mantra of this side of the Senate. The People's Partnership Government has in its three years of office undertaken to carry out these mandates in the best way that resources would allow. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senator, you have another 10 minutes.

**Sen. The Hon. L. Howai:** Thank you, Mr. President. This Government has undertaken this work in what is perhaps the most scrutinized political environment in our nation's history. Our every word, our every action, our

every commitment receive immediate, widespread commentary from citizens of our country. With the pace and scope of scrutiny having expanded enormously, it means that the expectations of the people have also expanded. Development, progress and implementation will therefore not wait.

As a government we must, and we have adapted, and in large measure have put in place a number of initiatives to meet the needs of this evolving environment, where the needs are greater, more urgent and more complex.It is for this reason that hon. Senators on this side will be detailed in not only the programmes undertaken, but also the necessity of these programmes and the benefit and value they would deliver for TrinidadandTobago.

Mr. President, TrinidadandTobago is at the geopolitical centre of the Caribbean. [*Desk thumping*] This was particularly underlined by the fact that the Vice-President of the United States as well as the President of China chose to come to TrinidadandTobago. The President of China could have chosen to go to Columbia and meet with Caricom members in Columbia, or perhaps have gone to Costa Rica and met with Caricom members there, but he close to come to TrinidadandTobago. He chose to come to TrinidadandTobago because this country is seen as a leading light in the Caribbean, [*Desk thumping*] is seen as the leader of the Caribbean, and therefore the leaders of the world come to TrinidadandTobago.

I want to say, as Minister of Finance and the Economy, I taken the hon. Prime Minister's mandate to us to serve for the people and to implement for the people very seriously indeed. The onerous task falls to me to ensure that with the limited resources we have, the needs of our

citizens, of our economic development agenda and of our determination to deliver, are met. These needs must be met in a manner that is responsible, that demonstrates a continuing progression of growth with development and that it is sustainable.

Already the benefits of our restructuring of priorities are showing. We have reversed the decline in the economy and we have placed our economy on a growth trajectory, notwithstanding the many difficulties which we face in the global economic environment. We have to continue though, to find a balance between the need to inspire economic activity through government spending and the need to control inflation through disciplined fiscal management.

We have to ensure that more and more, expenditure is matched by measurable gain and value for the people of our country. Most of all we have to ensure that in the midst of launching and delivering a redirected economic development programme, we do so with as little fall out as possible in the context of job creation and poverty eradication, and that we do so in a manner that is sustainable and deepens the confidence in the restored power and influence of the TrinidadandTobago economy.

Mr. President, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**11.00 a.m.**

**Sen. Dr. Lester Henry:** Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to initiate the Opposition's response to this Finance Appropriation Bill. And let me first start by saying that it is pretty much more of the same. We had the last finance minister, before this previous one, only coming to the House

to beg for more money. That is the only initiative that the PP Government has given us so far from both their finance ministers. So it is quite ironic that one finance minister was removed, we assume, for not being effective—if he was that effective we assume he would still be there—and another finance minister takes over and continues along the exact same path. So we are back to square one all over again.

The only thing is that I find the desk thumping for this particular minister a little bit less enthusiastic than the previous one. There was a way they used to thump their desks in unison, very loudly.

**Mr. Ramlogan:** "Dah is wha yuh does be watching and checking [*Inaudible*]?"

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** The Minister was just talking only pie in the sky, and nothing of any real substance. And I realize that it is actually only beginning to soak into the Government side, that they are really not offering anything that is substantial to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, in terms of economic development and growth. [*Desk thumping*] Because, when you come here and you start to boast about 0.5 per cent expansion, and you thump your desk over that? Are you serious?

**Hon. Member:** "If it was negative growth, yuh woulda hear yuh."

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** The strange thing about the Minister is when he is talking, trying to justify why his growth rate has turned out to be much lower than what they were thumping their desks about last September with the budget debate, and we told you 2.5 per cent does not make any sense, in terms of your predicted growth rate—that is what the budget was based on; either 2.5 or 2.2. Because you always have these lofty predictions, and you

go in the press and say the economy is turned around based on a prediction, rather than an actual fact.

So, now that you have a modicum of economic growth to talk about, a very, very—you know, you are grasping at straws, scraping the bottom of the barrel—

**Hon. Member:** Oh, come on.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** That is what you are doing. And you are not being true to even your own words. Because the Minister, in trying to justify, "kinda" in a back door way, why the [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

[*Crosstalk*]

Yes, yes—trying to justify why—[*Interruption*] No, no, no, no, no, no. We are not accustomed sneaking in any back door. We know about the front door.

**Hon. Member:** They accustom to back door.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes, you all seem very animated when you hear "back door". It rings a bell. [*Continuous laughter and crosstalk*]

**Mr. Ramlogan:** You will fall through the trap door.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Back door, boy; that really bring all yuh to life.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** It brought them to life.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So, in justifying, Mr. President, the really abject failure to achieve the targeted economic growth rates that were predicted last year, in trying to make excuses, the Minister talked about how all we had these big, negative growth and very sluggish growth in the major economies of the world, and so on. Now the question I ask is: If you know all this before; you so smart; if you know all this before, how could you jump and say we are

going to get 2.5 per cent positive growth for this year? And you come and you say well you knew this all along, that there is sluggishness in the international economy. You cannot have it both ways.

And then, when it comes to talking about the economic growth, why did the Minister go all the way to China and Japan and wherever; outer Mongolia, inner Mongolia, wherever else he was talking about? Right here in the Caribbean, if you look at the developing world, we have, most of the countries have tended to show some kind of recovery after the obvious financial crisis of 2008 into 2009.

If you look right here in the Caribbean, this is from the Central Bank Monetary Policy Report, when they comparing regional economies. In 2011, the Bahamas 1.6. All of these countries were severely affected by the same financial crisis that hit us in 2008 into 2009. In fact, it had the worst impact on them, because they are mainly based on tourism, as we all know, without much natural resources. Barbados in 2011, 1.6 per cent growth; Barbados, 0.6, we know they are struggling; Belize, 1.9; the ECCU, the Eastern Caribbean is having difficulties, of course, as we all know, minus [*Inaudible*]. So they are the only ones in the whole region, other than Trinidad and Tobago, that registered a negative growth rate for 2011, and none of these have oil and natural gas at very, very good prices over the past three years.

**Hon. Senator:** That is right.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So what is there to boast about? I mean, this is ridiculous. Look at, when you go to 2012; of course, some of these numbers may be revised, but the initial numbers, Bahamas, 2.5 per cent; Barbados is

flat, zero; Belize, 5.3 per cent economic growth; Guyana, 5.4. We know Guyana. We know the struggles they have over there; positive economic growth of some significance. Jamaica, even struggling under IMF conditionality, 1.5 per cent; Suriname, 4.7 per cent. This is 2012 growth figures. Drop down to Tobago, 0.2 per cent for 2012, and this Government, early last year when we warned them and said, how are you going to get over 2 per cent growth? When the TCL strike was about to start; the Minister talks about the strike and the negative impact it had on the economy, and so on, a year after.

**Sen. Singh:** Is Roget [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** When we knew from the time the strike started you must have a negative impact on the economy.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Of course.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Again, you want to have your cake and eat it. You want to act as though you were so smart; you know that the TCL strike affected your policies, and so on, a year after. So when it was actually happening and we were coming here in this Chamber and telling you, how could you still be predicting these positive things when you have a major strike that would affect your economic growth? And you all pretended as though: Well, okay, no problem. Our policies will bring such joy. And you come again and you have to admit that you almost achieved no significant economic growth whatsoever. I emphasize, the point is that these economies in the Caribbean, which were devastated by the financial crisis of 2008/2009, all of them have shown some signs of recovery. In fact, in the case of Guyana, the Bahamas, and so on, it is a significant recovery, and yet

we, in Trinidad and Tobago, with all our oil and natural gas, cannot seem to find anything to really be proud of by the way of economic expansion over the past three years. I mean, to put it in context, if you look at the energy prices that this Government has had since it came into power—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** That's right.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes. Price of crude—quoting from the economic bulletin earlier this year in March 2013, the average price of crude oil, West Texas Intermediate Crude, declined by 12 per cent to $92. So that means the year before it was about 95, or some higher figure. The average price of natural gas increased by 75.9 per cent on a year-on-year basis to March 2013 attaining a new 12-month high of US 2.8 per mmbtu. So you have buoyant energy prices. You spending like crazy, and you have virtually nothing to show for it. So what is the proper explanation? It means, obviously, as I have said before in this Chamber, that you are wasting people's money. It is just completely unproductive spending. [*Desk thumping*]

And then you come, you see some little glimmer and you grab at straws and come and beat your chest and say: Oh look, we have an expansion; something to congratulate ourselves about. But if you look at this in the context of what we had experienced before, you would find yourselves looking to bury your heads in the sand rather than thump your desks. Because if you look at the country's performance before the crisis that affected most countries in the world, you would see that we were on a significant growth path for almost 15 to 16 years, as many of us know in this Chamber.

If you look at the growth rate of Trinidad and Tobago's real GDP

growth from the year 2000, the last two years of the prior UNC Government, 7.2 per cent expansion, 2000; 2001, economic growth, 4.2 per cent. And then when you go to 2002, when a real government took over, 7.9 per cent in 2002.

**Sen. Singh:** Took over in December 2002.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Come on, come on, aye, aright, aright, aright, whatever.

**Sen. Singh:** You agree with me?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Well you want me make it better? You want to hear 2003?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Tell him.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** 13.4 per cent economic expansion. All right? [*Desk thumping*] So, 13.4 per cent; almost unprecedented in the history of the country. In 2004, 6.5 per cent economic expansion; 2005, 5.8 per cent real GDP expansion. Of course, look at 2006, 13.3 per cent real GDP growth. [*Desk thumping*] We do not come and boast about half of 1 per cent [*Desk thumping*] and talk about delivering to the people. So, 2007, 4.6 per cent. Of course, 2008, the beginning of the crisis, and so on, we went down to 3.4 per cent. The year of the crisis, which everyone acknowledged, we had a negative 4.4 per cent growth. No argument there. We acknowledge that things were bad in 2009 when the crisis hit. It happened all over, so we take full responsibility, because we were the ones in power at the time, so we do not hide. Right?

But 2010 now, .2 per cent. Right? As I said, you took over in about mid, somewhere before mid-year 2010, you were able to generate a positive growth. And, of course, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition usually

reminds you, in that budget statement of 2010 you promised to turn the economy around and you did, because the projected growth at the beginning of 2010 was 2.5 per cent—

**Hon. Senator:** We told them not to turn it around.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** —in fact, it was actually being recorded as positive economic growth for the first half of that year and you found a way to really turn it around. You ran it into the ground. Okay? And then now, after all the desk thumping, and so on, from the 2010 budget and then even into the 2011/2012 budget—many of the words the Minister used today sounded very familiar about laying a foundation and turning the corner and all kinds of—so what you ended up with in 2011, was minus 2.6 per cent growth, in your full year in office.

Then, at the end of 2011 into 2012, you went again and started talking about two and a half, 2.5, 2.7, all kinds of lofty predictions which resulted in 2012 in a whopping growth rate of 0.2 per cent. That is what the official figure is. And, I mean, so there is no reason for you to come and start talking about, you know, you have delivered to the people and you have made such great strides in economic management. As I said, as far as economic management is concerned, you are still struggling to get out of your own half and basically the Government is at sixes and sevens as to what to do with the economy. We hear about all kinds of plans from one Finance Bill to the other, from one budget to the other. And as the Minister pointed out in his own acknowledgment, you have a problem of implementation. So even when you come and you talk about: "Well, we projected a budget deficit of seven-plus billion," and the budget deficit

would actually be smaller or mid-year, in your mid-year review, you have a surplus rather than a projected deficit. That shows that you have incompetence in implementation; that you could not spend the money, even though you want to.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** That is right.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Even with your six-million fire truck, you still could not spend all the money.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** They tried.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** You tried very hard. And even with that, with corruption, you have—you are so incompetent, you cannot spend all the money. Because part of it, I will get to, is why is that happening? Why is there incompetence in implementation? The Minister himself said that is his priority going forward. By that he is acknowledging there is a problem. And we told you so from before; that you have a significant problem with your implementation. And when the Minister talks about inflation, and so on, and we have heard several speakers on the other side come and talk about: "Well, you know, they bring down inflation to such and such a figure." In March 2010, the inflation rate had dropped to 4.7 per cent. It had gone down. The same PNM administration; it had come down before you came into office. And then when you took over, there was another spike in inflation during the latter half of 2010. So, to say that you brought it down is okay; is all well and good. But the point is that it went up under you. Before you came into office in 2010, it had already gone down.

**Sen. Hinds:** That is right.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** That is the fact. So do not act as though it was high

under the PNM and you inherited high inflation and brought it down. We had already brought inflation under control before you took office. Okay?

So, in terms of the numbers here, some of the things that the Minister talked about, you see that you always fall way below your targeted growth and then come and try to make excuses. So when I announced your targeted growth rate at two point something and so on, and figures that sound kind of nice, you beat your chest and you act as though it is a fait accompli and then you come back six months or a year later and start making excuses and boasting about your ability to accomplish a very minuscule amount of growth.

Last year, around this time, I think, with this Bill, I also warned the Government about the potential tendency of tampering with data and statistics because I had a sneaky suspicion that if it was not being done, it was something that was being contemplated, because of the continuous embarrassment of these economic data. And I have noticed that the new Governor of the Central Bank took over in second quarter last year and since then, all of a sudden, the Central Bank figures recording positive economic growth. So, I want to raise the issue, as if in—wondering if that is purely coincidental. So, I am serious about this. I am not joking. Because, yes the consequences could be very dire if we fall into that trap and even involving the CSO, which I will talk about more, later.

And again, the Minister again talks about the sound footing and they thump their desks about what kind of solid macro environment we have, and we have the numbers. You met a solid macroeconomic environment in place. You are trying your best to mess it up, but because the base was so

solid, you have not been able to completely mess it up yet, because if you go back to 2007, Standard and Poor's, A minus; 2008, A; 2009, our X credit rating A; 2010, A; 2011; so it is a continuum. It is nothing that you have done. You met it that way. You could only congratulate yourself from the point of view that you did not mess it up yet. But if you continue along the lines at which you are going, eventually it will be messed up.

The Minister boasts about official reserves of over 9.2 billion. Well, when they came into office they met 9 billion there, and they had the discourteous way of saying that the Treasury was empty, and repeating it all over the radio, in the press, including people who know much better. And even when we told them: Well no, you had 9 million in the reserves and the Heritage and Stabilization Fund had over $3 billion at the time, you only added about $500 million or so since you came in. You met most of it there. [*Interruption*] Well, I might be off by a little bit, but most of it, the three billion was there.

**Sen. Hinds:** That is right.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So doh even try dat. Yeah. [*Desk thumping*] And not only that, the point is given the price, the energy prices, you had no choice. It is the law.

**Sen. Hinds:** That is right. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So it is not that you were doing us some generous favour. We set up the law that when prices were above a certain budgeted level, that money would be contributed to there. So do not act as though it is some genius of a policy that you made. No.

So all the macroeconomic indicators, the international credit rating,

the reserves, everything was in place. The expansion of the economy is still extremely [*Inaudible*] at best and nothing to really boast about. Now, in terms of prices, as I was saying, we had brought down inflation under control in the early part of 2010 and we proceeded to—and what is interesting about your economic growth strategies, because in the first year and a half or two years of the previous finance Minister they also talked about growth polls. What has happened to them? We hear nothing from this current Minister. I am talking about the growth polls that were promised.

**Sen. Singh:** It is coming.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** It is coming? Well, we told you that most likely those growth polls would be greasy poles, and so far, we have turned out to be correct. Pure greasy poles.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** The growth polls?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yeah. You know you climb up, you slip right back down? Right. [*Crosstalk*]

No, well you inventing it; you reinventing it. [*Laughter*] You bringing it back. Then we had the amazing flop of the removal of VAT from how many items?

**Sen. Hinds:** Seven thousand.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Seven thousand. You remember Minister Bharath coming with a long list of paper. You know, at the time, it looked like toilet paper but it was some kind of printer printout, with over 7,000, and it has turned out to be just that.

**Sen. George:** Like the paper the email was printed on?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yeah. So, you have a situation where even in the

Monetary Report of the Central Bank, they talk about, the effect lasted about two months or so at most, a few months, it has fizzled, so there is no benefit and you have forgone 400 million by—

**Sen. George:** Where the research?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** It is in the Central Bank Monetary Report.

**Hon. Senator:** Oh my.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I do not understand what you are talking about. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** The Central Bank Monetary Report.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** It is right here.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** It did not come from CSO.

**Sen. George:** The same figures he say the Central Bank Governor tampering? Where is the consistency?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** It is there. But I quoted his figures.

**Sen. Cudjoe:** He would have his turn to speak. Do not be discouraged.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So you had this amazing flop.

**Sen. George:** Make up your mind, and say what you doing with the Central Bank figures.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Let them research.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So you have this amazing flop where your own admission was that you were forgoing 400 million. [*Crosstalk*] And that also. The fact is that—

**Sen. George:** What it is yuh really saying?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I have seen the Minister of Finance and the press in recent weeks, talking about revenue generation measures is key to his plans,

and so on, yet he comes here and says nothing about it.

**Sen. George:** Make up yuh mind nah.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I mean, this is the place where you should come and say, "Well okay, we plan to generate new revenue by such and such," not just let it happen by happenstance: "Well okay, global oil prices increased so we get a little more money than we thought." What is your policy?

When you cancel productive projects, and so on, as you did from the start of your term in office things that could enhance the country's revenue, and so on, foreign exchange earnings, and so on, how could you come back now and say: Well, okay what are we doing? What is in place of the aluminum smelter, in terms of generating foreign exchange?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** That is right.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** We have heard all kinds of plans from the Energy Minister in 2010, 2011, 2012. What has become of all of them? In the previous budgets we used to hear about all kinds of plants and billion-dollar investments, and so on, what has become of all of that?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Zero.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** What has become? Where is the return on all those things? Right. Somebody is going to jump up and say: Well it will take 10 years or seven years or some kind of thing. You know when you get cornered, you say: Well no, it is coming. It is always around the way. It like the Messiah; it is always coming.

**Sen. George:** You go ahead and blaspheme.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And you cannot ever come here and say, "Well listen, this project that we talked about last year has been implemented"—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Sorry I deceived you.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** —and hence we are generating income and revenue from this for the country. It would be nice to hear that at some point. So at least if you thump your desk for that you can say: "Okay, we have something solid here." But nothing.

**Sen. George:** He doh like we thumping the desk.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Nothing at all.

**Sen. George:** Thumping the desk does affect him negatively.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So all our indicators were very, very positive and you met it so, and do not come and stand here as though you did something to put this in place, and Trinidad and Tobago standing as an important nation in the Caricom. In fact, you are doing more damage to it than anything else. [*Desk thumping*] Your Government is making us the laughingstock of the Caribbean.

**Hon. Senator:** Oh really?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Oh yes.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Of course. I travel too around the region. I know what they say about us at this current state. I mean, yeah. After we built a solid reputation.

So, you do not have to take my word for it, because you know I always have a little more to say about these things and I do not just rely on my own assessment. I have a few other people who agree with me in my assessment of what is going on here.

If you go to a report on WinTV news; this is dated Wednesday, May

29, okay. This is an interview, apparently, that took place with the Indian High Commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago, Shri Malay Mishra. He revealed last evening, while delivering an address at the University of the West Indies, trading figures dropped from US $190 million in 2012 to 2013, when in 2008 to 2009 trading figures were doubled that amount. Now he says here there is hardly any significant investment between both countries. He is talking about India and Trinidad and Tobago. Does that sound a bit odd after the lofty trip, and so on, that some of you went on? Furthermore his Excellency calls for increased investment in India. He says:

> Trinidad and Tobago is nostalgic for an ancient India but India has evolved and now offers opportunities for growth.

Apart from this, he also pointed out that there is not much domestic and foreign investment in Trinidad and Tobago and these are key to boosting the economy. So this is not me. This is the Indian High Commissioner talking about the collapse of trade between Trinidad and India.

**Hon. Senator:** What?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Just one example. I hope people understand the irony of this. I hope it is not lost on the Government side. So, at—the man, we have to assume, is neutral; looking at the situation and says there is not much domestic or foreign investment in Trinidad and Tobago. This is May 29. So, what I am saying, you do not have to rely solely on my expertise. There are several other people who know that you are not performing.

Also, in today's *Express* there is a comment of mine on the Minister's thing. The head of the Manufacturing Association—

**Hon. Senator:** You quote yourself?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** —also said: There is nothing to shout about in what the Minister said in the Lower House on Wednesday.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** And the Chamber agreed wholly.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes, the Chamber said the same thing—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Erudite comment.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** —that I was saying.

**Sen. George:** You shoulda read that instead ah yuh speech.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** The Chamber was on the same page with me; you have nothing to shout about.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** True.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Nothing to thump your desk about. You have not been good.

Now, in terms of—we could go further in an *Express* opinion poll, this is June 3rd; just recently—

**Sen. Hinds:** Tell them man.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** They commission—the poll, I think, with market facts and opinion.

> Crime and corruption remain major concerns for business leaders who feel not enough is being done to get to the root cause of the problem.

This is the MFO survey.

> Crime and corruption perceptions are very real. I cannot say over the last three years there has been any discernable dent in crime to give businesses the confidence to go out and invest in this country.

Who is saying this? The America Chamber of Commerce President, Hugh Howard told the *Business Guardian*. So, again, you do not have to take my word for it. You are a disaster.

Furthermore almost nine out of 10 people surveyed by MFO perceived corruption as widespread, both in the local business community and the Government. In fact, 70 per cent held the opinion that there was more corruption in Government now than there was in the previous 12 months. So you are even beating your low standards. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Beating their low standards.

**Sen. George:** Come on man.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I am quoting. This is not my statement.

**Sen. Singh:** Your leader quoted.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** This is from the MFO survey.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Tell them man.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So I do not, yuh see. Yuh see I like to show you that it is not just my opinion. You know I have a few.

**Sen. Lambert:** Put a smile on your face nah. You should be ashamed to make that statement. Come on, man.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So, therefore, you have no real basis for beating your chest and coming to be pious, pretend that you are delivering to the people, and so on. And that is just two examples. I could go even further in today's *Express*:

Good governance.

Who is this now? Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association President, Nicholas Lok Jack. Again, same story. What we looking for as

good governance, we are not getting it.

**Sen. Singh:** From the private sector too?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** The only people who think there is good governance in the country is what? About 15 of you over there? And 29 in the Lower House? Okay. Good governance. I think good governance is what we would call for, from the TTMA's point of view.

"I don't know what the actual cost of something like this is."

He was referring to the infamous fire truck. But he called for transparency and accountability, which is what the average citizen out there is trying to call for at the same time.

So what you have is a government that is sinking deeper and deeper into self-delusion and making a mockery of common sense, because everybody knows what is happening. But yet, you still come and try to pretend as though you are doing such a wonderful job in the public domain.

Now, what is happening in terms of the implementation? Let me get back to that. And I seldom delve into issues of corruption and nepotism, and so on, in my presentation. But the problem that you are having with implementation starts with your inability to appoint people, proper qualified people, to boards, and to manage state enterprises, which are so important to our economic development, because state enterprises are what, at the end of the day, implements your projects. And we spend billions of taxpayers' money in running these state enterprises. And if you continue to practise this kind of extreme nepotism and bias political style of management, where you appoint only friends and families to high positions and boards, regardless of qualifications—[*Interruption*] no; regardless of qualifications,

it comes back to haunt you. There is a reason why nepotism is wrong. [*Interruption*] Of course; when nepotism takes place at such a massive scale, where you put people in all the positions, it seems, based on political affiliation or family affiliation. Now, we are not saying that there may not have been—that there was not nepotism in the past, but you have taken it to a new level.

**Sen. Singh:** The appointment of Mrs. Manning was the highest level.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yeah, I know you would jump to that. No problem. We acknowledge that.

**Sen. Singh:** You acknowledge that?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes.

**Sen. Singh:** But you just say that en passant.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** No, we acknowledge that. Okay, we would not—but again, when you have friends and family running CAL, Caribbean Airlines, as usual I give a few examples to support my case—

**Hon. Senator:** And yuh eh say nothing?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Where you have one state enterprise racking up over a billion dollars in losses over the past two years. The Minister, at least we could give him credit for having the fortitude to dismiss the Board. But why was such an incompetent Board put in place in the first place, without any regard for technical ability or any kind of serious managerial skills? Why was that? Why was it there in the first place? What was your logic? Was your objective to run it into the ground? So, you have that. Just in terms of the 60 billion plus that you are going to spend this year, if you actually manage to spend all, a billion of that, almost, is just for CAL to cover the

losses—unproductive spending; nothing to generate any serious revenue. You are pumping money into something that is not bringing back any return for the State.

**Sen. George:** Like the Tarouba Stadium.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Now, again, I just gave you one. [*Crosstalk*] In the Lower House, Mr. President, one of my colleagues raised the issue of the Airports Authority, and he talked about the seemingly bogus qualification of the person who is running the Airports Authority now. And, as is reported in the news from the Lower House, the gentleman in question appears to have—no one could corroborate his claimed qualifications, once again. But I am just giving example of what passes for governance under this Government.

So what we have, from my information, is this deputy chairman, acting as chairman because, I believe the substantive chairman left the job, and there has been no formal notification of a new chairman, but he has taken on the role. And what I am told is that, apart from his questionable qualifications raised in the Lower House, we have information that the place is in a complete mess and there are significant shortages in manpower, in terms of manning the airport, all because of some crazy decisions being taken by this man who is running the place, as I am told, as his own personal parlour.

The TSA, Transport Services Association, from North America is here now beginning a review, and again the issue of a possible downgrade of our airport looms because of the security lapses; the lack of thing.

I have here—I could spend a few minutes if you want, outlining all of

the shortcomings that were put forward in the last audit by the Civil Aviation Administration. It is several pages long. It is quite frightening. And what is worse than that, it was an audit that was done last year, 2012.

**Sen. Hinds:** You missed two salient points.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** All right, here is one of the more frightening ones. Just to let you know how serious this matter is. Item No. 2:

> Screening officers and screening supervisors have not been subjected to formalize initial and recurrent aviation security training and certification approved.

[*Crosstalk*]

As I told you, I might. I picked out this one because of the fact that that is what makes us feel comfortable when we get on the plane; that the people who are screening these bags, and so on, as you are going through the security checks, that they know what they are doing.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** They were working on chicken parts.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So, therefore, you have this. Of course, this was the audit of last year and it was supposed to be—the recommended action for remedial work to correct this problem was supposed to be taken by August 30, 2012.

**Sen. Hinds:** Eh-heh?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes. But from my information, it has still not been done. And the man who is acting as chairman is running riot in the place and I want to know who in the Government will stand up and take heed of what is going on here, because this could be a major embarrassment for the country, in terms of our security lapses at airports.

**Sen. Hinds:** They do not care.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** This is no joking matter.

**Sen. Hinds:** They do not care.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** When we had the incidents of the two banks—the people involved in the FCB bank fraud, the credit card fraud, any of you know what happened then? They came from a plane in London and waltz out the airport and jumped the fence. This is fact.

**Sen. Hinds:** Here?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes. And they have not been apprehended since.

**Sen. Hinds:** And they brought a man from the UK here the other day?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes. They walked—they just pushed a door open and they walked out and jumped the fence and disappeared.

**Sen. Hinds:** Yes.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** The two people involved in the bank fraud.

**Sen. Hinds:** Are you serious?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes. I am serious. What I am saying is that—

**Sen. Hinds:** Look how the Government laughing. That is a joke.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes, yes, they jumped the fence.

**Sen. Hinds:** You heard that?

[*Laughter*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Call your people. I cannot believe you all will laugh at something as serious as this.

**Sen. Hinds:** The Minister of National Security is laughing.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** You could call your people at the airport and find out.

**Sen. Hinds:** The Minister of National Security is laughing.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So, what I am saying is that [*Crosstalk*] because it is here. I just read one of the shortcomings. You could go back to the newspapers of last year and see the report. The past Minister in charge, Mr. Jack Warner, talked about the shortcomings in Parliament last year in the budget debate, and the steps he was going to take to remedy it. So, this is no joke.

**Sen. Hinds:** They do not want to hear his name again.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** But the problem is, just like everything else, he raised the issues and he took serious note of it and, I do not know, he may have tried to put things in place, but the point is they are still not in place. A lot of these shortcomings still exist. So, they are using plasters on sores to make the airport look good to the public, but there are a lot of security lapses here.

**Sen. Hinds:** They always had problems with that airport.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And then you have—I also have a copy of the organizational chart that is supposed to be implemented at the Airports Authority. I can pass it around if you wish. And you have officers listed who are supposed to be on duty, shift by shift. I have the information.

**Sen. Hinds:** That is for friends.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And one of the crazy things is that different shifts have different numbers of officers. So it is either you need X amount of officers to guard the airport properly.

**Sen. George:** X number.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes. Do you want me to call the numbers for you? It is here you know; 49, 42—

**Sen. George:** X number.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** On shift. I could call the numbers.

**Sen. Hinds:** Security.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Whereas I—

**Sen. George:** English.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry: —**will inform that all of them are low; lower than what is the basic requirement to properly secure the airport. But again, the person in charge, whose credibility and his credentials were questioned in the Lower House, is singlehandedly making all the decisions, bypassing the management. The management has no say. He runs the place, as I said, like his parlour.

**Sen. Hinds:** This security firm, is it SIS?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** No, this is—

**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. [*Sen. F. Hinds*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Sen. Hinds:** Which security firm is that?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Thank you my colleagues for the support. I see the Government looking a bit shell-shocked here, but no problem.

Now, and that is the Airports Authority. I am just giving you tit-bits. Then we go to my good friend over there, Leader of Government Business, and the traditional problem child for many governments, but is having a lot of problems now. If you go to WASA.

**Sen. Singh:** Yeah man.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes, I know you would like this. Well you may not like it.

**Sen. Hinds:** WASA or worser?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Well, that might be a better description.

**Hon. Senator:** Plenty better.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** WASA—

**Sen. Hinds:** Wussa.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** A hotbed of corruption and nepotism.

**Sen. Hinds:** Yeah, better.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Than ever before. I am telling you; and you are the Minister in charge and Leader of Government Business. We know WASA is implementing a VSEP very, very quietly, not too much press; not too much fanfare about it, but it is happening. You want to deny that?

**Sen. George:** Everybody knows that?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Right; good. Remember when we talked about it two years ago, when you were the Public Utilities Minister? Or, okay. Under IDB conditionalities.

**Sen. Hinds:** Is that right?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes, because of the big money they got a few months ago. But they are getting it in tranches. You know that is the normal IDB thing. So here is what is happening. Close to 600 workers have already been given the VSEP.

**Sen. Singh:** It is a voluntary separation package.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** They were given the VSEP.

**Sen. Singh:** Okay.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I have people who called me and say they were told to take the VSEP.

**Sen. Hinds:** Oh yes; that is true.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Recently fired employees of WASA--[*Inaudible*] So do not talk about voluntary. You are giving people a VSEP.

**Sen. George:** That is bias opinion.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** You, Minister of National Security, stood here two years ago and talked about the overstaffing of WASA. Yes, yes, we remember that night, right here; the overstaffing at WASA and something had to be done. Well, you are doing it. That sounds like you are doing something. But here is the catch; every time they send home someone on VSEP, they hire somebody's friend; another family member. So the numbers are always—

**Sen. Singh:** That is not so.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes, it is so.

**Sen. Singh:** Can you give me an example?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Eh? You want me to call names and addresses? Yeah, right. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Minister Singh wants examples. He will get them.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So, they are saying that they are doing a VSEP and getting rid, and to reduce—to trim down the size of WASA to meet the IDB conditionality, and then at the same time, every time certain people are given the VSEP and they are told go home, they are hiring new people. So the actual amount of employees is not going down drastically.

**Sen. Hinds:** Correct.

**Sen. George:** So we will never meet the IDB.

**Sen. Singh:** You indicated in your speech that 600 persons have taken, or have been granted voluntary separation; over 600; you indicated that.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I am saying that I was told that it could be as high—it could be low, eh. I am just saying—I do not know the exact number.

**Sen. George:** Verify it.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Hey, hey, hold on. I do not know the exact number but it is a significant amount.

**Hon. Senator:** You have to verify.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I mean, would you volunteer the exact number? Would you volunteer?

**Sen. Singh:** Mr. President, I want to thank the hon. Member for giving way. It is a voluntary separation programme. It is done in accordance with the part of the conditionalities of the IDB loan—

**Sen. Hinds:** Eh heh?

**Sen. Singh:** It is done in dialogue with the major unions, the Estate Police Association, the NUGFW and the PSA. And over six hundred and forty-something employees have taken that voluntary separation option. [*Interruption*] Hold on. So that, therefore—and it is taking place. But you have made a point and I want you to provide the necessary evidence for that, that you have 600 people and every time somebody is gotten rid of we employ a relative. I want you to provide evidence of that.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yeah, yeah, right, right. I am told other people are being hired so the actual number of people employed, the total number

before of people employed is not going down by the 640 as the Minister said. That is what we know.

If I am off, in terms of—

**Sen. Singh:** Are you withdrawing it?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** No, I am not withdrawing it. If you have—and what is happening is rampant corruption.

**Sen. George:** Awwww.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And the favourite firm that we hear about is winning all the contracts, very frequently; SIS, again and again. Yes.

**Sen. Hinds:** Mamoo.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** This is what is happening at WASA.

**Sen. Hinds:** Yes.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** TOSL, a longstanding WASA contractor.

**Sen. Hinds:** Blatant, for "Mamoo".

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** My information is that they do not even bother to bid again.

**Sen. Hinds:** Workers used to do work in WASA, now they giving contract.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** They do not even bother to bid for work at WASA again.

**Sen. George:** The opposite of that.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Because if SIS does not win the bid, there is a mass investigation; an interrogation of the employees as to how could that happen? This is what we are hearing coming from WASA. So what about the high manager who the contractor bought a BMW X5 for? What about the manager?

**Sen. Singh:** Name names.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** What about the manager? And then, subsequently the contractors bought a Range Rover for.

**Sen. Karim:** Call the name nah.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yeah, right. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Hinds:** I have a letter to read here.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** In fact, my information is that the person involved was going for a third vehicle.

**Hon. Senator:** A what?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** A third one; after the X5 and the Range Rover.

**Sen. Hinds:** In WASA?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes, this is in WASA. In fact I was told that certain people got offended and called for the person to be fired.

**Sen. Hinds:** Ooh! Ah thief doh like to see ah thief wid ah bag.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Exactly. [*Crosstalk*] So what you have—I am just giving examples of what you are doing, and our information is that this is happening at enterprise after enterprise, so that is why nothing could be done properly.

**Sen. Hinds:** All over.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I know after today there would be an interrogation of the employees at WASA.

**Sen. Hinds:** Oh yes.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes, I know; we know how you operate. You think these things will stay secret? You are dreaming. Okay. So it is rampant corruption, no oversight, in terms of doling our contracts to different people.

**Sen. Hinds:** That is true, that is true. [*Desk thumping*] And they tap the phone to see which employee you talking to you.

**Sen. Singh:** Send you an email and fabricate.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And again, even as we go along—well my time is running out. I could go to other state enterprises.

**Sen. George:** Go man, go on. Yeah, you go on, go on, go on.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I have one for the Hon. Minister of Finance too—

**Sen. George:** You go on man.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** With the Clico matter. I have a question on the Order Paper. So, hopefully, when it comes, we will deal with that again.

**Sen. Hinds:** Sour Moonan.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** The new company that is supposed to take over the Clico operation, the Atrius; they put a Board in place. The Minister had a chairman. The chairman was rejected.

**Sen. Singh:** Ent he was PNM?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** For somebody with very little competence or qualifications. Once again, the same pattern of hiring people without regard for qualification, without regard for expertise or anything. And these are serious organizations. So, you end up wasting a lot of money because you put people in place who do not know what they are doing. And after three years you do not seem to be learning anything. You are still carrying out rampant nepotism, friendship. I mean, look at the issue with the former CAL chairman.

**Sen. Hinds:** Yes.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I mean, how could you sit here with straight faces and

tolerate that?

**Sen. Singh:** We tolerated it when he was deputy mayor for the PNM in San Fernando.

**Sen. Hinds:** Fired for bad governance.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes. So what—my point is that this is your pattern of behaviour. You cannot run. You could run; you could hide from it. [*Desk thumping*] if you want. As I have often said, you could twist yourself into a pretzel, but this is your track record.

**Sen. Singh:** That is why Calder—

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** This is what Nicholas Lok Jack talked about in his—yesterday's *Express*. We are talking about transparency and—poor governance and track record; that is your track record. And, to sum up, as far as your economic management, you have been a disaster, and that is your track record. And the only thing you can boast about is that you have not completely messed up our economy yet [*Desk thumping*] largely because of the good position you found it in, that you could afford to spend 160 billion or so in three years—

**Sen. Hinds:** It is heading south.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry: —**have very little growth to show for it. If you go back I can go; the budgets that were spent under the PNM and even the UNC before were much lower and generated much greater economic returns. [*Desk thumping*]

Nobody spent a $60 billion budget before; thirty billion; 40 billion; and generating 5 and 6 and 8 per cent economic growth. You are spending 60 per cent. So that, basically, is—if time permitted I could have gone on

for other state enterprises and show you what mess you are creating, and that is why, despite all of your significant spending, you cannot generate anything positive.

The CSO building was condemned; the employees thrown out. So when are we going to get up-to-date statistics, which we have been calling for a long time? The Minister promises us that he will fix everything since two years ago. One of the first things I raised with the Minister was the conditions of the CSO, when he came in replacing Mary King, in my first contribution while he was here. I said, "Listen, CSO issues, you have to deal with them." And he has promised us that he would deal with them. And yet, two weeks ago we have to hear the CSO building, workers refused to go. Osha condemned the building. And then there was supposed to be a Swedish team or some team from somewhere upgrading the CSO, and so on. What has become of that? So, what I am saying is that it is all well and good to come and say, well this is going to happen, which you do and you beat your chest and thump desks, whoever gets up to speak next is going to talk about what might happen. We want to talk about what happened. What have you done? And basically, you have not done very much. I thank you, Mr. President. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I propose that we will have one more speaker this morning before we take the lunch break. I also would like to take this opportunity to welcome the students of Goodwood High School from Tobago who are with us today. [*Desk thumping*] Welcome.

**12.00 noon**

**Sen. Subhas Ramkhelawan:** Thank you, Mr.President. I welcome the

opportunity to speak on this, the Finance (Supplementary Appropriation) (Financial Year 2013) Bill, 2013. It is a money Bill and therefore I do not expect that much, if anything, will be changed, except that we can make some comments on what is happening in terms of the budget, which is being, in every sense, varied from that which was read sometime last year for this, the fiscal year 2013.

I must say that the economic metrics of the country continue to look reasonably good heading in the right direction, albeit, economic growth is muted. The metrics relating to the foreign reserves over 9billion and something like 11 months of import cover continue to show a good story. The Heritage and Stabilization Fund at $4.8 billion, again, is something that is, in a sense, a nest egg, a savings plan for if gas and oil prices fall away at some time in the future.

My one concern, apart from GDP, the reserves, is what is happening on the investment side of the equation. When you look at the investment side of the equation, we need to focus on some of the monetary metrics. That is, on the investment side, we see that there is anaemic credit growth, if any, in some of the areas, business consumer, and there is, apart from the growth in mortgages, all of these areas are anaemic.

The concern that really which I would like to touch upon, Mr.President, is the expenditure in various areas. Invariably, what has been happening over the past three years is at the half year, we come for increased expenditure, in this case some $2,898 million or $2.9billion roughly. I wanted to look at, in my contribution, where these expenditures are taking place and whether they are having the kind of positive impact on the

economy, and on the nation, that we would like to see or that we would expect. Because, according to the statistics provided by the hon. Minister, if the expenditure increased as it is intended to be through this Bill, if all of that expenditure were to take place, our deficit would rise to over $9.6 billion. That deficit, in terms of GDP, would rise to over 5.5 per cent of the GDP from a previous figure of 4.6. By his own account, the Minister has suggested that part of the challenge, in terms of achieving—if you want to put it that way—achieving this level of expenditure is capacity constraints in the system. That is the ability to unroll many of the capital projects that need to be unrolled in order to get that development of the economy and economic growth going.

We have heard, and this is no secret that there are a number of workovers taking place which will only be corrected to the end of 2013, early 2014, in our main driver of GDP which is the energy sector. So I do not think that it is any surprise that we have an economy or on the energy side that you have growth of just 0.5 per cent. But, the main concerns which I have is that even if we are incurring recurrent expenditure in some areas, what are the benefits that we are generating?

The Minister mentioned that much of the expenditure, some 1.8billion of 2.9billion is going to recurrent expenditure for retroactive salary and wage adjustments. Therefore, what we are doing is we are continuing to, in a sense, we are increasing wages and salaries and the question is: are we getting more value and more efficiencies in what we are pursuing? So, as I looked at the Heads of Expenditure to be increased, probably the most significant is that for the police service, some $661-odd million. When we

speak to what is happening in the police service, probably one of the great social concerns that we have in this country is the extent and level and seriousness of crime and it is the police service in the main that will have to address this matter of crime.

I want to raise again in this Senate the matter of the appointment of the Commissioner of Police. Because, I believe that behaviourally, if you have someone acting, as is the case with the Commissioner of Police and the Deputy Commissioners of Police, you cannot get the best out of that position even though the person acting in a position is entitled to do most of what could be done with permanent incumbency. The point is, Mr. President, that behaviourally, a Commissioner of Police acting and being—his acting being renewed every six months, still gives him some level of handicap in developing the structure of the police service and making intended changes that he may want to make.

Here, we have a situation that since the new Police Service Act, 2006 or 2007 thereabout, we have only had one permanent appointment to the position of Commissioner of Police. We have only had one, I believe not permanent, but contractual appointment for three years and that appointment was terminated before the full term of the contract by resignation, I am led to understand. But, here is what is happening, since the resignation of that Commissioner of Police in July of 2012, almost a year ago, where have we reached in the permanent replacement or appointment for a Commissioner of Police? This really speaks to the efficiency and effectiveness and the state of the nation.

Some would argue that the nation is in a state and it is because of

some of these various elements which have to be put together in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness. Some of these elements that are missing are creating lacuna—and I think I might be corrected—lacunae in the system. What is the process and why should we be concerned? We should be concerned because there is a concern about crime, and the institution that is charged with detection, prevention and—is the police service. Where are we with it now?

Here is the process—according to Legal Notice 1 or 2, I believe, the process is that in practice is that the DPA appoints some entity to go out and put advertisements internationally seeking to recruit or to appoint a recruiter for the Commissioner of Police. Where are we with that? I am advised that we are at the stage where the DPA has appointed NIPDEC to start the process or go through the process of putting out international advertisements to seek, not a Commissioner of Police, but to seek to recruit a firm which will then go out and seek to get a shortlist for a Commissioner of Police.

Now, let us be clear. The Police Service Commission has not yet been enjoined in this process. The Commission, which has to make a recommendation for appointment, through His Excellency the President to the Lower House, that has not happened as yet; almost a year—we can say a year has gone by. A full year has gone by. So, the next stage of the process is to find a recruiter that will go and do the interviews and then come up with a shortlist of five persons who would be considered properly eligible for the position of police service commissioner.

Then, the next stage, it is only at that time when the shortlist is prepared that that shortlist goes to the Police Service Commission and when

we reach to the Police Service Commission, it is then that the Police Service Commission selects one of that five, recommends it to the President who acts essentially as a conduit to sending to the Lower House to vote upon whether that person is going to be appointed or not. So we have only completed one and we are in the second stage of a five-part selection process.

Now, as has happened before, the Lower House can vote against the recommendation, as has happened before. So, we have, since 2007, only one person who can claim to have been sitting in the position of Commissioner of Police, and sitting down comfortably there either on contract or being permanently installed. How do we get to a stage where we arrive at efficiency and effectiveness? I believe this is one of the areas the hon. Minister may have been alluding to in his presentation about some of the constraints in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

So, we want to fix crime but the top crime fighter in the country is not permanently installed in the position. So if, for example, as the Commissioner of Police is allowed to do, is empowered to do, the Commissioner of Police, if for example, he wanted to build an officer core to accelerate the development of police—very much as you might have in the army and so on—I do not—whether he wants to do that or not, if he does, he would be concerned about his incumbency, he would be concerned, as most people behaviourally would be, about "making track for monkey to run on". That is, if he does not have the position, why does he go to make—

**Sen. Singh:** "Is gouti!" Monkey [*Inaudible*]. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. S. Ramkhelawan:** It could be "gouti" and it could be monkey. I

choose monkey, you might chose "gouti", but as you might rightly know, Minister, this is not the hunting season and we want to stay away from those kinds of analogies—

**Sen. Prof. Ramkissoon:** Tell him!

**Sen. S. Ramkhelawan:—**leave it as monkey!

**Sen. Prof. Ramkissoon:** Tell him! Well said!

**Sen. Singh:** "Dey eating monkey now, yuh know!"

**Sen. S. Ramkhelawan:** Let me go on and not be distracted.

So, I was saying that behaviourally much of the structural changes that are needed in the police service would not take place, and that is what is happening. So, I want to suggest in terms of what we need to do for efficiency that the Government re-look this piece of legislation—which requires a special majority—re-look this piece of legislation so that we can get to the level of competence, efficiency and effectiveness that we need in this particular area so we can eliminate one of the bugbears that exist.

The other point about it is that it takes so very long for the DPA to get financing from the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy. I have mentioned it before. [*Crosstalk*] It takes about $5 million and only about two or three has been given. I stand to be corrected but that is the information that I have. So when we talk about crime and managing crime and so on, I am not sure that we are doing all of the things that we can do to promote efficiency.

**12.15p.m.**

Police Service issue again—I am advised that we have some 500 civilian positions assisting and working alongside and assigned to the police

service. The intention was that we would be able to put more police on the streets patrolling. Well, as you know, that has not happened, except for hot spots. We only deal with hot spots. So we wait until some spots that might be cold, cool, warm, get hot and then we get to those spots. This is a problem of efficiency and effectiveness. So, you know, we could end up, we spend $661million or we increase the expenditure by $661 million and the question is: Are we getting a bigger bang for our buck? What is the state of the nation? Is the nation in a state? And crime is very high on the agenda of our citizens because they are concerned about their personal safety and security.

But there is another aspect to this question of efficiency and effectiveness and I want to bring it to the attention of the hon. Minister. In the increased expenditure, I saw that there was a small of about $839,000 for the service commissions and I want to bring that matter, again, in the context of efficiency and effectiveness.

As you know, Mr. President, I sit in the position of Chair of the Joint Select Committee for Service Commissions excluding the Judicial and Legal Service Commission, and including Municipal Corporations, and it has been very clear to me, and these reports have been tabled in the Parliament, that there is the need, there is the crying need, for the commissions—all of which are mandated in the Constitution, for these service commissions: the Police Service Commission, the Teaching Service Commission and the Public Service Commission—to be given more autonomy in the running of their operations.

As it stands now, there are two bottlenecks to the efficient operations

of the service commission. One is accounting and finance, all of which has to come through the DPA, the Director of Personnel Administration. Now, this was done 50 years ago. The work of the commissions has increased. The number of persons under the remit of the commissions has increased. In the case of the police service, some 7,000 persons; in the case of the teaching service, some 16,000 persons; in the case of the public sector, the public service, I am led to understand some 60,000 persons. Yet still, if they want accommodation, if they want to buy even toiletries for the commission, they have to go through a very narrow bottleneck and this is inefficient.

So I appeal to the Minister of Finance to take a look at having separate votes and having separate accounting officers who may carry the title of registrars for these various functions, or else we will continue in a state of inefficiency and ineffectiveness as we go along and that is a matter of deep concern. Let them have their own vote, their own accounting officer and let them have the ability to manage the human resources that they need to provide sufficient and adequate oversight for what is happening with so many of our citizens who are subject to the decisions of these various commissions. If we take a total count of it, we are talking about over 80,000 persons and I hope the Minister would take note as he is preparing for his budget, 2014.

I think that, when one considers that this is the same situation, in terms of having a registrar, I am advised, and control of your human resources, this is the situation with regard to the Integrity Commission, which is constitutionally-mandated; the Equal Opportunity Commission; the Environmental Commission. So why not our constitutionally-mandated

service commissions?

So, you know, we can spend money, we can spend more money, but the question is: Are we getting increased and enhanced effectiveness with our expenditures? That is the point I am making. I am sure I could regale you with evaluations of all of the economic matrix. I am sure I can do that, but I am not sure that we are getting the point as a nation that for every dollar spent we must become more efficient and more effective and once we do that, I think we are on the road to the kind of progress that we are seeking to achieve.

The next point I would like to make is the deep concern that exists among our citizens now, with regard to, not just the expenditure that is increasing and not the efficiency and effectiveness but, whether there is corruption in the expenditures and that is becoming an issue that is hitting at the heart and the core of all of our citizens. Is it only that we are not getting the best bang for our buck because of a lack of efficiency, or is it that the Treasury is being pilfered? We have to find ways to address the concerns as a nation. We have to find ways to address the concerns of all our citizens that this is not the case, because if that continues to happen, the trust in administrations, there is a decline in the trust for successive administrations I would say, with regard to how our money is being spent. And, therefore, it is very important that we bring, for the benefit of our citizens, the highest levels of transparency, accountability and disclosure.

But part of the problem that we have—and I think the Minister spoke of capacity building and capacity constraints, and so on—is that, in the state enterprises, there have been difficulties in finding the kind of quality of

talent and the kind of corporate governance that is necessary to properly oversee moneys placed with these state enterprises. Some of these state enterprises, for whatever reasons, are not even revenue-generating state enterprises. What have we done? We have applied funds into the state enterprises through transfers and subsidies, and so on, but we have not applied the high level, the high bar, of corporate governance that is required for these various enterprises.

Now here is one of the problems, through you, Mr. President, to the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, one of the problems is that a number of citizens who would be very well qualified to serve on these boards are staying away from these boards. These citizens are staying away. And why are they staying away? One of the reasons is that the onerous requirements and the extent of disclosure about their personal assets is becoming a concern for their own personal security; those of them who do have a substantial amount after assets. And it being a concern for their personal security, what it would mean, in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, is that we may have to look very closely at the reporting requirements of persons who may wish to serve, but who do not now want to serve because of the concerns of security and because of the concerns for the onerous reporting.

Now, you can move reporting from hard copy to soft copy but the problem does not change, you continue to take junk from one area into another; you computerize junk. And the solution must be that we need to take another look at the Integrity Commission, particularly in terms of reporting, to ensure that we can attract people with the skills and capabilities

and the corporate governance skills in particular, to be able to carry out the mandate of the Government, in terms of efficiency and effectiveness and proper expenditure.

So I put that as another thought as the Minister thinks at the half-way mark of this year; how does he deal, not only with capacity constraints, but how does he deal with effectiveness and efficiency. And so, it is a problem

And, again in terms of the possibility, the perception, the specter of corruption, we need to address frontally this matter of procurement. I believe that the Government came into power on the basis that this matter of procurement would be addressed. Three years, I believe, have gone and we have not seen a scintilla of the legislation that ought to have come to this Senate by now, to address this matter of procurement. And it is very important, because if we not have the checks and balances and controls and oversight in procurement, it provides for leakage, it provides for haemorrhaging from the Treasury and we need to address that because we can talk about how much we increase in expenditure in the various ministries, but if we do not at the same time, talk and I repeat, if we do not, at the same time, speak to efficiency and effectiveness, whether in the Ministry or in the state enterprises that we oversee, then we continue to be spinning top in mud; we continue to have situations which have been described by some as a fiasco; we continue to have these situations coming at us as a nation, not only as a Government but as a nation; we continue to have these situations coming at us. Government is now caught up in firefighting rather than in concentrating on the development augend. And, therefore, in addressing this, I appeal to the Government to bring

procurement legislation as early as possible and hopefully by next year.

**Sen. Hinds:** Not Minister Tewarie, you would not see that.

**Sen. S. Ramkhelawan:** There is another aspect to this thing, this matter of the concerns about corruption. And that has to do with political party financing. I have said it here before and I will say it again, that we are a small nation and as a small nation, large contributions made by any single individual to political parties, they are made in the main, these large contributions, for a return on investment.

**Sen. Hinds:** SIS. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. S. Ramkhelawan:** And that return, how does that return on investment come back to that investor?

**Sen. Hinds:** Aka Mamoo.

**Sen. S. Ramkhelawan:** How does return move from, through the party, through the Government, back to that person?

**12.30p.m.**

Now, I am not saying anything that we in this Senate do not know and have an appreciation for. I am saying, let us do something about it collectively for the benefit of this nation, that is all I am saying, and it is in the hands of the Government and their will to address this problem must not only be there, but it must be perceived to be there by the population at large. Failing which, we will continue to have an ailing society and our politics will be one of distrust and mistrust. I believe that is where we are today, Mr. President, and I welcome the opportunity to be corrected. I welcome that opportunity to be corrected.

So, I call upon the Government to put in place legislation which will

address proper disclosure and transparency in very large contributions to party financing. This will not serve only this administration well, it will serve all administrations well, and it will give comfort to citizens, that it is not a case that he who pays the piper calls the tune, and this is a deep concern and it is a persistent concern, and it is a concern that we must address.

This is not only for this administration and I have said this has been happening to us, the citizens of this country for far too long, and if that is the case, let us address this deficiency. I am aware that my colleague on the Independent Bench, Sen. Drayton, has had on the Order Paper for some time now a Motion on political party financing. It also brings into stark contrast the situation that exists with us here in the Parliament in terms of our own efficiency and effectiveness.

Mr. President, you would know that we, in terms of private Motions that come to this Senate, I believe we have only completed one for this entire Parliamentary session—

**Hon. Senator:** It is not finished as yet.

**Sen. S. Ramkhelawan:**—and I am being advised that it is not competed yet, and we probably have before the expiration of this session which is scheduled some time on July 10th or 11th, we only have one more Private Members' Day, and we need to regulate our own good selves to make sure that the Parliament is efficient. I want to suggest—because I am in suggestive mode today—that we start thinking about for private Motions that we put a number of block hours for each of the benches, so as to ensure—and the benches will decide and agree amongst themselves how

they split up the time. But if it is three hours or four hours, we should not be spending more than two Private Members' Days for any one Motion. It means that there is a backlog of matters to be discussed beyond constitution—

**Sen. Hinds:** We have to discuss that.

**Sen. S. Ramkhelawan:**—and it is a matter that we must address and agree. So such are the issues with regard to even the effectiveness of our own Parliament, and I want to raise that as a matter that we will need to address as we go along.

I want to turn my attention back to the various expenditures, and the Minister spoke about growth in GDP in the agricultural sector by some 2.5 per cent. While he may be encouraged, I continue to be discouraged by what we as a nation are doing in agriculture. We have had lying fallow for some 10 years now, over 50,000 acres of agricultural land for which there is proper access—ten years—and while we are talking about all kinds of things, some of which I do not even properly understand, like growth poles—and I am told thery are greasy growth poles—we have—no pun intended—we have low hanging fruit here in agriculture, 50,000 acres of cleared lands and we have not made any significant move to do anything about it.

Yet still we have seven, eight, 9,000 persons in CEPEP who have developed a skill of being able to cut the grass in one spot twice a week. And what is the talk, where are we now with Farm-PEP? So the point is in agriculture, every nation strives to be as self-sufficient as possible, and they do that by clearing uncleared lands, by expanding the agricultural output.

What do we do? You drive all through Trinidad especially past the Caroni bridge and you see grass, bushes, nothing on them and yet still we employ—if we are to believe some of the figures—as much as 11,000 persons. This cannot be right.

If agriculture is 0.6, not six, "eh", 0.6 per cent of GDP, what are we going to do? That is why our food bill is $4billion. We going to eat grass?" And nothing has been done of anything significance in this area. So that we talk about—I would say the test that should be passed by any administration is that of the 50,000 acres lying fallow, we should be putting 5,000 acres under production.

I heard a strange thing, I heard that Caroni (1975) Limited, which I am advised we disbanded, is now going to get back into food production. So it seems to be rather a vicious circle [*sic*]. Why is Caroni (1975) Limited coming back into food production? And I heard and I stand to be corrected, that they are going to accumulate all of the lands of those persons who received two acres and so on, lease it, put them together to get back into production of 5,000-plus acres of land.

Let me say this, often repeated, that if we continue to do the same things and expect to get different results; somebody mad. We need to look at ourselves and correct this, so agriculture, low-hanging fruit. I think while you are hon. Minister, through you, Mr. President, while you are looking at your expenditures in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, look at this area, let us get this area going because you know what, apart from the question of food security, the employment ratios in agriculture could be revved up very, very quickly if you get production going. If you tell me look, if we get this

production going in this way, that we will have praedial larceny, somebody has to eat the food. It will go into the supply chain and once we increase supply, we will help to guard against inflation.

The Minister spoke about some of the economies and the international developments and so on. One of the things he may not have mentioned, is that soft commodity prices and so on,—those prices have come down quite considerably in the past two years. The reason for inflation, we would remember food inflation being as high as 28 per cent. The reason for that in the main was not because of local production, it was because of commodity prices rising at a clip that fed inflation in this country.

Core inflation has remained at about 2.2, 2.4 per cent for quite a long time over the past three, four, five, but what it is that moves headline inflation? What is it that moves the prices? It is food, because we cap energy unlike most other nations, market driven, we cap energy; we subsidize. We subsidize gas for most of our citizens except premium, which very soon in this country may become higher than market prices in the world, because we moved the price up to $5.75, and oil prices keep wobbling and heading down at times. So we have challenges as far as that is concerned. I think I have said enough about agriculture, but we can beat our chest in all the other areas, we are just not doing enough in the area of agriculture which can give you the fastest gains.

The hon. Minister spoke about trade and I want to commend the Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment for taking initiatives to create enhanced efficiencies, or I should not say enhanced efficiencies—I should say efficiencies in the customs area, and that is commendable, because it

will lift the ability not only of our businessmen, but others to do business in this country, but that in and of it itself is a necessary condition but not a sufficient condition.

I want to repeat that in terms of trade, we need to ensure that if we want to access and create a two-way flow of goods and services from this country to be supplied outside and to this country, we need to get proper trade agreements in place. It is worth repeating, that we have some trade agreements in Latin America, but we do not have trade agreements covering all of Latin America. After all, we are part of Latin America.

So we have Panama for goods, we have Costa Rica for goods, but we do not have the services yet; the financial services. The Minister spoke about financial services, but if you want to get financial services, that particular area going, apart from trade agreements in services which is the first item, the second item that I have mentioned before so many times is double taxation agreements; and the third is now in place. The third is that we now have the capacity under the Securities Act, 2012 for reciprocal agreements, reciprocal regulatory agreements between the various SECs in the various countries that surround us.

I want to commend the Government for that—just a bit more needs to be done—but I want to commend the Government that the first part has been addressed. The second part needs to be addressed which is double taxation and I think if the Government is looking for a scorecard in terms of economic development, growth efficiency and effectiveness in this area, it should set itself that by the end of its first term, it should have five more double taxation agreements in Latin America and trade agreements. Let us

see how that goes, because there is a missing link there, when we talk about trade and enhancing trade, we must create the infrastructure for enhancing trade, and enhancing trade, in doing that, trade agreements, double taxation agreements are particularly important.

**12.45 p.m.**

I want to turn to the question of capital markets and financial services. I believe the Minister put forward some statistics, encouraging statistics, in the capital market. Yes, the Clico Investment Fund has been, I would say, by tradingd measures, a success on the market; and maybe before I do that, Mr. President, I should declare that I have an interest in this particular area of capital markets as I serve on the board of the stock exchange as chairman. [*Desk thumping*] I am the managing director of a securities firm and I am a market practitioner.

**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. [*Sen. The Hon. Ganga Singh*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Sen. S. Ramkhelawan:** Thank you, Mr. President. [*Desk thumping*] In terms of capital markets, again very importantly, we want to become a regional capital market—a regional financial centre—and it is important that all of these, as I said, trade in services be put in place and double taxation be put in place.

We have a hinterland. We have parts of Latin America where we could be competitive, particularly in Central America, and, therefore, we

must focus on those areas in order to bring home the kinds of effects that we want. We have—I should mention, through you, Mr. President, to the hon. Minister, that on a per capita basis, outside of financial centres, we have one of the highest per capita ratios for accountants, for CFAs and for attorneys that can enter into this area. All we need to do is to clear the tracks for "gouti" to run—and I do not want to use that facetiously—but we need to clear those tracks and make the openings.

It is not only that we can be a back-office processor as has been mentioned in this honourable Senate. So, yes we will get some of the banks and so on to come and have back-office processing, data processing and so on and, hopefully, we will get those 3,000 jobs; but there is an opening for much more in the services area where our professionals are effectively underemployed and it is an area that we should push faster on in the financial services sector. After all, the financial services sector constitutes—it is actually the second largest sector in this country after energy and we do have the opportunity and let us make use of the opportunity.

So I call upon the Minister to ensure, not only at this time as he looks toward the next budget, to place sufficient resources for the development of that capital market sector. Indeed, I am aware that the Minister has the International Financial Corporation, but in the Ministry itself there needs to be enhanced capacity to develop this particular sector and I believe that the Minister would want to consider that in terms of financial services.

Finally, Mr. President, the concern is about energy. Energy is half our GDP directly—45 per cent—but much more, when you really think that energy and activities in the energy sector feed almost every other sector:

distribution and services, transportation and so on. We are reaching a point now where we ought to be concerned about our medium-term future in energy.

It is not only sufficient to say that we have been successful in deep water bid rounds as well as we have opened up the on-land bid rounds. There is a major sea change taking place in our world as we speak. We all know about it. We all know about shale gas. We all know that some of these international companies that came to us when we were not the ugly duckling—we were the beautiful swan; we were at the front of the game—they came to us. Now they are looking towards the US to set up energy plants, to set up methanol plants. The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs would very much know about that.

So, a major sea change is taking place and we have to start thinking outside of the box, Mr. President; not just more exploration and commercialization. What if we do not find the volumes that we want? Are we going to put all our eggs in one basket? So think outside of the box!

Political risk, mindful of what they are and so on, we know that on our shoulder—we are on the shoulder of Venezuela—that Latin America has 20 per cent of the world's oil reserves; that 85 per cent of that 20 per cent is in Venezuela; and that Venezuela wants to set up oil refineries in various places.

But, more importantly, Venezuela— there are people who would say that we are 20 years ahead of our neighbour in gas and that it is cheaper and politically less risky to put up additional LNG plants and petrochemical plants in Trinidad and it is cheaper to connect the pipelines to those areas to

mitigate risk.

Are we looking at that? Are we pushing in that direction, I am suggesting, mindful of the political risk? Do not believe that some of these visits that we have had recently by leaders of the great nations of the world; do not believe that—there are people who think they came just to get our little "driplets" of gas by world standards. It may be that the rationale is for more geo-political and stationing here to access other areas.

How do we do that? How do we become the gateway for those kinds of initiatives? Play our game right, we would benefit very significantly. Play our game wrong, they will go to some other place to station and position here.

So that when we talk about energy, we must start thinking about the next phase that we can be the second stage processor and we can access, not only gas and oil from Venezuela, but the whole Guyana Shield because, as far as we hear, Guyana is going to be a place that generate gas. Suriname will be a place that will generate gas.

It is not outside of our reach to do that because we have the know-how; we have the experience in those areas. All I am saying is that it is time for us to think outside of the box and get some critical thinking going. Outside of the arithmetic, we must deal with the strategic. If we do not deal with the strategic, something could happen as it happened in the 1980s.

I believe the Minister of the Environment and Water Resources would have been a much younger man at that time. He would have remembered when they were talking about oil prices going to $40-plus and so on. What happened? Price shocks, and oil went to nine. We do not have the

capacity—and this is worth repeating—we do not have the capacity to increase volume. We are price takers. So while the Minister speaks about prices being above our budgeted prices, if prices were to fall, we could not turn on the taps as some of those countries that have large reserves. We cannot, so we have to think differently.

We have done it successfully before, but we may be sitting on our laurels, thinking unidimensionally and that is a danger. We can get down on our knees or fold our feet and pray that oil prices do not come down, but a sea change is taking place where you have 250 years of gas reserves at current consumption.

A sea change is taking place where who would have believed five years ago or six years ago that you were going to put LNG plants in the US. It is happening now as we speak. So let us not rest on our laurels that the economic metrics are looking good. Some of them are looking good, but one, just one change could catapult this country—I should say "catspraddle" this country—and that is a change in oil price and gas price. We are a one--horse economy. Let us reflect on that. We are a one--horse economy. There are places that we can go to expand our capabilities and, as you put it, the hon. Minister put it, capacity, and that thinking is not happening. I am not seeing it. I am seeing the arithmetic; I am not seeing the strategic. We have to get to that phase because that is the phase that will lift us up as a nation. That is the phase, when we get there, that what we call employment, which is really underemployment, we can get to sustainable employment.

Oil and gas is only employing 3 per cent of our population, but it is 45 per cent of our GDP. You know and I know that that arithmetic is not good

arithmetic and, therefore, we need to spend the time; we need to, as one of our writers would have said, we need to cogitate upon the ways of life to ensure that we make a better Trinidad and Tobago, not only in terms of increasing production, but also in terms of ensuring that our citizens accept and believe, not by spin but by reality, that we are building a better life for all of our citizens in Trinidad and Tobago.

So, notwithstanding some of the metrics, I say to you that there is a lot more work that we have to do. There is a lot more critical thinking that we have to do and I believe that if you take that direction, the nation will stand with you and work with you to ensure that we together build a better nation. I thank you, Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, it is now 12.58. I propose to take the lunch break at this time and resume at 2.00 p.m.

**12.58 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**2.00 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed*.

**The Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie):** Thank you very much, Mr. President. I rise to support the Bill by the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy before this Senate, because the Bill basically seeks an additional $2,898,091,400 from the Consolidated Fund to meet expenditure for the service of Trinidad and Tobago and its citizens for the financial year ending September 30, 2013. It has been a practice, in our tradition, Mr. President, for Ministers of Finance to come following the midterm review to vary the budget and to ask for additional sums.

I was not present in this honourable Senate when the response by the

hon. Sen. Lester Henry was being made in the Senate, but I did have the opportunity in driving from south Trinidad where I had an obligation, to listen to him make his contribution and then I joined the Senate to hear the rest of it. I was very—what can I say—surprised to hear him talk about the Minister of Finance and the Economy coming to this Senate to ask for these additional sums, as simply coming to the Senate to beg for more money. And given that this has been the tradition and the pattern of almost every Government that has ever sat in this Senate, over the extended period of time in which the Parliament has met in various forms, both as an independent nation and as a republican nation, I was a little surprised at that.

Then I heard him say that, basically, nothing had happened over the last three years and that we were back to square one. I want to ask the simple question which is that: do people in this country looking at things rationally and do Senators of this Senate, having lived through the last three years of this country, do we really believe that the economy that we have today in 2013 is a lot better, a lot more solid, poised in the right direction, than it was in 2010 when we came into office in this country? The answer to that from all the indicators can only be that while progress has been a challenge and while errors have been made that the country really has moved strategically and solidly, forward and upward, over the last three years. [*Desk thumping*]

He talked about Ministers and the former Minister of Finance and this one, coming to the Senate to speak about pie in the sky and about what you are going to do rather than what you did. Is that not an unreasonable criticism? If a Government comes in in 2010, would it not say in 2010 and 2011, what it is planning to do? And would there not be a gestation period

in which deliverables could actually be achieved?

He talked about the fact that the growth poles, for instance, were what he called a greasy pole. Does the hon. Senator—the reason I am raising this is because he knows economics, he teaches economics, he understands the issues and, therefore, the things that he says could only be intended to—what can I say, confuse? Because he must know that it takes time from the time of the announcement of a growth pole to the time when it would gain traction, certain things would be required. I would speak a little bit about that.

So my response to the hon. Senator really is that he knows better, and that to make the kind of charges and insinuations that he does against the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy and Members of this Senate on this side, is really not to be speaking the truth and, at the same time, seeking basically to confuse and to make nonsense of rational positions being articulated by the Government in this debate, and in terms of policy development in the country.

I was happy to hear him concede, finally, that we are on a growth path, and he asked the question even while he said so: what is there to boast about? You have modest growth, in other words, you have low growth, the process has been slow. So he asked the question, what is there to boast about? Well, I think, we need not boast about it, but we need to acknowledge it. [*Desk thumping*]

We need to acknowledge that there is macroeconomics stability and strength in the economy of Trinidad and Tobago today in 2013. We need to acknowledge that there has been a return to growth in 2012 and there will be

an increase upon that growth in 2013. [*Desk thumping*] We need to acknowledge that the diversification process is in train, and that is manifested by the growth in the services and the non-energy sectors and the growth, basically, out of the energy sector, despite the challenges that we face in the energy sector, at this time, in terms of servicing of the various plants by the owners of those plant.

I think we need to acknowledge that inflation is very low, and that food inflation, which Sen. Ramkhelawan also spoke about, which he said he remembers as being 28 per cent at some time over the last four years or so, is in fact, today, 11 per cent in this country. And, therefore, the inflation figures for the whole is, in fact, in single digits.

We need to acknowledge that unemployment in this country is extremely low, in fact, around 5 per cent in this country. We need to also acknowledge that this is a country with very, very, clear plans and the Government is on a very clear path and committed to delivery and committed to strong performance.

The deliverables can be identified and they can be enumerated and the performance measurement framework has been established. It has been laid in this Parliament. The Performance Report for 2012 is there for all to see and in January 2013, the performance report for 2013—January 2014 sorry—the performance report for 2013 will also be there. He asked the question: what have we done? The insinuation, of course, being that we have done very little or nothing [*Desk thumping*] and he made the point—it is only on that side that they will bang the desk for the—

**Sen. Singh:** Truth!

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:**—for the mention of the untruth. [*Desk thumping*] I did not want to use a word that was unparliamentary. [*Laughter and desk thumping*] He said that when a real Government took over in 2002—harking back to the first years of the last eight-year administration which preceded this Government—that this was a period of high growth and so on, and he called some of the numbers.

But, I want to mention something to him about the growth of this country. An 18-year period of growth started in this country in the year 1992 and the 1992 growth was because of very, very, hard decisions taken by the NAR administration of 1986 to 1991. [*Desk thumping*] That period of growth lasted from 1992 until 2008 when the financial crisis came, in spite of the administrations that were in-between because the growth path had been set by the very hard decisions that had been taken in those years.

But since 2009, this country has been in decline and the decline was not due to the fault of any particular Government. Part of it was the financial crisis, but part of it had to do with local management of the financial sector here. The end result of that is that when the Government came into office, we had a situation in which we basically had to manage from loss of growth and economic decline, basically, to move the country back to growth. We have succeeded in doing that, I want to say, and that is the beginning of the process of another period of growth in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

What about the numbers themselves? You know, the revenue of this country, when you look at it and you compare, let us say, 2007, 2008 to 2011/2012, what we see in terms of revenue in this country is a decline of

$9.2 billion between the years 2007 and 2008—and the crisis came in 2008—and 2011/2012. So the actual revenue in 2007/2008 was $56.8 billion and the actual revenue in 2011/2012 was $47.67 billion. So that the revenue situation in Trinidad and Tobago during that period in which we moved into a decline in 2008 and 2009, the revenue picture was one in which there had been a decline, in fact, in those years of $9.2 billion.

**2.15 p.m.**

The other thing is that the increase in expenditure from 2007/2008, when the expenditure was 53.9 billion, to 2011/2012 when the expenditure was 54.4 billion, the increase, the total increase in expenditure during that period was .48 billion, less than half a billion during that period, the same period that I talked about the decrease in revenue by ninemillion. So we had nine billion-plus decrease in revenue over that period, but you had a less than half a billion increase in expenditure over that same period. These are numbers from budget statements, the various budget statements that have been issued during various years, and from the Review of the Economy in 2012, which has a composite picture of it.

When you look at the recurrent expenditure pattern over the years, you see that there has also been an increase of 2.3 billion between 2007/2008 and 2011/2012. So that when you look at the economy really, you are looking at a decrease revenue position. The Government has been keeping spending under reasonable control and a fair amount of the increase has been on the recurrent side. In terms of capital expenditure, I want to say, in 2007/2008 the total capital expenditure was $10.1 billion. In 2011/2012, the total capital expenditure was $8.3 billion. So, basically, capital

expenditure declined over the period, and under this administration when you compare to 2007/2008 and it declined by about $1.8 billion.

It is important to understand that, and when you see where the increases are with the decline, you see a decline in terms over the years from 4.3 billion—sorry—in the IDF you see a decline from 5.3 billion in 2007/2008 to 4.2billion in 2011/2012, but in terms of GATE, you see $450 million in 2007/2008 to an increase of $834.4 million and that tells you that where the Government, when it was spending was shifting its expenditure were to the things that related to the policy shift in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, because what was important was education and in this particular case, higher education. [*Desk thumping*]

Because you see a decline in every other column, but you see an increase when it comes to education and higher education. And—well we need not go into a lot of those things, but the point I am making is that when you look at the numbers, nothing that the hon. Senator indicated pointed to anything but effective management of the economy, effective management under conditions of declining revenues, managing in such a way as to effect the policy shift that was required in order to make a change in Trinidad and Tobago.

Now, Sen. Ramkhelawan said that the economic conditions and the macroeconomic indicators were pretty good, and he said the country was headed in the right direction, but he said that he was concerned about the investment side and he was concerned about the development agenda. He also raised some other issues which I do not want to tie into this discussion, the national security issues I will leave for the hon. Minister of National

Security. Some of the other issues I will deal with but I do not want to tie it up in this.

There are a couple of things that he said that I agree with, which is that he talked about the fact that in terms of expansion of trade, we should try to also expand, not just trade but services in the trade agreements, and, secondly, that we should tie double taxation treaties with the trade and services agreement that we signed. I think that is something I am sure that the hon. Minister responsible for trade and investment will bear in mind and in fact include in his strategies for the development of negotiations with the various countries that we are negotiating with right now. Right now the whole expansion drive is into Central and South America because that is one of the growth areas of the world today and I will say something about that as well.

I do want to say something though about the investment side. I want to say besides the commitment that have been publicly made by many of the major players in the energy sector, a commitment which approximates about $4 billion over the next few years, I want to say that for 2012, the investment in this country has been over $2.5 billion in a number of sectors, and these are Central Bank figures in the country.

I want to say, that from InvesTT we have—I do not want to name the companies, but from InvesTT we also have an indication of the kinds of new investments that are coming in that are not necessarily connected to the energy sector, but the investment is taking place in this country. The confidence is building in Trinidad and Tobago. The local investment sector, that is to say the local private sector, is in fact engaged actively in

investments in this country, and the foreign private sectors are also engaged in investment in this country. There are many discussions involving both joint venture partnerships involving local and foreign firms, and there are also a lot of discussion about PPPs, that is to say P3s, Public Private Partnership, and the opportunities that those can bring to the country.

Now, while we have been struggling to move this country from decline to growth and we are at the point now where we can say we have succeeded in doing that and that we will press on with the business of growth and expansion in the country, I want to say that it has not been easy. It has not been easy because of several reasons. One of these is the fact that in May 2010 there were 75 negotiations for collective agreements outstanding in the State and public sectors which had to be negotiated.

**Sen. Singh:** "Yuh hear dat?"

**Hon. Senator:** Seventy-five.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** And another 14—sorry. Anyway, I will leave that because I am not clear on it. The collective effort of the various Ministries, including the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, the Ministry of Finance and the Economy, and the committee of Ministers that meets to discuss these things, with the Government as employer though, out of those 75 negotiations, 66 of these collective agreements have been settled. [*Desk thumping*] And steps are being taken now to settle the other negotiations.

What that means, Mr. President, hon. Members, is that not only was time consumed in this—and these were legacy negotiations. These were legacy negotiations left by the last administration which we had to carry and

in the process we settled 66 out of 75, and each one of those 66 and the others that we must continue to negotiate and settle, all of them have a cost. Every one has a cost, and that cost has to be paid and that cost has to be met. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** The revised salaries, COLA and allowances bill, up to 2013, is the not insubstantial sum of $8.5 billion. [*Desk thumping*] So it is easy to come here and blow a lot of hot air and try to underestimate—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** "Yuh sounding good man, doh worry."

**Sen. Hinds:** Yes! Hot air?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:**—blow a lot of hot air and come here and make insinuations about what the Minister of Finance and the Economy is doing, but you have to acknowledge the fact that $8 billion-plus had to be spent on legacy debt for the labour sector—[*Desk thumping*]—through 66 negotiations out of 75. That is a reality. [*Crosstalk*]

I do not want to go into the details of the numbers for the contracts that were left unpaid, especially related to the construction sector, but the amount and the negotiations involved in it were painstaking because so many things had to be checked, and at the end of the day, we are still with a significant continuing debt in that sector. We have paid the bulk of it. We have paid most of it. We have had to go through the painstaking negotiations in a situation in which people, of course, felt they had been cheated by not being paid on time by the last regime. This was debt that we had inherited and we had to negotiate, we had to sit down, we had to find

that facts and we had to pay, and we continue to carry some of that debt there today and they are yet to be paid in this country by the Government, by the State.

Now, the Opposition and Senator—the Opposition and, in particular, Sen. Henry, indicates or seeks to give the impression that we do not know what we are doing and we are not doing anything, but I want to read here a letter from the—well, maybe I would not do that first. I want to show here—[*Member holds up article*]—something from the Sunday *Gleaner*, April28, 2013. And it has a big headline, "Big loss", meaning big loss for Jamaican, and then it has a sub-headline, "Film about Jamaica enjoys Trinidadian berth", b-e-r-t-h-.

**2.30p.m.**

And it tells the story of *Home Again* which, in fact, was a film that was made in Trinidad, based on a Jamaican immigration problem, and it has a picture of a good friend of mine, Lisa Wickham Branch, whom by the way I would say that I mentored and I think she would agree. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** What!

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** And what it does is basically point to the fact that Trinidad and Tobago is on the right track in terms of the things that we did with the film industry, the incentives that we brought into the industry and the welcome mat that we created for film makers who wanted to use Trinidad and Tobago as a destination.

Mr. Cadiz at the time was Minister of Trade and Industry and he and I visited this set when the film was being made because we were very interested in talking with them and trying to understand, in a very subtle

way, what were the things that brought them to Trinidad rather to some other country.

I know Sen. Lester Henry thinks that we are doing nothing — [*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** He knows that.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:**—well I am giving you the evidence to the contrary, Sir, this is what I am trying to do. [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** All that was missing is elementary dear Watson. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** So I cannot get the name of the paper; it is a Jamaican paper, it is supplement. It is the supplement from the Gleaner and it is called Outlook and it celebrates a lot the things that are achievements in Jamaica, but what it has is a big story about exploring Chaguaramas, and it talks about what is happening in Chaguaramas and what we are doing there.

As you know we are expanding the boardwalk now. We are going to put two jetties into the sea. We have brought a zip line there. We are going to bring other things. A master plan has just been agreed—has been put—the people doing the master plan have just been agreed upon, so we are going to do that, and basically Chaguaramas is going to become a place that basically builds on tourism, and builds on entertainment and really builds on recreation and an environment that is green, and we are going to able to do that.

I got a letter from the [*Crosstalk*] for the resident coordinator of the United Nations here in Trinidad and Tobago and I simply want to say one part—record one part of what he said. They are talking—he is making the

case that we have agreed to focus on a two-year programme over the next two to three years in which we are going to collaborate with the UN for these programmes. And what he said is:

> They are proceeding with this because Trinidad and Tobago has overall good quality, well-thought out development planning documents. He then goes on to site what these are: He says:
>
> I refer to innovation for lasting prosperity, the medium term policy framework 2011—2014, working for sustainable development in Trinidad and Tobago 2012, the human development atlas 2012, the annual performance report 2012, the national performance framework 2012—2015, the public investment programme 2013—15, the development of a national spacial development on going.

Then he goes on say how these can fit in terms of a strategy for influencing the developmental agenda in the post-millennium goal scenario for the global system. [*Desk thumping*]

This sounds to you like a Government that does not know what it is doing or does not have clarity or has no plans? They are famous to say that this Government has no plan. This Government has so many plans that dovetail into seven pillars of development in the manifesto, five priorities in the Medium Term Framework, very clear, elucidated and built upon by the budget of 2012. [*Crosstalk*] We have a seven point strategy for diversification and we have the five growth pole strategy. That is why [*Desk thumping*] to talk about greasy pole—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Deyalsingh:—**greasy pole.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:**—is a lot of hot air. So I want to tell you

what is happening in the country though. I want to tell you what is happening in the country.

**Sen. Hinds:** All over?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** Toyota; a Toyota complex in south Trinidad along the connector road from the Uriah Butler Highway to San Fernando, that would be opened in a few days and they are going to have a formal opening after, and that was facilitated—that private sector investment—by public servants who have transformed the Town and Country Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development.

The C3 Complex in Corinth, San Fernando untaken by the JT Allum Company, that is now in construction. The south park development, involving one of your colleagues on the Opposition side, that shopping complex and office, that is also ongoing in south Trinidad.

The following are buildings that are now in construction, no. 1 Ajax Street, Capital Plaza Hotel and multi-level car park and 10 storey hotel.

**Sen. Hinds:** Who built that?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** Number 6, 11 Street, seven storey office building with basement parking; No 19—sorry—98 Woodford Street, institutional building; No. 75 Ana Street, three storey commercial building; No. 27 Queens Park West, multi-level office building with basement parking; No. 5 Gray Street, a multi-level office building with basement parking; No. 47 Frederick Street, multi-level commercial building with car park attached; low rise building on the Richmond and Charles, as well as a four to five storey building under construction on Charles and Francis Street.

That sounds to you like an economy where nothing is happening? That sounds to you as an economy in which only the Government is doing things? That should to you like a place in which the private sector has no confidence? That sounds to you like a place where you could come and make hollow statements which you misinterpret from the Chamber of Commerce and Trinidad Manufactures Association to give a negative view of an economy that is actually on the move now? [*Desk thumping*]

"I doh know, as I asked some time ago, I doh know which country all yuh living in, and I doh know where you all get your information from." The information that I have gotten are from actual buildings that are being constructed. The information that I have gotten is from the Central Bank review—annual review. The information that I have are well documented pieces of information that anybody could search.

So let us make a deep separation between the facts that we articulate on this side and the—what can I say—[*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Senator:** Mauve langue.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:**—and the stories—

**Hon. Senator:** Mauve langue.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:**—that come from other side. And the reality of this country is that we achieved growth last year, growth is going to intensify this year and the services sectors and the construction sector are on the move. I will not say that there is any boom, and they are on the move.

I want to tell you that it is not only that. I want to let you know that it is not only Government that is building houses. I want to let you know that

all over this country—I have the information here. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** You on the phone?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** No. I want to get the information.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** From the phone?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** "Eh?"

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** From de phone?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** Yes.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** All right.

**Hon. Senator:** You now know that? [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** Well, you know, when you—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** It is a joke, boy.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:**—are an innocent party, "you doh worry about these things, you know". [*Laughter*] [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** "Relax nah."

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** "You doh worry about these things." I am trying to get this information.

Mr. President, please bear with me, hon. Members, also. I just want to give you an idea of where the construction is taking place, and these are housing. Well all—I cannot find it here. It is there somewhere.

**Sen. Beckles:** That is science and technology.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** But what I will say to you is that in the western part of the country I know that 145 apartments are now in the process of construction. In deep south Trinidad we have another 40 or 50. On the eastern part, in the Arima/Malabar area we have another 40, and

these are all private sector housing construction operations that are taking place.

The reason these things are happening is because public servants have transformed themselves and their institutions in order to facilitate the process by making these things a lot easier and a lot more collaborative for people who want to invest and develop in this country. There is going to be a major investment right there in Chaguanas that will make a significant difference to this country and hopefully, I do not want to announce anything, as you say, "I want to talk about wha we doing". I want to talk about what we did. I do not want to talk about what we going to do and therefore, I will not announce it, but the fact is that time will come soon when that 800 to $1 billion investment will manifest itself right there in the heart of Chaguanas.

So that tells you about the confidence that people have in the country, in the Government and in the economy of Trinidad and Tobago. I want to say something to you that is very important; we have plans and we have policy document, "we doh have one policy document—I will explain why in a minute—and we doh have a slogan", okay, but what we have are real thought out plans, and I want to show you where it began. It began in the manifesto where in the last pages, 66, it said, what will be the policy shift that will occur if development of this country is guided by this manifesto and what will be the impact of this policy shift. Because we understood in 2010 that the ideological issues were never issues of controversy because the whole world had gone into globalization, everything was in terms of investment and trade, and markets and opening of economies, and what was necessary was not an ideological reformulation of development plans and

strategies, but a simple policy shift building on what had been achieved before.

What had been achieved before on the basis of 30 years of PNM governance, what had been achieved before on the basis of five more years of NAR governance, what had been achieved before on the basis of five more years of—it was yeah—four years in that instance of PNM governance, what had been achieved in seven years, I think, of UNC governance and what had also been achieved in the Patrick Manning administration.

We know that there was continuity in policy and that there was a major policy shift in 1987, and that policy shift had taken us from 1987 well into 2008. And we knew with the crisiscome—having come—in 2008—2009 and 2010 the economy in the doldrums and all the things that were going on around there, that you needed a major policy shift and that is what we came to embrace in seven pillars for development in this manifesto.

What did we say? We said, if we made a policy shift this is what will happen: In general the economy will be transformed and the political system will be more responsive and participatory, but we mentioned nine specific differences.

**2.45 p.m.**

I would not read the nine for you, but I want to say this, all development will take place in the context of a land use and physical planning framework and that sustainable development principles will apply. There will be order and purpose and development strategy and execution, and that is the basis on which we proceeded, and all the things that are being

done, all the things that we are doing one by one, while they might seem to you as things that are happening here, there and everywhere, they are part of a coherent thinking, and they are part of a coherent sustainable development framework.

The five priorities are contained in here. The seven pillars for diversification are contained in here and the growth poles strategy is also contained in here. The sustainable development framework is elaborated in here and it is global in reach, because it has reached the Rio plus 20 conference, but it is a working document for us, and the diversification strategy with the seven business clusters which we did not by ourselves but in collaboration with private sector labour and civil society, we also have.

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

*Motion made*: That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. F. Karim*]

*Question put and agreed to*.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** Thank you very much, Mr. President; thank you very much, hon. Members. The framework of everything that we do while it is in the context of sustainable development is that we are trying to achieve a society that is all inclusive in which prosperity will be achieved for all, and that lasting prosperity can be achieved by collaboration and innovation. That is why we have the cluster diversification, the growth pole diversification, and in all of this, this business of innovation is important because at the heart of innovation is the human imagination.

And today is not the day to talk about that, but I simply want to

mention it and I want to mention why it is important. We are very alert to what is the challenge, the big challenge globally in the world today. When Vice-President Biden was in Trinidad and Tobago in one of the meetings in which I was involved he articulated very clearly. He said the two big issues for the next century are going to be water and energy. He articulated it very clearly. If you look at the scenario-scanning document prepared by Shell, a company which has now come back to Trinidad and Tobago and is using this as its base for both Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela and other operations in the southern part of the western hemisphere, you will see in their document when they talk about what is happening in the world that they also talk about this challenge of water and energy, but they include something else in it, which is food. And they talk about what is known as the water-energy-food-stress nexus. Because what they claim—and I want to say Shell is not a company to mess with in terms of scenario planning because they have been right three times in predicting where the energy world is going to go and have succeeded profitably from it on three separate occasions.

**Sen. Karim:** Plenty scenario planning.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** That is right. So, what they say is that the world will need 40 to 50 per cent more water, more energy and more food by 2030. When is 2030? Seventeen years from now. Okay? And while you all are talking about "commess" and making mischief in Trinidad here, we are thinking about 30 years from now. [*Desk thumping*]

Now, the thing about this is that 50 per cent of the world's fresh water is used in the extraction of energy resources. So, if energy increases and

energy production increases because of demand through consumption, then it means that the water needs also increase. And if the population grows, not only will they need more food which will need more water, but what it means really is that the whole nexus of energy, food and water is now tied to each other in an inextricable way and this is part of a challenge for us. When you think that more energy will require more water, more food will also demand more water and more water will demand more energy. When you think of the nexus there you begin to understand. When you understand that we are dealing with the reality of climate change and that extreme weather can complicate things, whether it is droughts or floods and its impact on agriculture livelihoods and housing, you begin to understand what a challenge this is.

So that the policy that we outlined when we talk about food, security and sustainability, it is not just about the old traditional notion of agriculture, it is about an understanding that although we will never be able to produce all the food we have, two things are necessary. We have to be less import dependent, we have to produce more, we have to produce it more efficiently and effectively and we have to build alliances to make sure that we also have food sustainability. When the hon. Prime Minister created the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, it is not because she wanted to create a new Ministry or give somebody a job; it was because water was at the heart of the business of development in this country. [*Desk thumping*] And that environmental sustainability in a small island state like Trinidad and Tobago was a critical factor. When the hon. Prime Minister created the Ministry of Diversity and Integration [sic], the reason was not because she wanted to

give somebody a job or create a new Ministry, it was because the building of social capital and the building of the integrated capacity of this country was necessary to make the policy work, because you cannot cause development by policy. You have to make policy work by unity, and that was the idea behind all of these things.

**Sen. Hinds:** You are becoming quite angry—[*Inaudible*]

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** I am becoming animated because when I think of the gap between your thinking and ourselves [*Desk thumping*] it is like a chasm.

**Sen. Hinds:** Yes.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** You know, it is like a chasm. And I hear you touting over again that you are going to bring back Vision 2020 and revise vision 20 and so on. I want to say that Vision 2020 was built on 2000 data.

**Sen. Hinds:** Very good.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** Everything that we have is built on 2011 data. That is the first thing I had to do as somebody involved in planning, get the data right for the population, because you had to deal with the population that you had here in Trinidad and Tobago.

The second thing is that we had to do this which was important. You "cyar" build any serious plan in this country unless you know what your space is, what your coastlines are, what your sky space is; this is an absolutely necessary thing. The kind of planning that people are talking about "long time" where you could go from economic model, these are dead zones of initiatives. People "doh" plan like that anymore. People do not

plan—we have to do this. This is a consultative process. It will use GIS in order to model the country land space the way we do it. This is very important. You have to start with the physical land space, with the kind of land you have, what is possible, what is not possible. You have to start with the population you have, and the growth poles are related to the idea that 82 per cent of the businesses are on the western side of the country and 92 per cent of the population are on the western side of the country, and 18 per cent of the businesses and 8 per cent of the population are on the eastern side of the country.

So, the growth poles are meeting the dynamic of population concentration in what we call the urban footprints of Trinidad, and a certain pattern in Tobago as well, and trying to see how you can make economic activity that would create a society of self-sustaining connected communities. I was in south this morning talking about the south-west growth pole. I do not have time to give the details that I gave there here today, but we have done a study on the central growth pole. Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business worked with us to thestudy, and on the basis of the recommendations we are now proceeding. We are doing a study of the southern growth pole and we have worked with the Trade and Development Institute at the University of the West Indies, Atlantic LNG and the IDB, to do some of the preliminary studies in the south growth pole.

We have a study on the eastern part of Tobago, which is very ecologically sensitive. The only place that we have not done a study on is on the north coast. We have one for east Port of Spain with the IDB involving a lot of collaborators, bringing both private and multilateral

investment in there. It involves a lot of Ministries; the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources is involved with the flooding issues. Because how are you going to develop Port of Spain if it floods every time rain falls? So those things are critical in the process. How are you going to transform east Port of Spain if you have perpetual criminal activity of the kind that we have now in that part of the city? How are you going to develop Port of Spain if it remains as it is now on the border of a crime area? So, all of these things have to be thought through, so "doh come here and tell me bout greasy pole". We are putting thought into this. [*Desk thumping*]

We are putting studies into this. We have plans, we have projects, we have things that are being done right now in this. I have 14 projects going on in east Port of Spain right now—small projects—and if you test me I am going to name them because I think I have them here.

**Sen. Hinds:** Name them.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** So, we are proceeding—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Name them.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Name them.

**Sen. Cudjoe:** Name them. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** I would not bother.

**Hon. Senators:** Name them.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** But I want to say, we are moving—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Senators:** Name them, you said you have them here.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** I might do if before I finish my 10 minutes

I have now.

**Sen. Cudjoe:** No, no, no; that is irrelevant.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Name them, we are testing you. [*Crosstalk*]

**Ms. Coudray:** They do not want to hear what you have to say. [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Senators:** Name them!

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** We are building an innovation-driven economy here, and it takes a big jump to move from where we are to where you get to an innovation economy. It is not easy. Some people think that you can do it by looking at what Korea did and do it. It cannot be done. Some people think that you can look at Michael Portelli's model and do it, it cannot be done, because you need in innovation a structured side which relates to science, technology, research, et cetera; but you also need even an innovative side of innovation itself, which really requires a number of mutinous minds to create that.

So, I want to close by simply saying this: we in this Government are very aware that we need to build an innovation-driven economy. Secondly, we are very aware that there is a shale revolution in the world and, therefore we have to transform what we do in energy, both in terms of what we do with the extracted elements from the earth as well as the marketing and strategizing of it. We are well aware that there is a geo-political shift from west to east in the world system. We are very aware that Latin America is the new growth region in the world, and we are constantly committed to the idea of sustainable development on the basis of five principles; not only economic growth, social development and environmental conservation, but also the building of social capital and the nurturing of the human

imagination.

**3.00p.m.**

That is where we are going with all the policy things that we are doing. And the way we are going about this thing is very, very—

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Methodical.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:—**methodically, yes, very methodically, thank you. And we are proceeding to this because we care about this country, we love our country, we love our people—[*Desk thumping*] and we want to see this place as the prize place. We want to get to the point where the people of this country will have so much pride in this country, and this economy will be so buoyant that we will not lose our brightest people to the magnet centres of the world, and we will be able to get people who are able to significantly contribute towards our development at the stage that we are, to migrate also to our country. That is where we are headed, Mr. President, thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Terrence Deyalsingh:** Thank you, Mr.President, for allowing me the opportunity to speak on the Finance (Supplementary Appropriation) (Financial Year 2013) Bill, 2013. So, I rise to make a contribution with accordance to section 63, 64 and 65 of the Constitution, whereas, the Senate cannot actually defeat a Finance Bill as it should be. This Bill has already been passed in the Lower House, and we as usual in the Senate will give it a second look, a second piece of scrutiny.

I begin, Mr. President, by examining some of the opening remarks made by the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, when he compared Trinidad and Tobago with Eurozone, England, the United States and other parts of the

world, to paint a picture that many of these countries are also in deficit. But I want to ask the hon. Minister, if it is by doing that we are comparing like with like. Because all the areas that the globe that he has cited, the Eurozone, United States, all those areas have their own reserve currencies and so they are able to better finance their own debt, whereas the Trinidad and Tobago dollar, in my respectful view, is a soft currency. It is not a reserve currency.

So my question is, are we really comparing like with like when we compare Trinidad and Tobago's macro-economic situation with the Eurozone, United States and so on? And let it not be lost on us, Mr. President, that the UK and even the United States, partially because of their high debt to GDP ratios have been downgraded by Standard and Poor's; their ratings go up and down. I think recently the United States after their initial downgrade to negative, I think they have now been upgraded back to stable. The point is, part of the problem is jet debt to GDP ratio. So we must not take comfort in where our debt to GDP ratio is. I just want to put that on the table so that we can bring some sobriety to when we compare ourselves with others, because we are not comparing like with like when we do that.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** That's right.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** And it raises the question, Mr. President, how are we financing our large infrastructural projects? And I want to ask the Minister of Finance and the Economy, squarely, although the decision to finance the Point Fortin highway was taken before his tenure, does he agree with the method used to finance that highway out of our current account and not via

debt financing? And that is the chasm between the PNM and UNC—

**Hon. Senators:** That's right. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:**—that Sen. Tewarie spoke about.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** That is the careful thought. That is the love of people.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** That is the chasm that will exist in how we finance capital projects. We will not do it out of the current account. We would have gone to the Inter-American Development Bank—[*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. George:** The beginning of that highway was financed by the PNM out of the Treasury. I spoke about that already here.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:**—and we would have complied with their tendering process; we would have complied with their requirements for transparency and accountability. So the direct question to the Minister of Finance is, the direct question which I hope he would address in his wrap up: does he agree with the method of financing of the Point Fortin highway, $7 billion out of the current account? Because you see, when you finance projects like that, willy-nilly, what you end up with is start and stop development, which is what you are seeing with the Point Fortin highway. It is on today, off tomorrow, on today, off tomorrow. So I want this Minister to get up in this Parliament and make a statement on his agreement with the method of financing of that piece of highway.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** That's right.

**Sen. George:** I talk about that in this Senate already. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Mr. President, Sen. the hon. Dr. Tewarie spoke about the development of the Chaguaramas peninsula, and I agree it needs to be developed. But as we develop the Chaguaramas peninsula, has the hon.

Minister considered access into and out of the peninsula via that one road. And my question is, my question is, are you still wedded to the last administrations plan to build a cause way to give access to the peninsula? Because you could have all the development there, but if you—right now after you have the big fetes there and the big events, you have traffic in, you have traffic out. And as you rightly develop it even further what are your plans for Egress, exit, into, out of Chaguaramas.

**Sen. Dr. Tewarie:** We are looking at it including the cause way.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** So the cause way, we had—the last administration had recommended is something that is still on the drawing boards?

**Sen. Dr. Tewarie:** As an option.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Thank you, good. Mr. President, I want to talk about the growth figures as supplied by the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy and also which are borne out by the recent Central Bank interim reports. The growth figures for 2011 showed a decline of 1.4 per cent. The 2012 actual, is 0.2 per cent. So we went from 2011, 1.4 declined, to 2012 0.2 actual; 2013 projected now stands at 2.5per cent. That is the projected. The latest data I have and the hon. Minister of Finance and Economy could probably correct me if I am wrong, is that the first quarter of 2013 shows a rate of 1.8 per cent annualized, which when you look at it gives you approximately an actual of 0.4 per cent. So my question is, how are we moving from 0.2 per cent in 2012 actual, to projected 2013 of 2.5 per cent which is a factor of 12?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** That's right.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** We are talking about, Mr. President—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** And you break it down.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:**—increasing by a factor of 12. You see, when you look at it at the percentages they give you a slightly skewed view. But I am asking you how are you managing to get 2.5 per cent growth coming after 2012 where you had an actual of 0.2per cent and 2011 when you had a decline of 1.4 per cent?

**Sen. Hinds:** Good question.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** It is just a question to put out there—[*Desk thumping*] and I hope I can get an answer. Because you see, Mr. President, the reason why these projected figures are a little bit bothersome, is that we now have a $60billion budget. And we have a $60 billion budget in light of falling or stagnant revenues; let us say stagnant marginally increasing. But what I want to ask, is this, what is the decision making process that goes through Cabinets minds when it sits to make decisions?

The last PNM administration was admonished for spending money. But at least those moneys were spent in times of high revenues. This Government is bringing the biggest budgets in history, year, on year, on year. And the question is, what is it being spent on? And I will develop my argument a little bit further down the line.

When you look, Mr. President, at some of the latest data put out by the Central Bank, and this is from the Central Bank, independent authority, you are seeing where between 2012, Central Bank report, and their latest interim report, the commercial banks are actually putting aside more provision for none performing loans. That is not a sign of a buoyant economy with high business confidence. Once commercial banks start to

make more provision for none performing loans it means people are defaulting on their loans. Why are people defaulting on their loans? What economic disease—

**Sen. George:** "Why the bank need more money?"

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:**—is that symptom referring too?

**Sen. George:** "Why the bank taking loans."

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** But you see all this liquidity in the bank which has been there for a while, admittedly has been there for a while, is speaking to lack of investment opportunities and it is a fact that the Central Bank took $270million out of circulation between October 2012 and March 2013 via their "supping up" operations. The Central Bank had to intervene to "sup up" all this excess liquidity. And when you look at that Mr.President, in terms of the fact that the Central Bank mid-term review again, talks about declining interest income and account of lower interest rates and limited investment alternatives, that is what the Central Bank is saying. The Central Bank report is saying there are limited investment opportunities. And to compensate for that, banks like everybody else have to drop their prices. When there are no buyers you drop your prices and hope for people to buy more.

**Sen. Hinds:** That is the reason why.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** That is the reason why I am asking now. The Minister talk about manufacturing increases. Caricom is flat, we know that. And Caricom is our major market for our manufactures, our ketchup, our cleaning products and so on. If the hon. Minister could tell us, which sector, he mentioned the cement industry, outside of that, which part of the

manufacturing sector is bringing us this increase to which he speaks about? Because the data from the Central Bank does not support what the hon. Minister is saying.

So if he could probably alert us as to what sector is really driving this increase, in manufacturing, whether it is manufacturing to extra Caricom markets or where ever. I think the hon. Minister also spoke, if I am not mistaken he can correct me if I am wrong, about the real estate market. Minister, did you speak about the real estate market?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** One line.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** One line. Go ahead.

**Sen. Howai:** No, I mentioned it is finance in real estates, yes and together the preliminary figures for this year showed a growth of 6 per cent which I ask that they revisit to confirm the accuracy of the numbers.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Thank you. But again the Central Bank report speak about an increase in the real estate lending by about 10.9per cent, which on the surface sounds good. I would like to put before the Minister, and if he could respond to me in his wrap up, whether this increase in real estates spending spoken about in the Central Bank report has to do with new buyers or does this refer to people refinancing, existing mortgages to take advantage of lower interest rates, because if it is one and not the other, it speaks to two different dynamics. If it is new business, if it is new homeowners, first time, that is good.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** As supposed to refinancing.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** But, if it is refinancing, and my little investigation is that the bulk of it has to do with refinancing.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Switch mortgages.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Yeah, switch mortgages. So that does not really speak to a buoyant economy. So if the hon. Minister could probably treat with that. But, Mr. President, as I go on speaking about these large mega budgets $60 billion, the now Government in the first year or two would always harass us on this side that the PNM spent $300 billion in 10 years, nearly $300 billion in 10 years.

**3.15p.m.**

This Government, in three years, has spent what—close to what?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Two hundred and eleven—

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Two hundred-plus billion dollars,—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Two hundred and eleven.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:**—largest budgets in history. But under the last administration, if we are honest, ask yourselves what percentage of that, by law, went into the Heritage and Stabilization Fund? What percentage went into the Infrastructure Development Fund? What percentage went into the Green Fund?

So is it accurate to say that the PNM spent $300 billion in 10 years? My question to you now is: what have you put into the Heritage and Stabilization Fund? [*Desk thumping*] And I ask this in context of the fact that you refused to answer a question in the Parliament today—

**Sen. Singh:** That is not true. That is not true.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:**—on the Heritage and Stabilization Fund. [*Desk thumping*] The first question on the Order Paper today had to do with the Heritage and Stabilization Fund. Why was that question not answered?

[*Interruption*] But there was a question on the Heritage and Stabilization Fund. Why was that question not answered? What are you shielding from the public on the Heritage and Stabilization Fund, which was question number 52, honourable?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Explain the heritage to the common man—tell them.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** But let us talk about what is the Heritage and Stabilization Fund. This is a fund, if you look at the words, "heritage", "stabilization". The heritage part, as I understand it and the way it should be, should be to put away money for a rainy day, and the stabilization part is that it should be apart—it should be; it is not working like that now—so that when energy prices fluctuate—go up, we put in; energy prices come down below a threshold, we take out. And that is part of the review that should be taking place now, and which is what this question today—question number 52—is based on, the review.

And I have put it to the predecessor to the hon. Sen. Larry Howai, that the time has come in this review to relook at the Heritage and Stabilization Fund and split it into two funds: a Heritage Fund, which is sterilized—put aside for future use, where only Parliament, whichever government of the day, can come to the Parliament to get access to that fund; it is sterilized—and the stabilization part could be a fund that any government of the day could draw down when energy prices fall below a certain threshold.

**Sen. Hinds:** Nice!

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** We have put that forward as a policy position. We have the permission of our political leader to say that, and I have said that and I am asking this Minister of Finance and the Economy whether he will

give consideration in his review, which would have started under Mr.Winston Dookeran, to splitting this into a Heritage Fund, which our future generations will have access to—our grandchildren, our children—and a Stabilization Fund. So I am just asking the hon. Minister to do that and I hope when we come back here and we get the answer to question number 52 we will be so enlightened.

But coming back, the question remains now, the Government has found itself in a sticky position as to infrastructural works and development works. The question is: how are you going to be funding your development works? Could you—could someone—I am sorry I am speaking after Sen. Dr. Tewarie because I know this will fall in his yard. You would have alluded to some of them. But some of the developmental strategies—and I will come to that a little later on—do not seem to be taking off as originally intended. But we will come to that soon.

Both Sen. Dr. Tewarie and the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, spoke about the failure of the public/private partnership initiative.

**Hon. Senator:** No, no, no. He did not say this.

**Sen. Singh:** He said it is a work in progress.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** A work in progress; it did not get the traction it was supposed to have gotten.

**Sen. Howai:** No, those were not the words I used. What I said was that I did not—the status of that initiative was not as far as advanced as I thought it was at the time when I read the budget. Nevertheless, since then, I have put things in place so that we could start accelerating the process.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Thank you for the clarification, honourable. So the

public/private partnership is not working as well as you thought it would have. Certain things that should have been in place were not in place. Okay. I appreciate your candour. But what are your pipeline projects that will see the country develop, that will create employment? And this is where I come to the growth poles now.

These growth poles have been much touted and much spoken about. The hon. Minister of Planning said that he needed to do certain spatial work first before you can develop these things. The question then is—and if someone from your side could explain to me—when the hon. former Minister of Finance spoke about the growth pole on the north coast, if I remember correctly that development was predicated on a tunnel from Tunapuna to Maracas. Was any study done before that Minister of Finance made a statement about a tunnel from Tunapuna to Maracas?

The answer is no. Let us be honest. Absolutely no study was done as to its feasibility, its viability. But the growth pole for north Trinidad, as I understand it, was based upon a tunnel from Tunapuna to Maracas so that more people could access the north coast. But in three years, nothing has happened to the growth pole in north coast of Trinidad, and that is the point I am making. You have had three years—not to build the tunnel, but have you turned sod to build the tunnel?

**Sen. Hinds:** In his mind.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** And that is the question.

**Sen. Hinds:** In his twisted mind.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** No. Your excuse now that you were not there cannot hold water—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Because he just spoke about the poles.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Because you blame us for everything—for the last administration. [*Sen. Dr. Tewarie stands*] Hold on, hold on, hold on.

**Sen. Dr. Tewarie:** I am not blaming anybody—

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Your excuse that you were not there does not mean that that Maracas tunnel was pie in the sky,—

**Sen. Hinds:** Oh yes. That was your Cabinet.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:**—a total fiction of somebody's imagination which is grounded in total unreality.

**Sen. Hinds:** And it was not a leak.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** And it was in a budget statement, honourable. It was in a budget statement.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** It is an anchor for the growth pole.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** It was an—that is why we call it a "greasy" pole. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Goebbels, "handle dat"!

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** That is why it is called a greasy pole.

**Sen. Hinds:** Goebbels, "take dat"!

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** It is a greasy pole. You can get no traction on it. Would somebody tell us today, what is the status of the north coast growth pole—greasy pole—which is linked to the tunnel from Tunapuna to Maracas? [*Desk thumping*] Somebody speak to that.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Rapid rail? That is what you comparing it to?

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Let us talk about the growth pole for east Port of Spain. Every time the question of the growth pole for east Port of Spain

comes up, hon. Senator, we get a different reason. I had it as a question on the Order Paper:—

**Sen. Hinds:** I remember.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:**—why was the east Port of Spain growth pole initiative taking so long to get off the ground?

**Hon. Senator:** Where it is needed.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** This is over a year ago. And the answer given by the hon. Minister of Planning then was that it was now linked to the Invaders Bay project.

**Sen. Hinds:** Oh, yes.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Remember that?

**Sen. Hinds:** Goebbels said that.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Hon. Sen. Tewarie said that.

**Sen. Hinds:** Goebbels.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** It is on the *Hansard*.

**Sen. Dr. Tewarie:** I do not know if I said that.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Yes, you did.

**Sen. Hinds:** "Yeah", twisting again—

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Now we are hearing that the east Port of Spain "greasy" pole cannot get off the ground until you fix crime in east Port of Spain. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** You understand?

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** So the question is, what is—

**Sen. Dr. Tewarie:** On a point clarification, Mr. President.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** I will give way in a little while.

**Sen. Hinds:** No.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** The question is, we have now had two reasons why east Port of Spain "greasy" pole or growth pole, cannot get off the ground. Reason number one, is was tied to the Invaders Bay project—

**Sen. Hinds:** Yes.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:**—for which they "doh" have a deed.

**Sen. Hinds:** Good.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Number two, today—

**Sen. Hinds:** Who said that?

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Sen. Tewarie, in response to a question I put on the Parliament.

**Sen. Hinds:** Goebbels said that?

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Reason number two today—

**Mr. President:** Senator, I am hearing remarks by a Senator on this side using references which I think are offensive.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Most of them.

**Mr. President:** I would ask that he refrain from further remarks to that effect.

**Sen. Ramlogan:** Hinds, man! Hinds! Hinds "does" make offensive insults—

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** I am sure the AG will calm down.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Assist us. He will assist us.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Reason number two, Mr. President, today, is that the east Port of Spain growth pole has to be now linked to reducing crime in east Port of Spain. In other words, the east Port of Spain growth pole, like the

north coast growth pole, like the tunnel, is nowhere in sight. I will give way to you now.

**Sen. Dr. Tewarie:** I may have made a link at some time, I do not recall,—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** That is honourable of you.

**Sen. Dr. Tewarie:**—to between the east Port of Spain development and the Invaders Bay. I may have also made that link to what we are doing in Chaguaramas and may have also made it in relation to the Sustainable Cities Initiative with the IDB in Port of Spain. But I did not make any direct link of the kind that you suggest, between that and Invaders Bay.

The second thing is that the east Port of Spain growth pole is, in fact, in development stage. It is part of the Sustainable Cities project and it is being pursued with a number of other things. It is just that it has not reached the stage where you can say that there is high economic activity taking place, because there is a lot of infrastructure work that needs to be done. It has nothing to do with crime. We will develop it.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Thank you. After three years of talking about east Port of Spain, we have to listen to this now.

**Sen. Hinds:** Imagine that.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Took the people of East Port of Spain for the proverbial ride—proverbial ride.

**Sen. Hinds:** Well put, Senator. Well put! [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Proverbial ride. So the north coast growth pole is out the window; east Port of Spain growth pole, out the window; the southwest peninsula growth pole, I "doh" know where it is going. The highway is stop-and-start, and I am sure other people here will speak about the Tobago

growth pole. But the question is: what is your plan? You speak about plans; you speak about growth poles, and here we are today, three years after your Government being in power, all we hear are reasons why these things cannot happen.

One of our—I could talk about one of our pipeline projects which was scuttled by this Government when they came into office, and that had to do with leveraging our natural resource in Chaguaramas with the capacity we had built over the years in marine development. And one of our initiatives was the repair and refurbish maritime project, which was predicated on the OPVs, the ferries which we have, and that was part of an overall development plan to instigate a repair and maintenance facility in Chaguaramas.

The OPVs are gone. We are going to buy some rusty decommissioned vessels from the United States—hand-me-downs. Could anybody tell me from the Government side, why, in 2013, with a GDP the size that we have, a country aspiring to a certain status, that we have to be taking hand-me-down vessels from the United States?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** And why does a country de-commission a vessel?

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** If these vessels were so good, why are they not in use by their current owners? We are now three years behind in protecting our maritime borders because the Government took an ill-advised decision based, in my view, purely on spite because it was a PNM "ting", not to bring the OPVs here. But yet—[*Interruption*] No, I have given way enough to you today. But yet today, we are financing the Agusta vessel and helicopters which were part of that whole surveillance system. What is the rationale?

Mr. President, I want to draw reference to something which I am becoming familiar with as far as our forex situation is concerned—foreign exchange.

I am putting it bluntly that my information may need some scrutiny, so I say it upfront and I will leave it for the Minister of Finance and the Economy to correct me if I am wrong.

**3.30 p.m.**

**Hon. Senator:** Because you say it?

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** No, but it needs to be aired, and I am saying upfront I will leave it for the Minister of Finance and the Economy to tell me if I am right or wrong. Our import cover I think is now 10.4 months. Is that correct, honourable? Has it declined slightly from about 10.7 to 10.4?

**Sen. Howai:** Ten point four. I may not be exactly correct.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Yes. So it has declined marginally from 10.7 months of cover to about 10.4. So I am correct on that score. But when one marries that hon. Minister, through you, Mr. President, directly to the Minister of Finance and the Economy, that slight decline in itself might not speak to a serious problem, but I want to know because you will have the information and I do not. Has that been matched by a corresponding increase of imports; and if not, what does that increase demand for foreign exchange US dollars speak to? You have confirmed that there has been a marginal decrease in import cover from 10.7 months to 10.4 months. That in itself is not a problem. My question is: has that been matched by a corresponding increase in imports; and if not, what does that speak to? I will leave it at that.

**Sen. Howai:** Senator?

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Sure. Go ahead.

**Sen. Howai:** There has been—let me say, the total value of foreign reserves has not decreased. What has decreased, as you quite rightly said, is the months of import cover, and that months of import cover has decreased simply because, as you quite rightly said, imports have increased. Imports have increased simply because, again, with the growth in the economy, there has been a concomitant increase in imports coming into Trinidad and Tobago.

So when there was a decline, you would have seen imports starting to reduce. That reduced over time and during the course of the last year, as the economy turned around and started to grow, the value of imports increased and that resulted in the change. I think to be very, very clear, there has not been a reduction in the total value of foreign exchange reserves. That has remained in tack.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Thank you. But you see, Minister, the problem I am having is that your explanation is based on a more buoyant economy, but the economy is not as buoyant as we have made it out to be. We have seen where the actual increase is less than 1 per cent, less than .5 per cent. So that I think—we will deal with that later.

**Sen. Howai:** All right.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** That leads to some more explanation, because when I marry that with what is happening at the commercial banks, where they have to make all these bad loans provisions, where consumer spending is down, I have a little bit of difficulty meshing the explanation with the slight drop in import cover.

**Sen. Howai:** When I close.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Yes. Sure. Mr. President, I now turn, again, to the Central Bank Report which deals specifically with the non-bank financial institution sector. So I have dealt with the commercial banks which I will come back to. This sector according to the Central Bank Report, Mr. President, and I quote their words now if you would allow me:

> They have "not coped well"—due to—"the slow-down in economic activity."

So the theme you get, that recurrent theme throughout the Central Bank Report—and these are not my words. These are the words from the Central Bank Report which speaks consistently to a paucity of investment options, slowdown in economic activity. It does not mesh with this increase in economic activity that the hon. Minister just spoke to. That same report spoke about a sharp drop in business opportunities, paucity of investment opportunities, and that particular sector declined by 10.3 per cent up to December 2012. But it gets worse. To March 2013, on top of that 10.3 per cent decline, it declined by a further 9.8 per cent.

So we are talking about a specific subsector of the financial sector, and I would like know what the Minister of Finance and the Economy has to say to the non-banking financial institutions. Are there any measures to be put in place for that sector of the economy to see some growth?

Mr. President, I turn a little bit now to the Auditor General's Report and I want to start by saying, mea culpa. Why do I say mea culpa? I have said before in this Parliament—and I think all reasonable people here, we are all reasonable—if we keep coming into Government on the promise of doing

things differently and doing things better, but then when we get into Government we try to excuse away and wish away our bad decisions because the previous administration did that, I am saying mea culpa.

Whatever the PNM may have done or not done, whether real, fictional or imaginative, let us say now that you came into power based on the premise of new politics and I will do things differently. I think it was Sen. hon. Jamal Mohammed, on being appointed as Minister of Communications, who said the hallmark will be transparency and accountability.

**Sen. George:** That is the hallmark.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Excellent. I am glad that you said that. So, after three years of this Government in power, I sat here for the first two years and took all the licks about what the last administration did from 1956 to 2010, and that was the basis upon which many Government's spokespersons use to justify their own actions now. I am saying to this Government, "dem days done".

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Long time.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** You are in power for three years.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** This is your fourth year.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** This blaming of the PNM has to stop. Even your own supporters are now fed up of hearing, "Well the PNM did it so, so that is why we could get away with it now"—many people.

The Auditor General's Report, I have no doubt—and I am being perfectly honest here—would have made similar charges against the last administration.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Not to this extent.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** That is the point. But everything now under this Government is being taken to obscene levels. In other words, we have changed Government on the back of a promise to do things better, to be more transparent, to be more accountable, and nothing has changed. The Auditor General's report is more damning now than it has ever been. [*Desk thumping*] In other words, we have learned nothing and that is sad.

**Sen. Hinds:** Worse!

**Hon. Senator:** We got worse.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** That is sad because you came in on a wave of popularity to do better. So when we look at what we have not learnt from Reshmi, what we have not learnt from clause 34 and, Mr. President, it brings me to the $6.8 million now we are spending or have spent to take a fire truck out of a ditch.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Thirty feet away.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** How could a Cabinet with sensible men and sensible women, who rode a wave of popularity to do better, to reverse all the ills of the PNM, sit in a Cabinet and be hoodwinked into paying $6.8 million to retrieve a $2 million piece of equipment? I would like the next speaker to tell me how is that possible. I would like the next speaker, Mr. President—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Dr. Tewarie:** Sorry I am not following you.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** You are not following me?

**Sen. Dr. Tewarie:** I said I am sorry I am not following you.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:**—to tell me state boards which are charged with the responsibility of executing projects which the hon. Sen. Ramlogan had all to

say about state boards under the PNM, about off-sheet balance accounting, this, that and the other.

How could the chairman of a state board, who failed miserably, how could his nomination to another billion dollar state board be ratified and agreed to by hon. men and women opposite me? And I speak directly to Rabindra Moonan's tenure now at the HDC. Where is the accountability? You take an airline, run it into the ground with a billion dollar debt, part of which is a $200 million corruption scandal with cargo, and this Government sees it fit, hon. men and women opposite me see it fit, to reward Rabindra Moonan, my friend—we have mutual friends in Penal. I like the man. We are good friends. We are good friends. If I see him now, I will hail him as my good friend, but the fact of the matter is, how could a Cabinet, hon. men and women, agree to reward Mr. Rabindra Moonan with the chairmanship of the Housing Development Corporation? What type of governance does that speak to?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** New governance.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** What hold does Mr. Rabindra Moonan have over this Cabinet? How could hon. Members opposite me, Mr. Larry Howai, Sen. Fazal Karim, Sen. Jamal Mohammed, Kelvin Ramnarine who sit in Cabinet—I want one of them to get up here today. I challenge them to justify that. [*Desk thumping*] You move him from a billion dollar loss to a billion dollar company now to head.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Not even an explanation.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** That is why I began that part of my debate by saying mea culpa. If we had done that in the past, I am sorry, but have we learnt by

changing administrations. Whatever we did, you are now doing it 10 times worse, but you use our past things to justify your present actions. That cannot be right.

**Sen. Hinds:** Now you have the President—[*Inaudible*]

**Sen. Singh:** **"**Doh bring the President into"—

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** I am going to be shocked, Mr. President, and ashamed if Mr. Rabindra Moonan is put to head the Housing Development Corporation. It will be a travesty.

**Sen. Hinds:** The Government is a travesty.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** It is a travesty to reward him with high position again, and I want someone there in the Cabinet to stand up here today and explain to us how that decision was made, why it was made.

You see the sum of $6.8 million is not the problem, you know. Six point eight million dollars of a $60 billion budget is small change. My problem is the decision making that goes on in the Cabinet, and after you have Reshmi, sector 34, you have the truck, you have Rabindra Moonon, I cannot see how this Cabinet is acting in the best interest of Trinidad and Tobago.

So coming back to the Auditor General's Report, Mr. President, what the Auditor General's Report speaks to, is a high degree of inefficiency and incapacity of the system and I think we could agree on that, and that is partially why many projects cannot get done. But the bland excuse which I saw in the paper to excuse away the Auditor General's Report simply does not hold water with me. Because you see, when the last administration was attempting to fix some of these things to bring some accountability to the

system, for instance the Revenue Authority, that Revenue Authority was seized upon by the Congress of the People as their whipping boy. They did not want a Revenue Authority so we could bring some accountability to tax collection. They did not want it.

**Sen. Hinds:** Ignorant

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** "It was ah PNM ting and no PNM ting good."

**Hon. Senator:** Frighten people.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:**—and they frighten people with cross like this. [*Symbol was shown*]

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Frighten public servants over it.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Frighten everybody. What is happening today, and I am sorry Sen. Vasant Bharath is not here because the situation he was faced with that lady to get her car cleared, my question to him here today would have been: after as a Minister you intervened, has anybody been held accountable for that? That is the question. Has anybody been held accountable for putting that poor lady—Mrs. Beard is her name? Whatever her name is. Has anybody been held accountable for that? The answer is no, and not because the Minister cannot do it. That is not his job. It cannot be done.

**3.45 p.m.**

It cannot be done! That was part of the vision of the last administration to change, to change and to have instruments like the revenue authority. The question is: what are you doing? The population bought in to your story in 2010 What are you doing now because that is a systemic failure? Systemic failure!

Mr.President, as I go on with Cabinet governance, or the lack thereof, there is a serious matter which I saw in the newspaper recently, and I want again, the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy to pay some attention to this. This has to do with the selling off of the assets of Valpark Shopping Plaza and Atlantic Plaza, and I think Holiday Inn Express was in it too—those three properties.

**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. [*Miss S. Cudjoe*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** "Yes, thank you, but I did say partnership, eh." Yes, yeah, that 45 minutes really went, Mr.President.

**Sen. Singh:** "When yuh having fun."

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Yes. So the question—I saw in the paper where the Valpark asset, Atlantic LNG and Holiday Inn Express were sold off. Mr.President, through you, to the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, a series of questions. Is the 2009 MoU still in effect?

**Sen. Singh:** What are the contents of that MoU?

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** In whose interest is the current board acting?

**Sen. Singh:** "Why did not you take ah charge on those properties?"

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Did the board need Cabinet approval to sell out those assets?

**Sen. Singh:** No, because you did not take a charge on those properties!

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Valpark, Atlantic, Holiday Inn Express. Where are the

funds going? Question again: what criteria was used or were used to determine who would prequalify with Ernst & Young?

**Sen. Singh:** Monteil criteria!

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** What criteria were used to determine who would prequalify with Ernst & Young to get on to that list? The two major questions: who were the purchasers? I want to know on behalf of the country because these are the country's assets. Who were the purchasers of Valpark? Who were the purchasers of Atlantic Plaza? Who bought Holiday Inn Express and for what price? We need to know because it speaks to a very murky situation. No transparency! No accountability! Absolutely none! [*Crosstalk*] Absolutely none!

Mr. President, Sen. Dr. Tewarie spoke about planning and he is right, "eh". "Ah lot of what he said about planning is true." This country has been blessed with good plans over the years. The most recent one that I could remember, as an adult, was under the George Chamber's administration, "Imperatives of Adjustment", in which they identified eight areas. I think that was done by the Demas task force, and when Sen. Dr. Tewarie was in the NAR, I think a lot of that plan was based loosely on the Demas task force plan so I have to congratulate the NAR for that plan of which Sen. Tewarie would have been a part of—the National Planning Commission.

Then, we had vision 20/20 of which Sen. Tewarie, again, would have been a part of. My question is: this UNC—the UNC per se has never been famous for planning. The UNC! The NAR was, as I have given them credit for now; PNM has always been known for its planning. Where is your grand plan? I am not talking about the individual initiatives, because Sen.

Tewarie speaks about individual initiatives. The country is still after three years waiting for a whole plan and this plan has to dovetail with energy, and this is the way I will close off with.

Mr.President, Trinidad has a history of energy diplomacy—a history of energy diplomacy! I think one of the first oil wells in the world would have been drilled here back in the 18—.

**Sen. Ramnarine:** I will give you the date.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:—**whatever. Then we transitioned from oil to gas—okay, we built Point Lisas that was visionary in that time. We cannot rest on the laurels of Point Lisas as a PNM thing. We did it, it was our responsibility to do it and we did it.

The current energy global landscape is one that your Government now—as we did in the past—you now have to deal with. You now have to deal with it. You have the shale gas issue to deal with the United States and China Although China is still wedded to coal, but with their recent talks with President Obama, I think the Chinese President has agreed to decrease their carbon footprint, stop using as much coal and start to use more of their gas which they will get from shale gas, and China could be self-sufficient in gas in about 20 to 30 years. The United States is going to be using about 50 per cent of their gas from shale gas by about 2050, I think it is?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** 2015.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** 2015. So we have all of this. The hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs does not create these global effects just as we did not create them when we were in power. But whoever is in power at the time is charged with the responsibility of exploiting whatever is available.

We have had a change of Government in Venezuela from the Hugo Chavez administration to Mr. Maduro. I would like the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs to tell us if in fact talks are going to resume over the Loran-Manatee field and if it is we need that gas reserve now in light of what is happening with shale gas. As I said, you did not create it, but it is your responsibility now—as it was ours then, as it was the NAR's then, as it was the UNC's then—to respond.

The one project which you have to start, which is the Mitsubishi Neal and Massy project, given the fact that—if you agree with me—we may have a surplus of gas in some years to come, hopefully, what are your plans, hon. Minister, five to 10 years from now to deal with that surplus? How are you going to monetize that? So, if you could tell us what are your plans, because what is happening too, I saw in one article where you claimed to be having sleepless nights over the drop in oil production.

**Sen. Ramnarine:** I never sleep.

**Sen. Ramnarine:** You never sleep, good! So let us see what is happening with oil now. I think you will agree that oil production has not really picked up—

**Sen. Ramnarine:** Yes.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:—**in three years?

**Sen. Ramnarine:** Yes.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh**: In three years, it has not, although one of your maiden speeches here lambasted the PNM for oil production. Here we are three years later and you have done no better. You may even have done worse. [*Desk thumping*] Oil production may be even lower now than it was in

2010. What are your plans? What are your plans? What are your plans for refining? Hovensa plant up in the US Virgin Islands has closed down. The Valero plant in Aruba has closed down. Are you looking to take some advantage of the new opportunities being posed by the closure of these plants? Are we poised to take such opportunity? Tell us!

Because, you see, I looked on your website—the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs—to see about crude oil production, and you know what message comes up on the website on crude oil? "No content received." I just checked; check it and see. So what space, hon. Minister, do you see you and see us occupying in this changing energy landscape in five to 10 years? As far as oil production is concerned, do you see a partnership—this public/private partnership—with some of the independent producers like Bayfield, Trinity, Parex, or are you going to be relying solely on state input? Because my information is some of these private players are willing to play a part. so if you could tell us today.

If you could tell us: what is the status of the plan to deliver gas to Barbados? Is that still online? Because I think the hon. Prime Minister might have made a commitment to Barbados to deliver gas. That was part of our initiative with the Cove Estate 18-inch pipeline going up the Eastern Caribbean. Are you still wedded to that part of our Caricom energy diplomacy?

As far as oil is concerned, Mr. President, what is happening with Trinmar? Trinmar's infrastructure, as I understand it—the upgrade—could you tell us what is happening with the moneys being—I am not talking about the 2 billion dedicated to infrastructure development. I am talking

about the whole Trinmar operation to bring up the proven reserves in the Jubilee field. What is happening with the Jubilee field? If you could just alert us so that we could have some comfort that this rapid decline in oil production, which you spoke about so clearly in 2010 when you blamed the PNM for it—we have had three years to either, one, stabilize it or increase it—could you tell us, if, in fact, it has been stabilized? What are the figures and what are your plans for the future?

Because, you see, all the rage now is gas but, as you know, hon. Minister, as technologies change, different sources of fuel may become the rage five or 10 years from now which we did not so envisage. The argument against shale gas years ago was it was too expensive; now, with technology, the price is no longer a barrier. So, tell us what is happening with your portfolio—gas/oil, liquefied gas, natural gas. What is going on?

Finally, Mr.President, through you, to the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, my favourite topic—the Cat Cracker. [*Laughter*] Yeah, yeah, and you see, you can laugh, but we have incurred to date about $3 billion in accumulated losses out of a project which you said would have taken four months—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** "And the board still in place, eh."

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** You said would have taken four months—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** No A-Team!

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:—**has taken two years plus with the same board there—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** And no A-Team [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** And it is the hon. Anand Ramlogan who will say and accuse PNM's boards—of what? Negligence—and what? Malfeasance in

public office.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Breach of fiduciary duties.

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Breach of fiduciary duties!

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** No suit for them!

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** But nobody is suing the Petrotrin board—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** No sue for Moonan!

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:—**over the disaster that is the Cat Cracker! Nobody is suing the CAL board over the disaster that is CAL. As a matter of fact, you are rewarding Mr. Rabindra Moonan. There is no breach of fiduciary duty there! There is no negligence there! The A-team is not being put on their heels and that is what we talk about the duplicity. It is nice to talk it but where are we going as a country where you have one standard for us and a lower standard for you, but you are in Government. [*Desk thumping*]

Where is our development? When you go after PNM's boards—and if they did wrong, no problem; you will find no resistance from us six here. You will find no resistance from this Bench if any PNM board Chairman or board member was negligent or breached their fiduciary duties. Go after them! [*Crosstalk*] Go after them! I have no problem with that, but, by the same token, what is good for us—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Must be good for you!

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:—**also has to be good for you. Rabindra Moonan has to be charged with—not negligence, you know—gross negligence, recklessness, total breach of fiduciary duty [*Desk thumping*] and you reward him, you reward him—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Then the temerity to spoil people!

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:—**with another chairmanship.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** He made a statement!

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** Absolutely amazing! Somebody needs to justify that today; today, June 14, 2013, because I will be finished speaking at exactly 4:00o'clock, somebody needs to justify that today. The country is looking on. The old days of blaming the PNM for your first two years and three years in existence that ad hominem debate has now worn thin. It has worn thin. You are going into your fourth year in Government—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** You are in it!

**Sen. T. Deyalsingh:** This is your fourth year. You need to explain to us by what standard do you judge us and by what standard do you judge yourselves?

Mr.President, with those few words, I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**4.00 p.m.**

**Mr. President:** Sen. Drayton.

**Sen. Helen Drayton:** Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for the opportunity to make a few comments on this finance appropriation Bill. I want to open by commending the Minister of Finance and Economy for the initiatives he has taken with respect to Caribbean Airlines. It, certainly, is an initiative that should be emulated by other ministers with respect to other State boards.

I also want put on record, encouragement for the Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment on his pursuits with respect to trying improve the business environment removing the bureaucracies that are 50 years old and, hopefully, to reduce the turnaround time for business start-up and operations

here.

It was of interest to hear the hon. Minister of Finance mention the need for fiscal discipline. Because, I do have a problem with the level of spending I see in this Bill; spending which has not been adequately justified, or we have not been given reasons for some of the items, or many of the items I see in this Bill.

On reflecting on the Bill, it reminded me of a statement made by the hon. Prime Minister in the very early days of the People's Partnership Government—that statement was with respect to an ATM. I wonder whether the Treasury is the Government's ATM which, when it is empty, it comes to Parliament with a finance appropriation Bill [*Desk thumping*] which we cannot vote upon. We really cannot do anything about it other than to make a few comments and hope that some of the recommendations would be taken in good stead.

Now it worries me that four months before the end of the fiscal year, the Government is seeking the blessing of Parliament for an additional 2.9—nearly $2.9 billion, projecting a deficit around 9 billion. There is nothing fundamentally wrong with deficit spending; governments all over use that principle. It is a prudent mechanism in order to get essential services and infrastructure in place. So that the issue is not so much the deficit, but there has been absolutely no mention as to the status of the overall expenditure—expenditures under the various public sector heads—where additional expenditure is being requested.

So, there is no analysis; we really do not have clue as to the state of the existing $57 billion budget, but we are being asked to approve $2.9

billion.

The concern that I have deepens. It is deepened by the statement of the Auditor General for the fiscal year 2012. I have to admit that the statements in that report are not anything new. From year to year the Auditor General is, by and large, making the same statements, which tells me that there really is not much seriousness with respect to how the public's purse is managed; and that public sector officers are pretty much complicit in that regard given the fact that they disregard requests for explanations by the Auditor General.

It also deepens my concern because of the lack of a robust procurement system. I have repeated that, I think, in every single presentation for the year, since that system was to be a priority of the Government. There was a committee in which I was involved that spent more than a year coming up with a framework policy.

There is no need for me to tread gingerly around the issue of procurement and its relationship with election campaign financing. We are into an election period this year, in terms of local Government election and by 2014, the new fiscal year, we are in the passageway to a general election. Yes, I have had a motion on election campaign financing on the parliamentary agenda; and this motion calls for a joint select committee of Parliament to come up with draft legislation to guide election campaign financing. And, needless to say, yes, again, I am disappointed that we have not had an opportunity to debate this very critical motion and to formalize a committee.

Before going into details in this finance appropriation document, I

would call again for the establishment of a Joint Select Committee of Parliament to draft legislation on election campaign financing.

I also want to make brief mention—the Minister made comments with respect to the Government being scrutinized more than any other Government. It is remark that we have heard from time to time. I do not think the Government need feel a victim about that; that is happening all over the world and there is a reason for that. The reason for that is, that no other time in the history of mankind, citizens have been so empowered, such that more and more power is shifting from the center to the hands, minds and feet of the citizens. They are simply asking for greater accountability because they now have greater access to information. So that the Government need not feel, as I said, a victim in that regard.

In turning to the Bill, this Bill is seeking approval for $2.9 billion. What I have observed is it is only 37 per cent of that 2.9 billion that would go towards salaries and related items such as NIS. The other 63 per cent is really transfers and subsidies, thereby, further restraining the productive capacity of the Government.

Now, I know that some of the expenditures other than the salaries and wages in this document—some of those expenditures—are necessary, but having reflected on what is being requested here , I am certainly not supportive of the full 2.9 billion—let that be so recorded. We have heard a lot about innovation; we have heard a lot about planning, but how much longer can the country carry on in a manner of increasing expenditure? Now, that is, perhaps, a very inconvenient question, but when there seems to be a reluctance to properly account, particularly when requests are being

made for such substantial sums, the question needs to be raised.

Let me point to a few items—I am singling out these items deliberately. One of the first ones, "HEAD 17 - PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT" $2.9 million; it is a small sum, but it says:

> "Cabinet agreed to lease/rental of office space located….Estate Trace, Aranguez….to accommodate the Personnel Department. The sum….would enable the Chief Personnel Officer to meet the rental cost to September…"

So, it begs the question: Why was this not accounted for in the budget a few months ago? Is it that additional space was acquired during the course of the year? You see, it is a small sum, but there are the flags. Small sums, incidentally, are red flags with respect to proper planning; with respect to efficiency and effectiveness.

Here we have a request for $25.8 million for a "Food Price Support Programme". Again, I have to ask the question, because the Government, in October, came and they forego $400 million with respect to VAT on food; and, what was the reason? To help manage the inflation.

Well, of course, I think any economist could have said, "Well, you cannot manage inflation by removing and putting back VAT at the drop of a hat." That has to do with how you are going to manage your import bill; that has to do with how you grow, a large percentage of you own food stuffs, and it came at a time when most of the basic items like bread, flour, sugar, oil and things like that, were already zero-rated. If we look at the Central Bank's statistics, while headline inflation had been maintained at a low of 6.9 per cent, some elements of food inflation—this is at the end of March

2013—had risen by 24 per cent; and an item was vegetables.

So, it begs the question: Why did the Government forego $400 million and, months later, is asking for $25.8 million to support food prices. It really does not make sense.

The Office of Disaster Preparedness Management (ODPM), $10 million. It is a small amount, but I want to make a recommendation and, that is—again, for the Government to follow the good example of the Minister of Finance and the Economy—to, certainly, scrutinize the ODPM to avoid a disaster.

I cannot understand why four months before the end of a fiscal year, and way into the rainy and hurricane season you would be asking for $10 million to strengthen disaster preparedness and mitigation capacities of the ODPM's readiness for the upcoming hurricane season. Again, it goes to the heart of planning.

Under the Development Programme, the Twin Turbine Helicopters: Well, this one, I have to say that I am confused; I am really not sufficiently intelligent to understand what is going on here. It says:

> "Cabinet agreed to continue interim payments…for the training and maintenance support programmes of the contract for the supply and delivery of helicopters, at a total cost of…(TT$276.5..Mn), pending finalization of financing agreements with BNP Paribas and US Ex-Im Bank. The sum of 100Mn. was allocated in 2013 to meet the interim payments, however due to non-finalization of financing…"—arrangements—"an additional sum of 176.5..Mn…would be required…"

My question: Why is the contract not finalized? When will it be finalized? And, what is the impact of these expenditures on the net cost of the equipment?

Under "HEAD 56 - Ministry of the People and Social Development," there is a request here for the Senior Citizens Grant of $181.2 million. Again, clarification is required. Now, if this is for Senior Citizens Grants, then it is equivalent to grants for about 5,000 persons. Okay? Now, the population turning 65 during 2013 is somewhere in the vicinity of—from when I checked the statistics—around 10,000, thereabout. Not 10,000—yes, roughly about 10,000. So, this would mean about 50 per cent of the senior citizens who are entitled to grants for 2013 are, probably, not receiving their pension grants; or is it that they are receiving it; it was under budgeted and now this sum is required. There is something that does not appear right about this request.

In addition to that, once this document is approved—it is a legal document; it is an Act—Senior Citizens Grant is not a legal term with respect to pensions in Trinidad and Tobago. So, this should be amended, it is a senior citizen pension; we changed that.

Under the Ministry of Housing, Land and Marine Affairs: CEPEP, the additional amount being requested is $142 million. This will take the allocation for CEPEP, for the year to roughly $610 million. It is said that these:

> "Funds are needed to facilitate expansion of beautification and landscaping activities…"

Question: What is the urgency of this, four months before the new fiscal

year? What is the urgency? You see, the Minister mentioned fiscal discipline. The hon. Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development was very passionate about how conscientious the Government is with respect to planning. So, why is it necessary to increase the allocation for CEPEP to over half a billion dollars four months before the start of the fiscal year?

As we are on the matter of the Ministry of Housing, Land and Marine Affairs, I made reference to accountability. This is a ministry that receives over 2.4 billion in allocations for 2013; billions are poured into the HDC annually. The last annual report was 2007. So that when you come to Parliament and you are asking for amounts that are half a billion, a billion dollars more, without accounting for the public's purse, I do not see how the Government could say that it is doing a good job with respect to governance, as it relates to accountability and transparency.

This brings me to another question that I had raised; this was in January when the finance Bill was passed into law; that finance Bill, in January, was to pass into law several initiatives for the 2013 budget. This was related to Nidco and other agencies such as HDC, which are recipients of large subventions. These institutions had been using accounting standards for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) under the international accounting standards. I had pointed out, at that time, that that is wrong, given the definition of SMEs and large public enterprises for ISA purposes. By defining Nidco, an agency such as HDC as SMEs, what is happening there is that the agencies are neglecting to report fully on their affairs. So, again, the issue of a lack of transparency arises. So, I will ask the Minister to clarify for us what is the position with respect to accounting standards for

these large state agencies.

Under the purchase of equipment for the police service, again, the question: Why is it at this time the police service suddenly realizes that it needs 317 vehicles? And the only other questions that I have to ask of the police service—specifically the acting police commissioner—is: What is the status of the Flying Squad investigation?

The establishment of COSTAATT campus in Chaguanas, 23.3 million: Now, this one says the:

> "Funding is required for the preparation of the design brief; tender documents; project management fees…"

This begs the question for clarification. If you have not yet done the design brief—or have you? If the tender documents have not yet been put out, and we are four months before the end of the fiscal year, what is this about project management fees? It is not making sense. The sequence of events are not making sense at all, but, I note that it is in Chaguanas, so I would ask that it be clarified. Probably it is a project that is well on its way.

Similarly, you have the establishment of a south campus, an additional amount of 80 million. The question is—this was budgeted for; I recall that this was budgeted for—is it that there are cost overruns? [*Interruption*] They are not cost overruns. Okay, give us an explanation.

I was pleased to hear the Minister of Finance and the Economy speak to innovation—this is with respect to the return on investment on the billions spent annually on education—and I certainly share his view because the spirit and soul of innovation is imagination. And, I know Sen. Dr. Tewarie will fully agree with that; but it also indicative of self-esteem. Innovation is

indicative of self-esteem and self-confidence. Regrettably, this is not reflected or demonstrated in the manner in which we posture, cap in hand, when high-level foreign governments visit. We are gushing over what is defined as their largess and loan financing when the local system is awash with liquidity. [*Interruption*] Awash.

You know something? The Minister mentioned fiscal discipline and that all goes to expenditure. Probably, what the government needs—probably what our sector needs—is a system where there is some level of risk averseness that would force discipline with respect to expenditure and proper accountability. You see, the Chinese government does not have to account, and you do not have to account to them. It goes to the heart of innovation. So that while we are taking pride in all these visits, the question some of us were asking the question: Why are after 50 years must we be so dependent on the technology and innovation of others to build our ports; to build our schools; to build our playgrounds; to undertake or guide us with respect to central statistical surveys and just about everything else? Why are we not building our own children assessment centres? Why, after 50 years there are educators in the primary education sectors, and apparently, the Ministry of Education, that do not know the difference between ratios and fractions? Why cap in hand?

How can we stretch our imagination to finally deliver water 24/7 for all?

**Sen. Singh:** We are getting there.

**Sen. Drayton:** I will be happy to hear from you, Minister.

**Sen. Singh:** You will hear.

**Sen. Drayton:** How can we stretch our imagination to deal effectively with the burning social issues, starting with bringing about synergies between primary healthcare and primary education. I will stress it over and over because therein lies a major part of the answer to the engine room of crime. How do we use our imagination to turn the tide on youth crime? What about challenging and motivational, educational and safe environments for young boys, in particular, who cannot cope with the outdated school system?

Mr. President, we have been speaking of innovation, yet we must go to foreigners to hire a commissioner of police. So, how do we build an innovative society with that mentality? I have heard all that Sen. Dr. Tewarie has said, but I think what is happening is that we are probably striving for the fruit on the high branches rather than trying to pick the fruits that are hanging very low. We are not tilling the soil right in front of our faces.

So, I listened carefully to Sen. Dr. Tewarie's passion and all that is being done, but I want to say that there is a disconnect between the ideals of innovation and where we are as a society. And, that point of disconnect is the level of waste; it is the level of corruption that is sapping the imagination of so many of our people. That is why our young people migrate. It is destroying the very core of our society.

So, let me say that this Bill does not reflect the new dispensation in planning that Sen. the Hon. Dr. Tewarie has just spoken so passionately about. Let me also say that I am fully aware that the Minister of Finance and the Economy—in the short space of time between his appointment and the last budget preparation—would not have had the opportunity to scrutinize inputs

from the various ministries and to come to grips with the weaknesses in the system. So, I am hoping that the Government will do better for 2014 and four months before the end of the fiscal year, it is not coming for $2.9 billion, which we really do not approve—let us just say it is passed because that is what happens.

I want to take the opportunity to comment, briefly, on a matter in the public domain and which has been raised. It is about the fiasco—I do not have to call names—but, again, I was taken aback by the comments of two senior members of Government—public comments—about leaks and cabinet decisions and the doctrine of collective responsibility. Given what we have said earlier on about corruption sapping the energy and sapping the imagination and chasing our people, I want to ask them to reflect on this. That is: Does the doctrine of collective responsibility extend to contracts, physical or otherwise, which are manifestly inappropriate? I am avoiding the word corruption in this instance because I think we were told that it was a fait accompli before it came to Cabinet. But, is there a greater principle involved in not succumbing to either internal or external pressures when dealing with public moneys?

Would members of Cabinet consider adopting a rule of thumb in professional ethics when decisions involving the public's purse are to be made? It is simply this: Would they be embarrassed if a decision is leaked? If the answer is yes to that, then clearly it is unethical; clearly, it was wrong. So, it is not a question of leaks and it is not a question about the collective responsibility. It is a question of corruption; it is a question of wasteful spending; it is a question of a lack of accountability and a lack of

transparency. [*Desk thumping*] These are not just words, the Auditor General Report's bears it out quite succinctly.

A word on the buoyancy of the economy: Now, interest rates are low with prime lending at 7.5 per cent and deposit rates are less than 1 per cent. I have heard, again, what the Minister of Finance said, they have spoken very highly about the buoyancy of the economy—there are threats, there are opportunities. But, when you consider that, with respect to the very liquidity in the system, and with respect to the very low interest rate, the expectation was that low rates would have translated to a boost in investment by the local private sector. This has not really materialized in any appreciable way. Hopefully, eventually, the private sector enthusiasm about investing would be supported by the Government's position on investor confidence.

With respect to energy and the energy sector, the energy sector has been in a maintenance mode for some time affecting output and also revenues. Since 2007 the industry has continued to decline. It has contributed less and less to the Treasury. That is a fact.

The announced maintenance schedule, I think it is for the last quarter of this year—you could correct me there—that also would have an impact on economic output.

When you see that crude oil production is expected to decline in this fiscal year and similar trends are being experienced with steel projects; steel products which are wire rods, billets, urea; oil prices have also declined while methanol prices have increased. So, the performance of that energy sector would undoubtedly affect our performance this year and may very well signal a need to borrow next year.

On the international trade side, exports over the previous year declined by 8.6 per cent. I heard the Minister of Finance and the Economy's response to Sen. Deyalsingh and, probably, in his wind-up, then, maybe what I am about to say will be corrected; but according to the statistics I have looked at, the current account balance of payments declined by 167 per cent in the same period and you have oil surplus with respect to the balance of payments also fell by 128.3 per cent. As a result, the net official reserves fell by 7.1 per cent in the period. This trend has a direct result on developments in the energy sector and the decline with respect to Caricom exports and the difficulties in the region of a whole.

So, I certainly, would like to hear the Minister correct me on that one.

So, given the spending by Government—as demonstrated by this Bill, given the lack of accountability demonstrated by the Auditor General's Report, if I were in a position to vote against some of the requests in this appropriation bill, I would do so, but this is a money bill, there is no voting and there will be no changes. I do fully support additional expenditures with respect to the salaries and wages. I support pensions for the elderly. If what it says in the Bill is true, that is, it is a disbursement of senior citizens grant; the statistics do not necessarily gel. I certainly support any subventions with respect to the restoration of the President's House. All other requests require adequate explanations for which none had been given and if they were not budgeted for the question is: What is the urgency four months before the new fiscal year?

With that, Mr. President, I thank you.

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, it is now 4.34, I thought, perhaps, it is an

appropriate time to take a break. We could take the tea break at this time and resume, however, at five o'clock.

This House will now stand suspended until five o'clock.

**4.34 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended*

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

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Kevin Ramnarine):** Thank you very much, Mr. President. I rise to make a contribution on this very important Bill. [*Interruption*] I think—is Sen. Drayton finished?

**Mr. President:** Yes.

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** Okay, all right. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, again, Mr. President. I rise to make a contribution on this Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) Bill before us here today and I would like to really congratulate all the speakers that have come before me. They have all made very valuable contributions.

While I arrived a bit late today, I was able to hear the contribution of Sen. Subhas Ramkhelawan and Sen. Dr. Lester Henry on the radio coming down. When I arrived, I listened to the very good contribution of my colleague, Dr. Bhoe Tewari—[*Desk thumping*]—and he referred to a report that had read from Shell and he is quite right, Shell is the company that invented scenario planning. It is a company that is over 100 years old and they reminded me that the year 2013 commemorates 100 years of Shell in Trinidad and Tobago.

And then, of course, as you know Shell operated a very famous refinery in Point Fortin, where our onetime colleague Sen. Basharat Ali had worked as

part of his career before he came to the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs. In preparing for this debate, like Sen. Dr. Tewarie, I looked at the BP outlook on world energy to the year 2030. Sen. Dr. Tewarie raised a very critical point and it flowed from a point that was made by the Vice-President of the United States when he was here a few weeks ago, that the currencies of 21 Century, his exact words were the currencies of the 21st Century are water and energy. Sen. Dr. Tewarie added a third dimension to that from the Shell report, which is food.

Mr. President, the world population in the year 1820, was one billion people. In the year 2011, we cross the 7 billion mark and it is estimated that by the year 2030, the world population would be 8.3billion people. Population growth is one aspect that we have to look at. The other issue is that the world population is increasingly becoming more middleclass and you have more people entering the middleclass, especially in places like Vietnam—I know we always talk about India and China so I thought I would throw Vietnam out there—in places like Thailand, in places like Brazil and, of course, India and China. And that increase in global GDP means that there is going to be an increase in demand for two things. One, of course, is energy, because as people's income levels rise they get electricity, they buy a car, and the other thing is protein. It is a trend which has been observed that as income levels rise, people consume more protein.

All this is expected, this is forecasting out to the year 2030, that between today and the year 2030, the global energy consumption will increase by 40 per cent and that, the main component in that 40 per cent, is power generation, because around the world are getting more and more

electricity. But there is a connection between energy, water and food that Dr. Tewarie spoke about. In Trinidad and Tobago, to come back to our own local context, one of the things that dawns upon you very quickly is that there will be no energy sector in this country if there is not an adequate supply of water, because water is both an input in the petrochemical process and is also used for cooling in our petrochemical plants and at Point Lisas. So water is very critical to industry in Trinidad and Tobago.

And what is the relationship between energy, water and food? Well, of course, in the United States where they have vast farmlands, those farmlands can only be treated with, can only be harvested, and so on, using mechanized means. Those mechanized means require fuel, again, diesel. The ammonia that is exported from this country, 85 per cent of it, Mr. President, goes to the United States where it becomes fertilizer, diammonium phosphate that is used to replenish soil with nitrogen and phosphorus. So there is that relationship between those three pillars, which I had mentioned in an earlier debate, as being part of a thesis being put forward by a gentleman named Jared Diamond in his book *Collapse*, where he examines how societies, over time, collapsed. Sen. Ramkissoon I know would be very interested in my reading material.

But coming back to what is happening in Trinidad and Tobago—and I want to thank, again, all speakers for their contribution—this is fundamentally a debate about the economy and energy sits very importantly in the context of the economy of Trinidad and Tobago. According to the last monetary policy report of the Central Bank, April 2013, recently updated to June 2013, energy accounts for about 43.7 per cent of gross domestic

product and many have argued that that is really an underestimation of its true contribution to the economy.

In recent times, as the Minister of Finance and the Economy would have pointed out, we have had now three consecutive quarters of economic growth in Trinidad and Tobago starting, of course, with the third quarter of 2012, extending into the fourth quarter of 2012, and now into the first quarter of 2013. And within that growth there is an energy story, which I intend to tell.

In the third quarter of 2012, the economy grew by some 1.7 per cent, I think it was, but in there, there was a .5 per cent growth in the energy sector and that was a reversal of four consecutive quarters of economic contraction for the energy sector.

In the fourth quarter of 2012, the energy sector recorded flat growth, 0.0 per cent and that was due in main to major maintenance activities taking place in the fourth quarter of last year. And in the first quarter of this year, the energy sector grew by .5 per cent and we expect that growth trend to continue into the second quarter of 2013.

Mr. President, a lot has been said about oil product. In the other place, when this Bill was debated two days ago, the Member for Diego Martin, I think Diego Martin North/East, made heavy weather of oil production. So I thought I would bring the statistics, as provided by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, with regard to oil production, to just demonstrate the trend. As you would have no doubt recall, in the year 2001—and Minster Singh would have been a Member of the Cabinet back then—bhpbilliton made the discovery of what is now the Angostura Field

and that field commenced production in the year 2005. That was the first major oil discovery in Trinidad in several decades and in the year 2006, oil production in this country was 146,450 barrels of oil per day, as a result of the coming on product of bhpbilliton's Angostura Field in Block 2C of the east coast Matura/ Manzanilla area.

Following that, there was a steady decline from that year, all the way down to where we are today in 2012. So, as Sen. Dr. Lester Henry had pointed out in the last debate of this nature, the decline in oil production did not start recently. It is something which has been happening now for a while and Sen. Drayton, when she spoke, spoke about the energy sector being in a state of almost static nature since 2007 and she is, to some extent, right.

After 2006, there was a fall to 122,000 barrels of oil per day; so from 146 down to 122. It then went down in 2008 to 115,000 barrels of oil per day and in 2009, it went down to 107,000 barrels of oil per day. I would not call out all the years, but I would say in 2012, the most recent year for which we have, of course, a full year data, oil production averaged 81,735 barrels.

For the first five months of this this year, production averaged 81,566 barrels. Again, I refer to those two numbers to make a point. So we average 81,735 barrels last year and for the first five months of this year we are averaging 81,566 barrels and it would have been more, had it not been for the industrial unrest of March 2013, where we had a decline in production from Trinmar as a consequence of that industrial action. I am making the point to show that we have more or less stabilized or arrested the decline in oil product. [*Desk thumping*] And we expect that as the year progresses and the activity that is taking place around the country begins to manifest itself

in greater production, we would see an increase in oil production progressively as we continue along the year.

Sen. Deyalsingh made reference to a couple companies that are very important to this economy, although they are small companies. These are companies like Trinity, companies like Parex Resources, and so on. These are the small companies operating on land in south Trinidad that are doing a tremendous amount of work to arrest the decline in oil product. In fact, the production levels, if one were to disaggregate the statistics for the country and one were to look at the production coming from these small operators over the last two or three years, they have held stable and they have even increased while, nationally, the picture has been declining. So there is some merit in their business model. Of course, I would add that the lease operator programme was introduced in the late 1980s by the NAR administration of which Dr. Tewarie was a part. [*Desk thumping*]

So, the trend shows that we have more or less arrested the decline in oil product. And I would also add that one of the major factors in the decline, as I said in this Senate before, has been a collapse, an almost collapse, in condensate production, which is the liquid which is produced alongside natural gas; a collapse which I brought to this Parliament a bottle of condensate recently, a couple months ago, coming mainly from bpTT's operations and that has to do with simply the nature and the geology of the rocks on the east coast. Our gas is becoming drier and drier, which means that our natural gas is being produced with very little or no condensate and that is simply what the geology has given to us.

Mr. President, we expect to have some increases in condensate

production very shortly and we also expect to see increases by the end of the year. Trinmar is currently doing roughly 22,500 barrels of oil per day. That is an increase on last year's average, which was around 21,000 barrels of oil per day and the forecasted figures provided to me by Petrotrin shows Trinmar going up to 23 to 24,000 barrels of oil per day by the end of the year, as a consequence of the high-level activity currently taking place in Trinmar.

Levels of activity are measure by a metric used by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs called rig days. I would just read out the rig days for the year 2007—2012. In 2007, we had 3,409 rig days, a very active year; in 2008, 2,690 rig days; in the 2009, and this is significant, rig days collapsed to 744. That indicates a major slowdown in activity in the upstream sector in 2009.

**5.15p.m.**

In 2010, it was 1,132; in 2011 it climbed to 2,189 and last year, 2012 rig days were 2,788, and this year we expect it to cross 3,000 rig days for 2013, an indication that there is a high level of activity taking place in the upstream sector. As we speak, Mr. President, and I have said this before in other foray, as we speak right now, there are six rigs operating in the water around Trinidad; [*Desk thumping*]—six rigs, and those rig— that compares to one rig operating in the waters around Trinidad in May 2010. So there was a major slowdown in activity in the years 2009 to 2010 for several reasons which I will get into later.

But, Mr. President, the activity levels will contribute to a turnaround in oil production. Oil production, of course, will be better served if we had

new discoveries. What we are really trying to do is squeeze more juice from mature fields, from oranges that we have been squeezing for some time. Only two days ago and I hope that analogy is a nice analogy people understand, only two days ago I did what the PNM administration over the last 10 years has failed to do, which is sign deep-water production sharing contracts. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, we signed four deep-water production sharing contracts with a very reputable company BHP Billiton of Australia, and they have been here since 1996 and they are the company that discovered the Angostura Field in 2001. At that ceremony, Vincent Pereira who is the president and, Minister Ganga Singh was there in that ceremony, so he heard what happened. Vincent Pereira said that this was a very happy day for BHP Billiton, and that the company was very happy to be expanding its presence in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

The investment is at least US $565million and at most, US $1,024million which is if they go into optional phases beyond the first phase. Mr. President, those four production sharing contracts now bring to a total of six production-sharing contracts for the deep water. The first two would be BPTT that was signed in the year 2012, and all six production-sharing contracts I have the honour of being the Minister who signed those six production sharing contracts.

**Hon. Minister:** Ohhh! [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** So, if I were to say what were some of my major achievements, I think and David Renwick would, of course, support me on this—

**Sen. George:** Ahhh!

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:**—because he said that in his column, that one of the achievements of the last two years has been the ability to attract investment into the deep water in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*]

**Sen. Singh:** Pay attention! Pay attention!

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** Mr. President, the level of activity in the water, in the marine area is very high. There are two rigs working right now for BP, the Rowan EXL II, and the Westshire rig, drilling for BP on the east coast. There is a rig drilling for Trinity a slant rig, what they call a slant rig, drilling for Trinity in what was Bay Fields acreage because Trinity acquired Bay Field. There is a new rig that has come into the country, the Ocean Lexington to drill for Centrica, BG and NICO, and there is the Rowan Gorilla III rig, drilling right now for EOG Resources, and there is Well Services rig 110, drilling in Trinmar.

There are two other work-over rigs right now together with that Well Services rig drilling in Trinmar. If you saw yesterday's *Business Guardian* there is an article about the level of activity in the south-west peninsula in Trinmar in particular. We have made Trinmar a central plank to the strategy to increase oil production, because there simply remains a tremendous amount of untapped potential, oil basically "looking at yuh in yuh face" in Trinmar that we intend to tap in years to come. One of those work-over rigs is dedicated to the South West Soldado Reactivation Project which is again, a key plank of the reactivation of Trinmar.

Mr. President, on December31, 2012, I also had the honour of signing

a new licence for what is called Trinidad Northern Areas or Trinmar. That licence was first—the first incarnation of that licence was a lease of 1952, this was from the Colonial Government to a company called Trinidad Northern Areas. That lease was renewed in 1982 by then Minister of Petroleum and Mines. I do not know how many of you all recall who was the Minister of Petroleum and Mines in 1982, but he is today the Member of Parliament and former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Patrick Manning. In the year 2012, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs has given to Petrotrin a licence in line with international standards, in line with what we give to the multinationals.

Mr. President, I want to talk a bit about foreign-direct investments, because foreign-direct investment is something which has featured in both Houses in this debate. So, I requested information from the Central Bank because they, of course, are the keepers of foreign-direct investment information. The energy sector, Mr. President, accounts for roughly 90 per cent of foreign-direct investment. And, of course, as we seek to diversify the economy more and more into the future, we will see foreign-direct investment coming from other sectors.

But I will just look at total direct-foreign investment, Mr. President, and I will speak to numbers for the period 2005 to 2012. The numbers for 2012 are preliminary provisional numbers as the Central Bank has indicated; they are still firming up that data. In 2005, FDI was US $940 million; in 2006, FDI was US $883million; in 2007, US $830 million; in 2008, it was US $2.8 billion and I will tell you why. Sen. Ramkhelawan might know what happened significantly in 2008 to cause that spike. In that year energy

accounted for 21 per cent of foreign-direct investment. So there was a sharp decline in energies contribution to FDI and that was because of the acquisition of RBTT by RBC. So you had that cash coming into the country; that FDI coming into the country. In 2009, Mr. President, FDI was US $709 million; in 2010, FDI was $549, a decline again, signifying a slowdown in the energy sector for 2009 and 2010, which is the point I keep referring too. In 2011, and I have made this point to the Parliament many times, but I do not know if people hear me. In 2011, total FDI was US $1.831 billion. So there was a sudden increase in FDI in 2011.

According to the preliminary provisional figures provided to me, by the Central Bank, for 2012, FDI was US $2.5 billion in Trinidad and Tobago. In my examination of—now, 90 per cent of that money is coming from the energy sector, 90.5 per cent of that money. I have said to this Parliament before in the budget debate of last year, that we captured data at the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs that shows a significant increase in investment in the energy sector mainly in the upstream, because the investment is coming in the upstream, and the investment is coming heavily, Mr. President, from a couple companies one of them being BPTT.

I refer, of course, to the *Business Guardian* of April 2013, BP to spend US $5 billion in Trinidad and Tobago in five years. So when I was listening to Sen. Henry who is an economist with a doctorate at the University of the West Indies, he was referring to some interview that he read in the papers with the Indian High Commissioner talking about—and saying that FDI is not come into the country, but here we are seeing that [*Crosstalk*] from India, or, okay, I know he was talking about FDI in

general. [*Crosstalk*] Okay, and he is not here to defend himself so, okay.

Well, FDI, the provisional preliminary figures for 2012, is US $2.5 billion. [*Desk thumping*] And I refer Members to the *Business Guardian* of April, what date is this? It does not say the date, but April 2013 the *Business Guardian* where they spoke about $5 billion—what date? The third week in April about US $5 billion in investment by BPTT in the next five years, and it cost, there is a ratio, there is a rule of thumb ratio that they use in the industry. It costs approximately US $1 billion, Mr. President, to develop one trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

And, of course, what we are seeing from the upstream gas producers, is that they are behind the curve as is evident by some of the shortages we were having, and they are putting themselves in a position to increase their reserves. And, of course, the Ryder Scott report from last year showed that we had the smallest decline, it was about a 2 per cent decline in reserves in many years, and the preliminary results of Ryder Scott for 2012 are currently with me, and as is the norm—and this is something started by the previous administration, so I give them credit for that.

This country, Mr. President, is the only country in the world that I know of that publicly presents its reserves on an annual basis, the only country in the world that does that. That happens—and I do not want to call the names of other countries because my friend would refer to diplomacy. I know he spoke about diplomacy earlier, but that only happen,s to my knowledge, in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] It is for that reason, that you know recently *Revenue Watch* put out a ranking of countries according to their level of governance in the mineral sector, and

we were ranked, I think it was 10th in the world out of 53 countries. [*Desk thumping*]

Only last week, Mr. President, or is it this week? It was last week. I am a very busy man. I lose track of weekends and so on.

**Sen. Singh:** "Time is irrelevant when you working hard."

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** Only last week you would see in the *Guardian* that the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, myself, I signed a Memorandum of Understanding with all the majors companies in the upstream sector, and it was their commitment to the principles of EITI, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which is a very important initiative that is almost becoming now mandatory. Countries, of course—and I think it was under the previous administration, Sen. Christine Sahadeo, she had gone to Paris, she had committed Trinidad and Tobago, and I saw this in a report from the EITI by the way, they said basically at one point in time the Government was committed to it.

**Sen. Singh:** When she came back home—[*Inaudible*]

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** When she came back home from Paris things changed. But our manifesto makes a commitment, Mr. President, to the EITI, and we are working very hard at the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, with the support of the World Bank to implement and to bring this country into the EITI Club. So I would say Mr. President, that I hope the data provided on FDI is of use to Members. The FDI is, of course, coming as I said mainly from the upstream sector.

We also had, of course, last April, on April 08 of this year, we signed, again, myself and the NEC we signed a project-development agreement.

That was not a MoU, it was not a MoC, it was a project-development agreement which is a legally binding document with Mitsubishi Corporation of Japan, Mitsubishi Gas Chemicals and Neal and Massy for a methanol to dimethyl ether plant to be located in the Union Estate in La Brea. And that is a major down-stream investment for this country and this Government.

On the issue of Union Estate, I want to refer a bit to the—there were comments made about the highway and that the Government is funding the highway from Government revenue. Well, my checks indicate and Sen. George, you will add to this when you speak, that the TGU power plant, which has cost the country in excess of US $700 that, the TGU power plant was funded almost exclusively from Government Revenue. [*Desk thumping and crosstal*k]

**5.30 p.m.**

Mr. President, in the other place, two days ago, the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin North/East referred to—you know he has a style; you know his style—he said natural gas production, down; oil production, down. So, I decided, of course, to pull [*Interruption*] the figures for natural gas production. [*Laughter*]

Mr. President, this is comparing the first five months of 2013 to the first five months of 2012—comparing apples with apples. In the first month of this year, January, there was a 4 per cent increase in natural gas production in Trinidad and Tobago. In the second month, February, there was a 0.01 decline—0.01 per cent—minuscule so we could say it was flat. In March of this year, Mr. President, there was a 2.26 per cent increase in natural gas production and in those three months, therefore, overall, there

was an increase in natural gas production in Trinidad and Tobago compared to the previous three months of 2012 and that is part—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** How did they perform?

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** What?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** How did they perform?

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** How did who?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** The previous three months, were they up or down?

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** The previous three months as compared to the previous three months of 2011? I do not have that data.

**Hon. Senators:** A-a-a-a-h.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** That is the whole story.

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** But, Mr. President, I will not be distracted and side-tracked by these gentlemen here. [*Desk thumping*] So I will move quickly. We spoke about the first three months.

For the first five months of this year, January to May, natural gas production has been 4 per cent higher compared to the equivalent five months in 2012. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, let us talk a bit about the LNG industry, which is, of course, very critical to Trinidad and Tobago. The LNG industry was established in 1995 in this country, with the establishment of Atlantic LNG, and many people like to lay paternity to the LNG industry and the history would show that in 1992 a company called Cabot from Boston came to Trinidad and met with the then administration and the seeds were planted then.

The first train was constructed under a UNC administration and the

first train was completed in 1999. It was Sen. Balgobin, who is, unfortunately not here, in writing recently in a column he wrote called The Leadership Factory—those of you all who went to Presentation, San Fernando, would be very happy with that article. [*Desk thumping*] He wrote about The Leadership Factory, Presentation, San Fernando.

**Sen. Singh:** It is alive because Faris is here.

**Sen. Oudit:** From his flight on the plane. When he was on the plane he met him.

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** And he spoke about decisions that were taken in the 1990s that have positively impacted us today. In examining again, in a disaggregated way, the economy of Trinidad and Tobago, I would say that the LNG industry is very important to this country's economic health.

If you look at the Internet, you will see force majeure notices coming from other countries, from Nigeria and other countries that are LNG exporters. There is no such force majeure notices coming from Trinidad and Tobago. We are one of most reliable suppliers of liquefied natural gas in the world. [*Desk thumping*]

Our market has changed; our market has diversified. Around 2007, Mr. President, most of our gas went to the United States, but as President Biden told us when he came here—sorry, Vice-President Biden—I do not know if I am predicting his candidacy for 2016. As Vice-President Biden told us when he was here only a few weeks ago, in his view, the United States of America has at least 100 years of shale gas. Another energy executive I met told me that, in his view, it was somewhere in the region of

200 years. So America is headed towards energy independence, self-sufficiency, by the year 2020 many believe.

The story in America with shale is not only gas; it is also oil. There is a shale oil boom in the United States, mainly in North Dakota in a massive field called the Bakken, which extends into Canada, into Saskatchewan. So America is headed towards energy independence and this was relayed to us, of course, directly from the mouth of the Vice-President of the United States. But he did say to us that a gentleman who is coming later in the week is somebody that you all need to engage and this is the Chinese President.

At this point in time, Mr. President, I wish to put on record the fact that Trinidad and Tobago, in attracting the leadership of the two largest economies in the world, the two largest energy consumers in the world, is firmly on the world map as an international destination. [*Desk thumping*]

So, Mr. President, whereas the bulk of our LNG went to the United States in 2007—then the world changed with the shale gas revolution—41 per cent, the bulk of our liquefied natural gas today, goes to South America and there are many reasons why that is so. One of them is price. The price in South America is somewhere in the region of what the price is in Asia, $14 to $15 per MMBtu and there is also the case of freight. South America is not that far from Trinidad and Tobago, which is 10 degrees north latitude. So we find that, increasingly, South America has become a destination for our LNG and the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs has been working with companies that are in the Atlantic LNG consortium to greater facilitate more cargo diversion from Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. President, in talking about LNG and gas reserves, I want to talk a bit about Shell. Shell made a major financial commitment when they bought Repsol's assets, which were sold as a bundle. Repsol was not selling one thing here and one thing there. You had to buy a bundle of assets and that bundle of assets included their shareholding in Train 1, Train 2, Train 3, Train 4; their shareholding in Peru LNG; their shareholding in an electric company in Spain and a couple other assets. But the diamond in the crown, the jewel in the crown really was their shareholding in Atlantic LNG and Sen. Tewarie alluded to that; that Shell bought into Trinidad and Tobago for a reason, for a strategic reason. They want to play a larger role in LNG trading in the Atlantic Basin.

But Shell would not have made that massive financial contribution to this country if they believed that we had 10 more years or nine more years of natural gas, right? Nobody understands the energy sector globally more than Shell. So like Shell, Mr. President, I believe that we have a lot more gas in our basin and recently, BP are right now in the process of one of the most significant seismic programmes in this country and that is the OBC Seismic, OBC meaning Ocean Bottom Cable Seismic and the results from that seismic programme are very encouraging.

So, Mr. President, again, in dealing with the energy sector, we have, in addition to the points I have made, I want to deal with what Sen. Ramkhelawan, the point he made. He was really speaking about vision and about thinking outside of the box and what is emerging around us is an emerging oil and gas market in the Caribbean.

There is exploration taking place in Guyana and this country has

signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Guyana for energy cooperation. There is already oil production in Suriname and there is already a major oil discovery in French Guiana. [*Interruption*] Mr. President, could I seek your assistance in having some quiet please in the Chamber? Thank you.

So, Mr. President, the point being made by Sen. Ramkhelawan is that we must prepare ourselves to become a processing and a logistics hub for Latin America and the Caribbean because we sit on the shoulder, according to Sen. Deyalsingh, of the world's largest reserves of oil, which is Venezuela, which has more oil reserves today than Saudi Arabia. Venezuela has more oil reserves than Saudi Arabia.

We have excellent relations with Venezuela. The Prime Minister, as you know, attended—and we congratulate her for that; she showed statesmanship when she attended—the funeral of President Chavez—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Following in Mr. Manning's footsteps.

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:**—and she was well received by the Venezuelan people.

With regard to Loran/Manatee, Mr. President, Loran/Manatee remains a very important asset to the people of Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela. Twenty-seven per cent of the field is on our side of the boundary. [*Crosstalk and laughter*] Mr. President, I am being distracted again by several parties. [*Laughter*]

Mr. President, in the whole thesis being put forward by Sen. Ramkhelawan, which was an idea, as I told him, I had heard many years ago from the late Trevor Boopsingh, who may have also gone to Presentation,

San Fernando.

**Hon. Senator:** "Wha, Presentation is the country boy."

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** But there is another leadership factory in Trinidad and Tobago, and it is in Tunapuna, at the foothills of the Northern Range.

**Hon. Senator:** Nice try; nice try.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** That is a small factory, man. [*Laughter*]

**Hon. Senator:** Small shop; small shop.

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** Mr. President, coming back to that vision, Trinidad and Tobago is poised to play that role in the region because of the experience that we have. The wells that are being drilled in French Guiana by Shell are being logistically—the logistics base for those wells is Chaguaramas, Trinidad and wells that are being drilled by Repsol in Guyana are big planned and coordinated from Port of Spain. So that role is already here; it is an emerging role.

In 2012, we commenced construction of the Galeota port and we expect that that work on phase 1 of that port would be concluded shortly. The Galeota port sits at the middle of a circle, the radius of which touches Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana and even our deep water to our east coast. So the vision, therefore, for Galeota, Mr. President, is that Galeota would become to Trinidad what Aberdeen is to Scotland. [*Desk thumping*] Galeota would become to Trinidad and Tobago what Aberdeen is to Scotland.

That is diversification because we are, therefore, linking the maritime sector to the energy sector and I know that there are plans to do the same

similar type things in Chaguaramas.

So, Mr. Speaker—

**Hon. Senator:** President.

**Hon. Senator:** Sign of things to come.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Ah, boy, Chaguanas West.

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** No, no, no. I know you were the candidate for Chaguanas West for the—

**Hon. Senator:** Lester Henry.

**Hon. Senator:** Lester Henry.

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** So, Mr. Speaker, with regard to oil production, we have stabilized—we have arrested the decline in oil production and we expect that oil production will begin now to increase to the end of the year and we base that on the premise that there is a tremendous amount of investment taking place in Trinmar; there is a tremendous amount of activity taking place on land; and this, of course, is a reversal of the trend that we saw between 2009 and 2010, when, for some reason which I will discover, there was a slowdown in the upstream sector.

For natural gas, Mr. President—and I heard the Member of Parliament for Port of Spain South referring—a very lengthy contribution on energy from Port of Spain South in the other place—with regard to natural gas, from late 2010 to the present day, we have been going through a period of maintenance in the energy sector. That, of course, is heavily linked to the maintenance works being done by BPTT. It is not only BPTT, there are other companies that have been doing maintenance work.

The world has changed since April 2010. April 2010 was when I

think the election was declared, in 2010; but there was another disaster taking place. [*Laughter*] There was one disaster taking place in the PNM in April 2010, but there was another disaster taking place in the Gulf of Mexico, which was being broadcast live around the world and that was a massive oil spill in what was called the deep horizon oil spill, the Macondo oil spill, and that oil spill has caused BP to be a very different company today from the company that obtained in 2010.

It has also rewritten safety standards around the world; not just for BP, but for all companies around the world because we tend to change safety procedure and protocol after major disasters, of course. Following that, companies, BP in particular, went into maintenance mode in Trinidad and Tobago and BG, to a lesser extent, has also been in maintenance mode. This is not only unique to Trinidad and Tobago where BP operates, it is also happening in the Gulf of Mexico; it is happening in Alaska; it is happening in Azerbaijan.

**5.45 p.m.**

Mr. President, the assets that are out there, the assets that underpin the gas economy of Trinidad and Tobago have been out there for 10 to 15 years and, therefore, we have to take care, Sen. Ramkhelawan, of the goose that lays the golden egg. We are advised by BP that after the shutdown in September of the Cassia 'B' hub—and the Cassia 'B' hub is the largest offshore installation in Trinidad and Tobago—and it comes back up in October—that, by and large, the bulk of the maintenance now is behind them. There would be one or two minor things in 2014. So, therefore, once that happens, the world returns to a position of normalcy and BP, of course,

is paralleling that with the drilling programme that is taking place right now to bring more and more reserves into the proven category. So that is gas-to-production.

We expect, of course, the Mitsubishi project to start next year, and they expect to have that project completed by the year 2016.

**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. [*Sen. S. Ramkhelawan*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** Thank you very much for the extension in time. Thank you very much for that. I was actually about to wrap up, but since you all give me 15 more minutes [*Desk thumping and laughter*] I may continue. So, Mr. President, this is a sector—it is not an easy time to be Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs in Trinidad and Tobago. It is not an easy time to be Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs in Trinidad and Tobago. There are challenges but, Mr. Speaker—sorry—Mr. President. Subconsciously, I do not know where this is coming from—

**Sen. Singh:** Freud!

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** Freudian slip. But, Mr. President, we are up to the challenge. I am supported by some of the best minds in the energy sector in Trinidad and Tobago. We expect to go out very shortly at the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs for a number of RRPs for consultancies. One of the consultancies that we intend to go out for is a consultancy for a new natural gas master plan.

The last natural gas master plan for this country was done in 2001 by Gaffney Cline and Associates. And those of you all you know Gaffney Cline and Associates, they are one of the best companies in the world and they actually started off in the 1970s, I believe it was, in Trinidad and Tobago and they have gone on to become one of the best consultancies in the world for energy. So the last natural gas master plan that we have had is dated January 2002, and the time has come, of course, for a new natural gas master plan to take this country into the future.

I have great optimism and I would add one more thing. The optimism that the companies are seeing in Trinidad and Tobago is as a result of what is being telegraphed from the Government and from the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs. When I speak, I am aware that all the companies are listening. Right? [*Desk thumping*] We must always transmit and we must always put out an image of confidence. The companies are confident that the Government would not pull the rug from under them and suddenly increase taxes. It is for that reason that investment has returned. I have cited the very important figure of 2.5 billion is it, in FDI for 2012, largely coming from BP, BG. Petrotrin is also in there and other smaller companies.

So, Mr. President, I close by saying this sector is very important. It contributes to almost half of our economy; it contributes to 90 per cent of foreign direct investment; 60 per cent of Government revenue, and I think somewhere in the region of 70 per cent of foreign exchange earnings.

I place great emphasis on working very hard to ensure that we have stabilized the energy sector. It is on a path of growth. It has grown in the first quarter of 2013 and we expect growth again in the second quarter of

2013. We are looking at a major maintenance intervention by BP and BG in the third quarter of 2013, and some of that would be spilling over into the fourth quarter of 2013. That is not happening by "vaps". There is a degree of coordination between the companies at the Point Lisas estate, between the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, the NGC, BP, BG and Atlantic LNG. There is a huge amount of coordination happening there. We have done this before. The same thing happened last year September when the Kapok and the Dolphin platforms went down.

We expect that—and I would close by saying that we launched on May 16 a land-based bid round. It is called an onshore bid round. This is the first onshore bid round in almost 15 years. The last one was 1999—[*Desk thumping*]—first land-based bid round in 14 to 15 years. There remains a tremendous amount of acreage on land in south Trinidad that is not Petrotrin's acreage. It is state land. It is not private acreage. It is state land, and we have divided this into three blocks, and we have put this out to the international and the local community in Trinidad.

We normally do promotions for these things in Houston and Calgary and we have done Houston and we have done Calgary, but we believe San Fernando is an energy city. [*Desk thumping*] It is a member of the World Energy Cities Partnership. On June 26, two weeks from now, we will be doing a promotion for this land-based bid round in San Fernando because there are many companies in south Trinidad that would like to bid in that land-based bid round. It is approximately 150,000 acres of land and many of our senior geologists—people like Dr. Krishna Persad, people like Wilson Lalla—

**Hon. Member:** Mr. Manning.

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:**—I heard somebody say Mr. Manning. [*Laughter*] Many of our senior geologists, Mr. President, believe that there is a tremendous amount of oil left to be found on land in south Trinidad. What has happened, Mr. President, what has changed the world quite radically is technology. Mr. President, 3D seismic would be applied to these blocks and 3D seismic, as you know, is a vast improvement on 2D seismic which is what we had before. It is the difference between a 3.2 megapixel camera and a 15.0 megapixel camera, if I was to use an analogy that would allow the layman to understand. The resolution is much better. People are excited about this.

We have put out data packages for sale. We have sold 11 data packages at the cost of US 40,000 per data package. So, you have to be a serious company to put US $40,000 out for a data package. So we expect great interest in that.

Very soon I would take to Cabinet a note for another deep-water bid round which is greatly anticipated. We are, again, going out with acreage in the deep-water because the excitement created by the last deep-water bid round has caused the entire world to sit up and say, "Trinidad and Tobago is once again a hot spot". It is being called a "hot spot" for deep-water exploration. [*Desk thumping*]

So, Mr. President, I leave the Senate Chamber on those points. I am always very optimistic about the future of this country. I am always very optimistic about the people of this country who, by and large, are the people who work. That is 3.7 per cent and it is 3.7 per cent of the labour force.

Sen. Karim would know the figure better than me. Mr. President, 3.7 per cent of the labour force is in energy, very small, a very small percentage.

Our people are in great demand globally and, believe it or not, there are more Trinidadians, right now, working for our major companies outside of Trinidad than there are expatriates inside. We are a net exporter of human beings with talent—of talented human beings—[*Desk thumping*] because this industry is underpinned by young bright people—

**Sen. George:** Like yourself!

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** Well I would like to put myself. I do not want to blow that trumpet.

**Hon. Senator:** Like yourself.

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** So, Mr. President, I thank you very much for the opportunity to address the Senate. I wish to give the people of Trinidad and Tobago, through the Parliament, the assurance that the energy sector is in safe hands, it is in good hands. It is being led by a combination of youth and experience, and we do not intend to do anything but improve it in the future. Thank you very much, Mr. President. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Shamfa Cudjoe:** Thank you Mr. President and thank you colleagues. I want to extend my gratitude for the opportunity to participate in this Bill. Mr. President, I just want to place on the record a couple of my concerns. They are very few and I hope not to be too long today. Mr. President, I think that given the wide-ranging implications of a budget exercise and the wide implications that it has for a country and its people, I do believe that the budget should be subjected to significant scrutiny and debate—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Singh:** Parliamentary scrutiny!

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:**—to parliamentary scrutiny, public scrutiny and debate. Now, Mr. President, it is critical for the parliamentarians, for civil society organizations and for the general public to be a part of all stages of the budgetary exercise, whether it is the general budget or the variations in the budget as we are doing today and as we have done in January.

Now, Mr. President, I think that the public needs to play a significant role, not just because they may have good advice to offer but, at the end of the day, we are spending public money. At the end of the day, this is public funds. So I really do think that more effort needs to be placed in encouraging public debate. I think for the most part, not just this administration, but also previous administrations; we have developed a way of treating the budget as if we are dealing with our personal finances.

Mr. President, at the end of day, I think that Government must resist the urge to treat the Treasury as its personal piggy bank or to treat the people who would have entrusted us with power and leadership and all these wonderful things, we are not to treat them as our own minions. Mr. President, $2.9 billion is not $2.90 and even if it were just $2.90, at the end of the day, this is public funds. I am making this point to place on the record my discomfort and my dissatisfaction with our process and, especially, this time the way things have been done.

Now, on Monday, a finance meeting was called where the Members of the Lower House would have been advised that the Government is requesting $2.9 billion. At that meeting, an explanation was supposed to be provided as to what this money is going to be used for—the breakdown of

the allocation that is being requested. I got the chance to read the report of the Finance Committee's meeting on Monday. In the report, Members of the Lower House were asking the Government for explanation and clarity on some of the issues and some of the requests, and the Members were advised that the answers would be given on the parliamentary floor. I have some problems with that, because here we have a couple issues.

We were called on Monday and told that the Government is requesting $2.9 billion. The debate is expected to take place on Wednesday, which is only two days later. As late as Wednesday morning, Mr. President—Wednesday afternoon—I was looking at the Lower House debate and I saw the Leader of the Opposition reading from a document which would have given an explanation of the amount that was asked for and what the Government intends to do with it. So I called the Parliament asking for a copy of the documents, and I was advised that the Parliament gave that document only to the Lower House and they would have to receive special advice to give that document to the Upper House, members of the Senate.

**6.00 p.m.**

So here I am on Wednesday morning expected to debate this topic on Friday and I have nothing to work with other than the Bill that says, the Government is requesting $2.9 billion, and this is the way it is going to be divided.

Now, Mr. President, $2.9 billion—it may sound like not much to when you compare it to the amount that we spend each year, but $2.9 billion is a significant amount of money. For many years $2.9 billion, or in the area

of 3 billion or 2.5 billion, that is the amount of money that was allocated to Tobago to run the entire island, so I consider this to be a large sum of money. At the end of the day this is not our personal money, this is the people's money. And I think that not only the parliamentarians in the Lower House, all the parliamentarians in the Upper House but the members of the civil society and the members of the public ought to be given the opportunity to have some kind of say as to how this money is being spent.

I find it quite strange for a request to be made on Monday and debated on Wednesday, and passed and ready to go by Friday. Although this has been the practice for so many years, I think we need to review the way we conduct our business. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Good point! Good point!

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** I think it is very important, especially as we speak about being a democracy and honouring the principles and the tenets of democracy as it relates to accountability and transparency, and parliamentary scrutiny, and so on. So it is just a suggestion, and I truly hope—

**Hon. Senator:** Very good suggestion.

**Hon. Senator:** Good point! Good point!

**Hon. Senator:** Very good.

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:**—that we would make that kind of consideration, and as Sen. Emmanuel George would have said, "Not just for the Parliament but also for the Tobago House of Assembly"—

**Hon. Senator:** Oooooh!

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:**—and I can place on the record right now as I speak, on—what day is today? It is Friday. On Wednesday afternoon I was a part of

budgetary consultations that would have started earlier this year in the Tobago House of Assembly. We got the chance to engage the young people in discussions for the budget. So it is something that we are trying practice, especially considering the fact that it is only one party in the House right now. There is need for much more scrutiny than there had been before—

**Hon. Senator:** Correct!

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Thanks to the UNC.

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:**—and the people need to play a larger role, a greater part in the governance process. [*Crosstalk*] So, Mr. President, I hope that this is something we could consider and something we could adopt here in the Parliament.

Mr. President, I want to speak to the issue now of deficit spending and the whole issue of debt-to-GDP ratio, and so on. I listened to the Minister's contribution in the Lower House—I did not hear him mention it in today's discussion, but he was keen to inform the House and to inform the public that deficit spending is not so much of a problem because it is being practiced in so many other countries, and he gave examples. But, Mr. President, I want to remind the Minister that every time we were engaged in deficit spending—I am not saying that it is a bad thing, but whenever you decide to engage in deficit spending we must have some kind of clear plan, some kind of clear vision as to how we are going to generate the money, generate the finances to service the debt that we have incurred.

Usually when a country engages in deficit spending, it is done to invest in some kind of industry or promoting some kind of sector, or stimulating some kind of economic activity that is guaranteed to bring in

some kind wealth to service the debt, or to do something very major to transform the economy and to train the people and improve the standard of living for the people they serve. Now, Mr. President, I listened to Sen. Tewarie and he spoke about so many wonderful things that this Government is working on and aiming to achieve, and so on, but I could not make the connection. I had some difficulty in making a connection between the initiatives that Sen. Tewarie was promulgating, and this $2.9 billion that is being requested today.

Mr. President, I do not see much of this activity that we are about to finance today as being very wealth generating, or capable of transforming the economy in any major way or even catering to some of the concerns that Sen. Tewarie have. Mr. President, I will give you an example of some of the issues, some of the provisions in this Bill that would have piqued my interest. I would start with CEPEP, and that is heading number 61; $142 million for CEPEP and it is pretty much to expand CEPEP for works in new areas and to engage four additional CEPEP workers, four additional CEPEP contractors.

Mr. President, the description also mentioned programmes and initiatives to train CEPEP workers in setting-up their own businesses and attaining different skills. We have been hearing about these initiatives since the budget of 2010, that this Government is turning CEPEP around, and there were too many people working in CEPEP, but as far as I remember and as much as I read in the newspapers, the workforce of CEPEP continues to increase, and I find that kind of troubling because the Government is boasting about training these people and giving them these skills and

certificates and so on to move on, to move up and out of CEPEP, but yet the CEPEP workforce keeps getting larger and larger, and larger.

Mr. President, I find some trouble with that and every budgetary presentation and every supplementary exercise, the same thing is being said over and over, and I do not see us getting anywhere positive with this whole CEPEP issue and trying to decrease the number of people in CEPEP. So there is a significant amount of work that needs to be done. Some time and some energy and some resources need to be spent on really trying to figure out how to deal with this CEPEP and URP, and these kinds of social employment programmes, and breaking people out of that culture of dependency.

The problem is not just in Trinidad, it is also in Tobago and some of the islands up the region. I remember meeting at a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and some of the other Ministers and Members of Parliament was speaking about the same thing, even in the US where there are people abusing the Section 8 system. Mr. President, it is just a new culture of narcissistic behaviour where people are just concerned about themselves, and not really concerned about the people who are really in need.

So we need to train ourselves and train our people, and develop our programmes to monitor these social initiatives so that they are not abused, and that we are not wasting money and killing productivity and killing the intelligence of our people by maintaining these programmes and continuing to pump more and more money into it without getting any benefits out of it. My second concern is the police service; that is heading number 64, $119

million to be spent on the police service. Now, Mr. President, based on the situation with crime in the country I cannot really argue against money being spent on national security initiatives, but I see 11.3 million being spent on maintenance of vehicles and, for the most part, much of the allocation is being spent on salaries and back pay and so on.

I want to remind the Government that whenever we debate issues about national security and policing, we have all the wonderful ideas of things that are supposed to happen and the different kinds of investments that ought to be made, but when we get down to the budgetary exercises and variations and supplementary budgetary initiatives, I do not see us really addressing these issues. I was really looking forward to seeing some kind of allocation or initiative in improving our forensic investigation ability. The witness protection programme; we have been taking about this for over three years.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Excellent point!

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** The surveillance system that we have been talking about, since last July we were supposed to have the surveillance systems in Trinidad and in Tobago up and running and that has not happened yet. Since the inception, since this Government has assumed duties in 2010 they would have stopped the contract that treats with building the Roxborough Police Station and the Grange Police Station in Tobago. I remember asking that question to Sen. Brig. Sandy, and he who was the Minister of National Security at that time, assured me that the projects were being reviewed and they are going to be up and running soon. And soon was 2010, we are now at 2013 and these projects have not started. I hope that when the new

Minister of National Security speaks, he would be able to shed some light in that regard. I want to bring to the attention—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Senator:** Roxborough and Grange Police Station.

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** Roxborough and Grange Police Station, the contracts for Roxborough and Grange Police Station, construction in Tobago. There is also another concern in the policing area in Tobago. This is a conversation that has been going on between the Chief Secretary and Sen. Sandy since 2010 also, and that is the "911 system". When you call the police from Tobago, when you have an emergency, the call goes to Trinidad and then it is rerouted back to Tobago, and that takes time. Mr. President, there must be something that could be done in this new age of technology. So if some kinds of consideration could be made in that regard I would be very, very thankful.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** And the people would be.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** And the people of Tobago would be very thankful also.

My other concern for policing in Tobago is the use of the passenger manifest that we use in trade. The use of the passenger manifest as a national security tool, because we have a situation where sometimes criminals in Trinidad make their escape to Tobago, or sometimes criminals in Tobago make their escape to Trinidad. Now we are trying to get the police service involved in the whole process so that when the passenger manifest is sent, the police service could check—the police officers could check the passenger manifest and see if there are any wanted persons on the manifest, or even the vehicle and cargo manifest and see if there are any stolen vehicles or stolen cargo on the boat.

Mr. President, these are just some of the concerns as it relates to policing. The Chief Secretary would have written to the past Minister of National Security requesting a meeting, and that did not happen. The Minister had agreed to meet, I think it was either June or April, but he would have demitted office before that, so I am hoping that this—I know that this Minister had said that he is going meet. I hope that that meeting happens soon so that the national security issues that are faced by Tobago could be addressed.

Mr. President, I move on now to heading number 24 for the Ministry of Legal Affairs, and this has to do with the National Consultations on constitutional reform. The Ministry is requesting a further $10 million to treat with expenses incurred for consultations that took place between November2012 and March 2013, and I find that to be very, very sketchy. Because, Mr. President, I remember attending the launch of the National Consultations for Constitutional Reform on March 02, 2013.

**Hon. Senator:** This year?

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** This year. So this request for $10 million to cover constitutional reform consultations that took place between November 2012 and March 2013, I find it very sketchy. This programme launched on March 02, and was intended to run until Saturday May 04. Since May 04, I have heard about some advertisements on the radio that consultations are still taking place, but certainly not from November2012 to March 2013. So, Mr. President, I do not know if that is a typo, maybe it is supposed to be March 2013 to November 2013. I do not know, Mr. President, but if the Minister could clarify that in winding up.

**6.15 p.m.**

Let us just say, suppose it were from November 2012, then why was it not budgeted for in the October budget last year? And let us just say, suppose if it were from November12, we came back to the Parliament on January 25 of this year; so why was it not catered for on January25? So I am just assuming that it might be an error, but if the Minister could investigate that and treat with it in his winding up, I will be thankful.

Mr. President, further on—the issue of constitutional reform, I see that the Government is spending somewhere in the vicinity of $28 million on these consultations. Now people like to say "talk cheap", but these are some very expensive talks.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Nice one, Shamfa.

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** Now this process of constitutional reform is long, it is tedious, it is a very technical process and if we do not take action, if we keep talking and talking and talking and talking, then it just redounds to a complete waste of time, a complete waste of money, a waste of resources, a waste of brain matter, a waste of emotions because if you have been to one of these consultations, people get very, very emotional, people will fight, it is serious.

So, Mr.President, we are spending a lot of money on these talks and I am just hoping that some action, something is actually done because I do not want this process to end up like what has happened to the Tobago process. We started our discussion since 2005 and a lot money and time and resources had been expended on these talks in drafting the legislation and doing all these things. Mr. President, we are now at a stage where the

Government has pretty much abandoned the process.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Seemingly.

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** Seemingly because we have about four—[*Crosstalk*] we have—what is your concern?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** He said that we are asking for money—[*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** You go on. You stick to yourscript.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** It is okay you were talking about consultations.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Stick to your script.

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** Sen. George would have—[*Crosstalk*] not worried with you at all. "Hakuna matata."

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Do not answer him. You go ahead.

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** Mr. President—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Singh:** "Doh worry."

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Shamfa, forget him.

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** No. Let me stay focused. Yes.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Put down your fighting tools.

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** This process started in 2005 and we had done all that we could on our part as the Tobago House of Assembly and requested the cooperation of central Government. Now central Government did its own thing and brought this legislation to the House on January16, one week before the election. The legislation failed. Well a matter of fact, Mr.President, it did not even get to a vote, the Government abandoned its own process and never brought it back to the Parliament since. We have about four more weeks left in this term. Parliament is supposed to prorogue sometime in early July and I do not see this appearing, this Bill appearing

anywhere on any Order Paper.

Mr.President, I know it is not the will or the desire of the Tobago House of Assembly to continue with the Bill that was drafted by the Government, what we have asked for and what we are still asking for, is for some consultation between the Tobago House of Assembly and the central Government and all the stakeholders that could add some value to this process and this legislation to bring internal self-government to Tobago, if we can get together and talk and work this thing through rather than continue in this process where we seem to be fighting against each other. In this fight, nobody wins. So we are asking for civil discussions—

**Hon. Senator:** Very nice.

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:**—among all the stakeholders—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Well said.

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:**—to get this thing done. The Tobago House of Assembly has spent a lot of money and central Government has spent a lot of money, but to this point nothing has been, nothing substantial has been attained to bring any kind of relief to the people of Tobago. So, Mr.President, I lay my case on the table again to central Government. I will proceed in a rather peaceful manner.

**Hon. Senator:** Yes. You are doing very well. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** Now, the Chief Secretary has been writing to the Prime Minister about his concerns about this whole process and the people in Tobago are pretty much worried about what is taking place. Now, we had received a correspondence from the Leader of the House, Minister Moonilal, stating that the national consultation has subsumed the Tobago discussion

for internal self-government. That cannot happen. That is unacceptable. Our issue of internal self-government cannot be absorbed in this whole issue of national constitutional reform. It is a separate and special issue and we would like it to be treated as such.

**PROCEDURAL MOTION**

**The Minister of Environment and Water Resources (Sen. The Hon. Ganga Singh:** Thank you very much, Senator for giving way. Mr. President, in accordance with Standing Order 9(8), I beg to move that the Senate continue to sit until the completion of the business at hand.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**FINANCE (SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION) (FINANCIAL YEAR 2013) BILL, 2013**

**Mr. President:** Sen. Cudjoe. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** Thank you, Mr. President. So my final remark on this constitutional reform, I understand that the Prime Minister, after several letters from the Chief Secretary, has agreed to meet again and we are thankful for her consideration and we hope that that meeting takes place soon, and I hope that it is genuine and that it brings some fruit.

Now I move onto heading number 18. The Minister of Finance and the Economy, under Ministry of Finance and the Economy, now this Ministry is requesting $25 million for a food price support programme—$25 million is being requested for a food card initiative to provide food cards. Now I think that it is very, very critical that we review and revaluate this social programme. They are many cases being reported of abuse of the programme, abuse both by the Government and by the people receiving, the

recipients of the card. We ought to review the qualifications or the requirements for the people who are receiving the card.

Mr.President, I know of a case in Tobago of a cancer patient who was a food card holder, but every time she goes into the hospital for service, for chemotherapy or whatever treatment, by the time she gets out the card is cancelled and she has to reapply again from stage one, and that is kind of difficult for somebody who has cancer to keep going up to the Ministry of Tobago Development and waiting and joining a line and that kind of thing to get access to a food card. And there are healthy working people, sometimes households that have more than one food card. So we need to review this programme.

I know that in about November/December of last year, the Minister of Social Development would have travelled to Tobago and spent over $2 million in his food card distribution programme; in November/December. That is a very short time to issue over $2million.

Now, Mr.President, what I was very concerned about is the way in which the process that used because you would be sitting in your house during the day and then you hear a music truck travelling around the village saying, come out and get your food cards. This is not—the Treasury is not your personal bank account. At the end of the day, as I said before, we are spending taxpayers' money and this cannot be the way.

**Hon. Senator:** [Inaudible] for the people of Tobago.

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** Whether or not it is for the people of Tobago or the people of Trinidad or people anywhere, that is not the way to spend people's money. [*Crosstalk*] People get up early in the morning and go out there and

do their work and pay their taxes and this is not the way we spend their money.

So, Mr.President, there must be some kind of legitimate process, some kind of legitimate requirements for applicants, not just to hand out food cards on a music truck. [*Crosstalk*] And that is why Tobago voted the way they did. [*Laughter*] And you would have a chance to present.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** "Yuh look for that. Yuh look for da one." [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** One part, one provision that I am particularly pleased about is heading number 15 and that is $222 million finally being issued to the Tobago House of Assembly to treat with the back pay and the payment of salaries and wages. [*Crosstalk*]

Now, Sen. Moore would have just issued a very long steups. That is up to her, Mr.President, but this money that is owed to the Tobago House of Assembly based on the changes that would have been made in payments in the public service, and just like all the other Ministries in Trinidad are getting their back pay and getting their COLA and their salaries and their wages, Tobago is a part of Trinidad and Tobago too and we are entitled, our workers are entitled to their salaries and their wages and their COLA and all the compensation that they have worked for.

I would like to place on the record though when Sen. Nan Ramgolam was here, I know some work was being done on improving productivity in the public service. I do not where that has—the progress of that project, where that is right now, Mr.President, but I hope to hear something on that probably as the President [*sic*] winds up because unions and workers are going to continue to request more and more salaries, and we as the leaders

are also supposed to request that we get our money's worth and that the productivity level is where it needs to be to run the country effectively and efficiently.

I just want to say in the final analysis, a budget document, a budget exercise, is geared towards economic recovery, towards job creation, towards wealth generation, towards implementing measurers that would improve the quality of life for the people we serve. A stimulus package, I have not considered this a stimulus package, is supposed to do just that, stimulate economic activity. When we are talking about a stimulus package by means of deficit spending, then I am hoping that it must be some kind of economic activity that would at least try to generate the necessary revenue to service the debt that is being incurred.

I just think it is unfortunate that this stimulus package does not treat with generating revenue to service the debt. We are moving the debt up to $9.6 billion and we do not know how we are going to pay that back.

There is a Yoruba proverb that says, the one that is being driven from the village to the town does not know distance between the two. When you are spending money and you do have to earn it to pay it back, you do not care. But at the end the day, this is the public servants' money, this is the public's money, this is public funds, this is the Treasury and not your personal piggy bank. I have some difficulty understanding how the CEPEP project and the food card project is going to generate wealth or what plans the Government have to bring in wealth—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Moore:** Has.

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:**—to pay—you stay there and correct my English. You

would have a chance to speak. Anyway, Mr.President, I am going good. [*Crosstalk*] Yes. So I have some challenge in understanding that and I hope that when the Senator, the Minister winds up, he is going to give us some kind of advice or provide some kind of recommendation that the Government has to treat with this issue.

So, I am sure if I ask Sen. Tewarie or Sen. Howai if he were here or Sen. George: how much does a bag of bread cost? How must does a loaf of bread cost?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Hampers.

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** How must does a pack of Crix cost? [*Crosstalk*] You do not know. You do not know. How must does a dozen eggs, how much does 12 eggs cost? Then these are—[*Crosstalk*] Right. But, Mr.President, some Members of the Government, some people who do not care about whether or not we have the money to pay the debt, they do not know that, but the person who has to face the grocery store every week, we have to worry about the price of bread, the price of crix, the price of these things.

**Sen. George:** That is why we have the food card.

**Sen. S. Cudjoe:** So it is one thing to say, oh it is blue skies and everything is all nice and everything is wonderful, but you are not—people in these positions do not check price, they just swipe when they get to check out.

Mr.President, whatever it is that we are doing, whenever we request to use public funds, whenever we decide to issue a stimulus package, we need to ensure that it does just that, stimulate economic activity, and not just stimulate activity, but do it in such a way that would bring wealth generation and would improve the quality of life for people, so that they could live the

kind of life that you guys live over there. Mr. President, with that said, I thank you.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Well done.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Good.

**6.30 p.m.**

**Sen. Dr. Victor Wheeler:** Thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to make a brief intervention in the Finance (Supplementary Appropriation) (Financial Year 2013) Bill, 2013.

Mr. President, I will go straight to the Bill at hand and as was mentioned by Sen. Cudjoe, the THA allocation this time is $222,808,100. This actually represents 7.69 per cent of the supplementary total appropriation funds for this portion. Now, I see in the document that the money is actually intended to repay arrears of salary and wages. I am just wondering if this will be sufficient because I remember the original request was for $300 million. So, I am hoping that the THA would have been provided with the difference sometime prior, because if the 222 is only to be part of the arrears then there might be a bit of an issue.

The other thing I would want to comment on is, again, as mentioned by Sen. Cudjoe, on page 9 where it refers to the money requested by the Ministry of Legal Affairs for the National Consultation on Constitution Reform and, I also would like to raise the issue of the status of the THA Bills that were brought to the Lower House just before the elections and nothing seems to have happened since. Seeing that Parliament is due to prorogued early next month, it seems very unlikely that this would be completed. So, I am hoping that some decision would be taken soon to have

this matter addressed because I do not see how we could be having National Consultations on Constitution Reform and leave out a very important sector of that, that is, the discussions for the changes to the THA Act.

The other area I would like to address, Mr. President, is with respect to the allocation requested for the Ministry of Sport on page 15, and I saw in the papers recently that the Minister of Sport was teeing off at a golf tournament at St. Andrews Golf Course. I am actually happy to see his commitment in golf because Tobago actually has two golf courses that are there to provide an opportunity for Tobago to earn income from golf tourism. Unfortunately, the two golf courses are in a state of disrepair.

**Sen. Coudray:** Just like Chaguaramas own.

**Sen. Dr. V. Wheeler:** Yes, like Chaguaramas. These courses really need to be maintained and upgraded. Now I know that one of the golf courses, Mount Irvine Golf Course is a private facility, but the other golf course, Tobago Plantations Golf Course is actually owned by the Government.

And if you look at the request for CEPEP, the additional request for CEPEP which I see is about 143 or $142 million. Could not there be some consideration for allocating a gang or two to be assigned to the Tobago Planations Golf Course to assist them in maintaining the grounds, because CEPEP is responsible for clearing the roads, cutting the grass on the roads. Keeping the country beautiful is nice but for something like the golf course which requires that help, I do not know if it would be out of order or something that can be considered to have a gang assigned.

Now, in reviewing the document I saw that there was actually no allocation to the Ministry of Health as being one of the beneficiaries for any

additional appropriation. Usually I know every year, the Ministry of Health being such a demanding Ministry as it is, is always in need of extra funds. So I was actually very surprised to see that it was absent this year. Now, when we look at what was said for 2012, and I now want to focus on the area of cardiac care—$17 million was spent in paying for private care to have 211 open heart surgeries, 88 coronary angioplasties, 519 angiograms, as part of the Ministry of Health's Adults Care Programme.

Now, the World Health Organization has said that for Trinidad and Tobago, 34 per cent of the deaths in Trinidad and Tobago was as a result of cardiovascular disease. Now, the previous Government in its wisdom in 2008 entered into an initiative to try and address this high death rate due to cardiovascular disease by engaging Johns Hopkins International to come and assist in implementing a comprehensive Cardiac Care Programme. They call it the Trinidad and Tobago Health Service Initiative. Under this programme the aim of it was to educate primary care physicians and cardiac specialists. The second aim was to assist in the training and education and actually the operation of a cardiac catheterization lab that was located at Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex. The aim at that time was to have the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex to be developed into a regional tertiary cardiac centre that would offer invasive cardiac care, cardiac surgery.

Now, the contract with Johns Hopkins International is actually coming to an end, some phases of it have been—the contract has ended and some of the achievements have been, at least the establishment of a Cardiology Scholarship Training Programme at Eric Williams Medical Sciences

Complex, where you have five doctors becoming fellows, which is a specialist training in cardiology under the auspices of Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Now, in 2008 there was only one trained cardiologist in the public sector. As a result of this initiative, in 2013 we have 11 trained cardiologists in the public health. Unfortunately, Tobago with its new hospital, new Scarborough General Hospital still does not have any cardiologist.

The training also was for personnel in ECG training. It also offered training for cardiac cardiology consultants to go to Baltimore for periods of two months. Nurses were trained in coronary care; doctors and nurses were trained in basic cardiac life support, advanced cardiac life support; the Trinidad and Tobago Medical Association became accredited to do continuing medical education, and this programme also oversaw the installation of the first permanent electro-physiology lab at the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex. All of this was the intention to make the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex a premier centre for cardiac care. Now, the aim of all of that was to provide comprehensive training for one of the commonest cause of deaths in Trinidad and Tobago by devising a prevention programme, screening programme, early detection, early intervention, therefore to prevent deaths from heart attack.

Now, when this was fully implemented, it would have resulted in some of the local health centres offering additional services such a stress testing, echocardiogram, anticoagulation clinics. Those health centres that had emergency departments would have been able to diagnose heart attack quicker and offer initial treatment, the aim of which would be to save lives

and to avoid deaths from heart attack. Each of the main hospitals in the region would have had a full-time cardiologist, would have been able to offer cardiology services, there would have been coronary care units, and as was said, Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex would have been the referral centre.

Now, one of the big problems with the actual success of the programme was in the way of equipment, because when the contract was negotiated and agreed in 2008 with the Ministry of tertiary education, there was a budget identified for equipment, but unfortunately the funding for this was placed with the University of Trinidad and Tobago who did not have the expertise to purchase the equipment. But I have had some discussions with the Minister of tertiary education, Sen. Fazal Karim and he has agreed that there would be efforts made to transfer this funding so that the Ministry of Health would be in a position to access it and procure the equipment so that it would be made available for all the health centres. Because when this is in place, anybody having chest pain, difficulty breathing, will be able to go to one of the health centres and get immediate care. You would be amazed to see how that simple intervention would be able to save the lives of persons in Trinidad and Tobago.

The other aspect which should have happened which did not happen was the Johns Hopkins initiative and the Johns Hopkins Medical School organize the training for the fellowship programme. The University of the West Indies was supposed to develop their own cardiology fellowship training programme and that has not happened yet, and I do not know if funding is part of that I know some discussions have taken place, so I am

hoping that this is something, Minister Karim, that will also, if it is implemented, allow the efforts by Johns Hopkins International to have it sustainable, because the aim of the programme was not just for a group to come and provide a service and leave. They were supposed to provide persons to be trained. They have trained a lot of people, equipment was supposed to be acquired, the group would have overseen people using the equipment, so that when they leave it would be a sustainable programme which would actually be the first in the Caribbean.

Now, the other thing I would like to mention here is that, I had said that there was no cardiologist in Tobago, and with the new hospital that is there the Minister of Health already indicated in the budget for 2013/2014 that in addition to the new hospital which is finished and opened, he will be installing an MRI in the hospital, and also a cardiac catheterization lab. Now, that lab was not initially budgeted. I am not seeing any funding for it. However, I am aware that Nipdec and the China Railway who oversaw the construct of the new hospital have actually had their contract extended to the end of the year. Saying so, I must commend China Railway Construction Company for building the new hospital in Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Right now, Tobago has the honour of possessing the best hospital in the country.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** That is right.

**Sen. Dr. V. Wheeler:** It is a fantastic facility. It was opened fully in December of 2012 and the Tobago Regional Health Authority oversaw the closing of the old hospital and the reopening of the new hospital.

Now, this is the first time such a move and such an exercise has been undertaken in Trinidad and Tobago and I think in the rest of the Caribbean,

so the TRHA should take some credit for successfully overseeing this. However, even though the hospital is opened, it is functioning, there are some challenges in some of the departments. The medical imaging department does have some HR issues with a couple employees being on suspension. However, the CAT scan service is fully functional.

I remember seeing a letter in the *Tobago News* recently about a patient who had a stroke, an elderly gentleman, was taken to casualty, had a CT scan, was diagnosed as having a bleed in his brain, was flown to Port of Spain General Hospital, was operated on by a neurosurgeon, one of the neurosurgeons that were recently hired by, got by the Minister, he had his bleed drained and in a week he was able to fly back to Tobago almost fully recovered. Now, he is one of the few people who actually had a good experience in the health sector and shared his experience with the public, because we know that anytime something bad happens it makes the news, the front pages and—

**Sen. George:** One of the few people you say had a good experience.

**Sen. Dr. C. Wheeler:** Yeah, yeah, one of the few—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. George:** Most people have said—[Inaudible—and do have a good experience.

**6.45 p.m.**

**Sen. Dr. V. Wheeler:** No, most people—over 90 per cent of the people who go to the health services actually have very good care but they do not say anything. The minority who have problems as with anything else they are the first to—

**Sen. Singh:** It is the same thing in water.

**Sen. Dr. V. Wheeler:**—go to the media, and for some reason they always attract—make the headlines. Well, I presume this is the case with other departments. Now—yes, coming back to Tobago—going to have a cardiac categorization lab by the Minister of Health. Now, because the TRHA does not have a cardiologist, one of its new pieces of equipment, the echocardiogram machine that was borne with the hospital is none functional. This is going to create a challenge for the TRHA in being able to operationalize the services.

So, I am actually hoping the Minister of Health will assist as he has assisted with the TRHA on other occasions when they are not able to provide the expertise, to have them develop this cardiac categorization lab, because it will be the second such lab in the public service. Tobago will be able to offer that service. We have heard, in fact two years ago at a joint select committee, Minister Gopeesingh had said that he did not want to have a heart attack in Tobago because there was nobody to care for him. Now, once this unit is installed, once we have a cardiologist, once we have services improved and I am hoping that if John Hopkins International has their contract extended, and Minister Karim has also committed to doing what he can in that regard, then I think Tobago will be well served as far as cardiac care is concerned.

Now, I want to just digress a little further on another matter, and that is just giving a few comments on the Regional Health Authority System as a whole. Now the RHA system was introduced in about 1994, and the aim of this system was to get around a lot of the bureaucracy that prevailed with the Ministry of Health being centralized provider of care. The RHA—you have

five regions whereby a region would have its own board that will be able to provide its services to the people; it will be funded separately. But what it meant was that, whereas the Ministry of Health was staffed by public servants who were permanent, and they were employed after having applied for jobs that were advertised, have their proper credentials, I think they were employed by the public service commission. You now have a system where a regional health authority board has its board of directors who are all political appointees. In addition to that, they were appointed for periods of just about two years and very frequently there is a delay from when the one board ends to when another board ends.

Now, I came back to Tobago in 1996, so I started working with the first regional health authority board that was appointed in Tobago, and since then every two to three years there would be a new board. One of the problems that happen is, every time a board is changed, invariably the Chief Executive officer is also changed. Because the senior management in the RHA, the chief executive officer, general managers and most of the managers are all on contracts varying from two to three years.

So as a result of this, whereas under the public service you had senior doctors, nurses, senior professionals who were like the chief medical officer, permanent employees, security of tenure was not an issue. So you would have Ministers come and go, chief medical officer remains, so you have some stability in the hierarchy at the level of the Ministry. But with the RHA system there is really no stability and continuity at all. Every time the board changes it appears as if that particular board wants to do things their own way and it invariably results in business plan changing, policy

directions, policy initiatives changing—when the Government change the whole entire top structure changes. It is therefore not surprising that with all of this instability you would have problems in the sector, and I believe it is time for the Government to seriously look at reviewing this whole RHA system to determine its strength, its weakness, because I do not believe it should continue as it has been for the next 15 years.

I really think some serious discussion needs to take place if we are really to improve the care now. You have a Minister of Health like Dr. Khan who is very involved and hands on. If he wants to have something done, it will get done. You might have another Minister who may not be that hands on and may adopt a more—adopt an approach where you let the technical people do what they want.

This also results in a lot of instability because the senior managers who are all on contract—we have had CEOs who have been fired if they have not carried out the instructions of a Minister, and therefore you might find that some senior manager might want to not upset those in charge and I really do not think for us to provide a first class health care system to work in that environment is not very healthy. So if nothing else, I hope for some discussion or at least the start of some discussion for reviewing the RHA system.

Now that is not to excuse the medical personnel in it because at the moment a doctor who graduated 30/40 years ago does not have to open another textbook, does not have to go to any update, he just applies and gets his licence and continues to practice.

In a first world country you have to be revalidated every five or ten

years. In other words you have to demonstrate that you have been keeping up to date with modern technology. There have been attempts by the Medical Board of Trinidad and Tobago to change this system whereby the intention is to have not just applying for your licence every year, but you also have to demonstrate that you have done a certain number of hours of continuing medical education. I believe this is close to coming into effect. Also for the nursing sector and all other allied health care professionals, it should be mandatory to have your licence renewed, that you do some level of upgrade.

Trinidad and Tobago is too advanced—the population is much too knowledgeable for a patient to go to an institution and the quality of care that person gets would depend on the training, experience or lack of training by the professional that he sees. A patient should know that if they go to a particular facility for care there should be a minimum acceptable standard of care that they would be provided with. They should know that when they see a doctor or a nurse, that doctor is somebody who is up-to-date with modern technology, modern medication. There are new techniques now, new operative procedures that are there to make patients recovery quicker, shorter. Not everyone is skilled and that is a problem.

So I did not mean to digress away from the Bill at hand, but I thought that I should take the opportunity to address those concerns and digress, thank you, and I hope that some of my concerns would be heard and some action taken. I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training (Sen. The Hon. Fazal Karim):** Thank you very much, Mr. President, for allowing me the

opportunity to join the debate on the supplementation of the appropriation Bill, 2013. Mr. President, before I commence into what is a customary practice—what some of my friends are making it out to be different—I will deal with some of the reasons why they want to make it out to be different. In fact what I think they want to do is to say that we are better as opposed to different, but we will come to that a little later on. Before, as I said, I get into the meat of my contribution I would just like to make a few comments or respond to some of what was said by my colleagues earlier on.

Mr. President, let me first of all as I extend condolences to my Cabinet colleague, Sen. The Hon. Larry Howai, on the passing of his dear grandmother, but let me also elevate him this evening. I want to say on behalf of all of us here, and I am saying not only those on this side of the bench, but all of us to Sen. Howai, we are indeed very proud of you. We know that you have worked hard together with your predecessor, the hon. Winston Dookeran to put us on a part of steady growth. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. George:** "Oooh".

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:** To ensure—and that is not only, that is what is the headline in the front page of one of the newspapers—

**Sen. Singh:** Solid growth.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:**—to ensure that there is fiscal prudence—

**Sen. George:** "Aaaw", that too.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:**—to ensure that you have steered the economic ship on course; to ensure that we have excellent macro-economic fundamentals and to ensure, very importantly for Trinidad and Tobago, that we are maintaining our very high financial ratings with the excellent rating

Standard and Poor's and other institutions. Sen. Howai we commend you, we congratulate you, and while we extend condolence to—[*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:** Senator, you want me to give way for you to extend condolences? We want to welcome our brother into the Senate. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. George:** Yes, he wants to welcome Hinds for the first time.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** He is with the Attorney General who is still outside.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:** Oh, I see, sorry.

**Sen. Hinds:** Would you like to give way?

**Sen. Singh:** Nah, nah, nah.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:** Mr. President, I want to also say that we are very proud of some of the accomplishments of the Government, particularly with respect to, as Sen. Howai indicated in his presentation, the country having received 5per cent unemployment rate. He also indicated that what the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is focused on doing and what we as a Government and all of us in the Parliament and as Ministers would like to have focus as well, is that there is in fact the move towards diversification. I want to also advise that while we heard the very erudite presentation from our Cabinet colleague the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs—

**Sen. George:** Oooh, yes.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:**—in addition to all our colleagues who have spoken so far, and those who will speak later on? I want to also say that the aspect of diversification is upper most not only on the oil economies and gas economies like us, but certainly in world economies. He mentioned Saudi

Arabia even though at this present time Venezuela has more reserves than Saudi Arabia.

Mr. President, in Saudi Arabia they are now embarking on a new development strategy called K-A-E-C. And that is, K-A-E-C means the King Abdullah Economic City. And although Saudi Arabia is earmarked to be pumping 10million barrels of oil a day, they too are looking at life after oil and gas and that is in fact what Minister Howai had indicated.

Minister Howai also exhorted us and particularly—and even over lunch we were talking about this where the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Tertiary and Skills Training, both Ministries are substantial recipients of Government's moneys, the taxpayers money in terms of education and training from preschool to tertiary as we say, from nursery to tertiary. And what he was very forceful and forthright about and he said to us here this morning when he started his presentation, is that he needs to be more impressed with the level of innovation and creativity. I want to say that we support Minister Howai's need in this area and it is in that regard that the University West Indies, which previously had the faculty of Science and Agriculture, now has two separate faculties, and they are called science and technology and the faculty of food production.

**7.00p.m.**

Prof. Ramkissoon will know because he has been a resident there and a very distinguished professor at the University of the West Indies, and also is in the vanguard of innovation and creativity; that all our institutions are now mandated to become, as well, entrepreneurial institutions, but you can become that when you move from creativity at the individual level;

innovation at the organizational level and when you move to wealth creation at the national level.

Mr. President, we acknowledge the fact that as you move towards innovation through creativity, that you must also have the enabling environment. Prof. Ramkissoon has often—I am sure when he speaks tonight or in the wee hours of the morning—I am sure he will mention, as he often mentions, his concern about the amount of moneys as a percentage of the GDP that is spent on research.

Mr. President, we recognize that new knowledge is important for the development of any society, and new knowledge, really, is an outcome of research. As a result of that, what I have done, I have taken a note to the Cabinet which has been approved and now for implementation, to establish the higher education research fund, with an initial deposit of $7 million. It may sound small, but I did that in the context where one institution for the last seven years—one institution in Trinidad and Tobago for the last seven years alone—received $50.385 million. It may seem, again, small in the context of research and development, but very importantly, I think what it is saying is that we must now account for the research that was done.

Mr. President, if you take a survey—a random survey—of 10 persons in the country and you were to ask them: "What do you know about the research that has been done at an institution, or institution A or B or C over the last 10 years? I am sure maybe eight or nine of them will tell you they do not know.

It is our view as well—I am sure Dr.Bernard who is an imminent researcher as well, in his own right, will tell you that you must inform the

research agenda by telling the people what you have done and discovered, and by listening to them, as well, to be able to inform the policy agenda.

So it is not simply a matter of, let us do the research, but how do you determine what research is necessary. How do you determine what is the value added to the society. And, therefore, as we are talking about research, Minister Howai this morning also spoke about the fact—his concern for the aging population, which is now referred to in terms of the terminology, gerontology—the concern that the baby boomers are now at the age of retirement. And it is our view as well, how do we allow this asset to go not wasted?

I am going to get to the substantive issues because what I propose to do is to focus the contribution on those aspects that we have asked for moneys—sums of moneys—and I will deal with them individually under the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training—save and except to say that one of the things that we will want to do is to see how we can re-enter those persons who are at the upper end of the spectrum, who are now being classified as part of the aging population, to return to the workforce with all the skills, abilities, aptitudes and correct attitudes, to assist our young boys and girls, to assist the present workforce, even if it is through mentorship or even if it is through apprenticeship.

Mr. President, in talking about innovation and research, I want to also advise the Senate that recently the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training, through the National Energy Skills Centre, signed an agreement with Microsoft for a youthspark Programme. This is where Microsoft is now outfitting an innovation lab with the NESC for young persons. We also

have discussions with CISCO, with the networking academy. We want to discuss with Google, labs as well, how we can make this intervention in terms of this whole aspect of innovation and creativity.

Mr. President, when we look at what is happening in the Silicon Valley, when we look at what is happening in Bangalore with Infosys and TCS, the Tata Consulting group; when we look at how learning is moving from bricks and mortar to the borderless world of knowledge, using the technology; when we look at what is happening in terms of MOOCS, M-O-O-C-S—the massive open online courses; when we look at the intervention of Coursera, of Udacity, of futurelearn, of Can academy—all of those—we are saying in Trinidad and Tobago, and we are saying to the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, that is the way that we are going to build the brains and unleash the potential of the citizens of this country. [*Desk thumping*] That is the way that we are going to accomplish and surpass the 60 per cent participation rate in the tertiary sector.

Mr. President, as Minister, I propose to focus on the following things: number one, the participation rate in the tertiary sector; secondly, the graduation rate in the tertiary sector; thirdly, the employment rate arising out of one and two, and number four, as a result of one, two, and three, the cost of doing that business. I will say that in the context of GATE and so many of the other interventions that we have had and we are embarking upon.

Mr. President, my Senatorial colleague, Dr. Lester Henry in his contribution, indicated that we are not being true to our words. I want to tell you that we have always been honest and true to our words. He spoke about the crisis in 2008 and 2009. I want to tell him that some of these crises that

we cannot run away from are those that we inherited. We cannot, Mr. President, run away and we cannot not face the truth whenever we drive along the highway to San Fernando and we see the Tarouba tsunami stadium.

Mr. President, we cannot escape the view of the rotting and decaying steel on the eastern side of the Uriah Butler Highway at Champs Fleurs, when we look at what was supposed to be the oncology centre; cost overrun, nothing done; over $100 million—look at the figures—in terms of concrete poured on the ground.

Mr. President—and when you go down the highway again and you look on the western side at Gasparillo, we cannot escape the truth of $400 million of steel looking at us with an incomplete Petrotrin headquarters. Mr. President—and if you were to go inside of the gates of Petrotrin, you will never be able to escape the view of a scrap iron yard of WGTL over how many billions of dollars.

Mr. President, if you went east, you will see the Tamana Intech Park over there. Mr. President, if you look at the amount of money that was spent on the proposed aluminum smelter plant, and we now had to take some effort to ensure that we upgraded the Chancery Lane car park to a teaching hospital of the University of the West Indies, I say to all of us, that is what we would have met. That is what we have to deal with.

Then I listened to Sen. Ramkhelawan in terms of indicating that we should ensure that these moneys that we are asking for have a positive impact on the country. He spoke about the fact that the police commissioner is not appointed now. But we recall, as well, some years ago, where a

former Police Commissioner was appointed at Whitehall and the letter given there. Those are some of the things that when we deal with effectiveness and efficiency—and that is what I titled his discussion to be, his discourse: effectiveness and efficiency. But I want to also say—and as we talk about the police service—that we are embarking now with the Minister of National Security in training a substantial number of persons as SRPs who will hit the road.

Mr. President, I am sorry that Sen. Ramkhelawan is not here because he made mention and he lamented about agriculture. But we, too, lament about agriculture. In 2003, the Agro-industrial Company of Trinidad and Tobago was closed down, and I leave that to the own minds of persons who are listening here and there, as to why that decision was taken, and with the closing down of that because he was lamenting the fact that we still import quite a lot.

With that we had the closing of—or the halting for a substantial period of time of Mora Valley and Buffalo, of Mon Jaloux and the dairy farm, of Caroni's rice project which had to be restarted, and the citrus at La Gloria in the Todd's Road area. But then, that is the history of what we would have experienced.

I want to also say that Sen. Deyalsingh, in his contribution, exhorted us as well, as to what we will do, and I want to compliment Sen. Deyalsingh for some of the questions he would have raised and which were answered appropriately by the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs with respect to the energy sector. In fact, I was originally organized to speak just after Sen. Deyalsingh, but his intervention in energy allowed the Leader of

Government Business in the Senate to ask the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, who made an excellent contribution in answering his questions.

**Sen. Singh:** It demonstrates the array of talents we have.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:** As we spoke about energy—and the Minister spoke about energy—I want to tell you—and he did say that anywhere in the world you go now and you look at oil installations, exploration, processing, refining, marketing, or even in terms of gas, you would find a Trinidadian and Tobagonian there.

**Sen. George:** "Yuh bong tuh find ah Trini."

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:** And that is because of the over 100 years we have in expertise in the area of oil and to a lesser extent, in gas. As a matter of fact, Mr. President, we are very proud to say that Trinidad and Tobago, through the Energy Institute and through the National Energy Skills Centre, for the first time in the history of this country, has launched a drilling school. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. President, we have students from Nigeria, we have interests from Angola, from Ghana, from Uganda, from Equatorial New Guinea, all of them now are looking to Trinidad and Tobago to benefit from the expertise and the talent and the training in the energy sector.

So that Trinidad and Tobago has become a net foreign exchange earner because of the fact that we are saying that for us in Trinidad and Tobago, "talentism" is the new capitalism. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, I listened to the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, and he said that when he speaks the companies listen, and we will be looking attentively to secure from all of these foreign companies—and

those who are local as well—to identify their manpower demands, to identify their skills gap and to ensure that our training providers at the tertiary level prepare the requisite human resource capability to deliver to our country.

Mr. President, Sen. Cudjoe, as well, indicated that she had a little problem in terms of CEPEP, the labour getting larger. And I say to Sen. Cudjoe with all humility, what is wrong with increasing employment? What is wrong with creating more jobs for our people? What is wrong with our people being certified? What is wrong with CEPEP? What is wrong with the quality of work that they do? I think they do excellent work, and what we are saying is, through the National Training Agency, all those persons who are now earning and learning, can, in fact, be certified.

Mr. President, what we are saying is that whether you are landscaping, whether it is in terms of small engine repairs—and I want to say that the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy did give 150 per cent tax allowance to persons who can elevate from CEPEP into other areas of occupation in the manufacturing sector, in the services sector. Whether it be landscaping, whether it be painting, whether it be small engine repairs, we can ensure that all our persons who are employed—our citizens employed in the CEPEP programme—can acquire certification. We have now developed, through the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training, what we call the Workforce Assessment Centres, and basically that means certifying the uncertified.

I want to assure as well, my friend, Sen. Dr. Wheeler, that the University of Trinidad and Tobago, together with the Ministry of Health,

and together with John Hopkins International, continue to engage in discussions with respect to resolving this matter. It is a contract that we would have inherited. It is a substantial amount of money. It is to the tune of billions of dollars. In fact, although it might start small, it has the potential in terms of expansion in nature. I want to tell you, as well, that we have studies done, particularly at the South-West Regional Health Authority—that area—not only in terms of the problem that you have identified, but in terms of case studies relative to cardiology and to the issue and to the problem of heart disease.

So that I give you the commitment that these discussions continue and we will ensure that the best thing we can do is to assure the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago that whatever investments have been made in the Trinidad and Tobago Health Sciences initiative with John Hopkins, will redound to the benefit of all of our citizens in the country.

**7.15 p.m.**

Mr. President, I did indicate that I would want to deal with matters relative to what the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training has requested, as increases in some cases through the Ministry of Finance and the Economy. Out of the $2.89 billion, our Ministry is requesting $190,187,500. As a matter of fact, when you look at that figure, it represents 6.56 of the total request that is made. I want to say as well, that that amount of money is focused primarily on developing the human capacity for the tertiary sector and, by extension, for the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

The hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, in his maiden budget presentation enunciated, and I quote:

"…we cannot transform our economy and achieve our goals without building human capacity in a comprehensive manner."

And that is what we are doing, that is what we have done with respect to this mid-term review.

As a point of reference, Mr. President, it might interest Members of the Senate if I were to say, and taking five years prior to this Government taking office, that between the period 2005—2009, a total of $13.15 billion, one three point one five billion dollars was agreed to by the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago as follows:

In 2005, Finance (Supplementary Appropriation) Act, approved—$1.67 billion.

In 2006, it approved $3.39 billion.

In 2007, it approved $3.12 billion.

**Sen. Singh:** Who was in charge then?

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:** In 2008, it approved $3.9 billion.

And very close within the election year of that fiscal period 2009, it approved $1.07 billion.

Mr. President, after over $13 billion of supplementary appropriations on top of the annual budgetary allocations of over $170 billion, between 2005 and 2009, the question could also be asked, the very question that they have been asking us: what have you done with this money? How has the country benefitted? As a matter of fact, how have taxpayers benefitted from approximately $183 billion between 2005 and 2009?

Let me give you some of the facts, Mr. President, in terms of how or what that investment meant, or how it benefited the country between that

period and up to 2009. In area of crime for the year 2009—I am using just that one—we witnessed the following: 509 murders; 649 woundings and shootings; 5,535 burglaries and break-ins; 5,821 robberies; and 499 narcotic offences. These are all serious crimes. When we fast forward that to the year 2012, in 2009, 499; in 2010, 463, in 2011, 414, and with a reduction from 2010 to 2012, 437 in the categories that I have outlined there.

Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity, as well, to congratulate our new Minister of National Security [*Desk thumping*] and certainly all the other Ministers of National Security who would have served in our Government for their tireless efforts [*Desk thumping*] and, particularly, the hon. Prime Minister who heads the National Security Council.

Mr. President, we shall not abdicate our responsibility of protecting our people. We shall not retreat from our aspiration of safe communities and safe roads. Through the continued efforts of the Ministry of National Security, led by our esteemed Minister of National Security [*Desk thumping*] Sen. George, we shall prevail. Contrary to what the naysayers may say, we are attacking the crime situation frontally. We have prioritized crime on the legislative agenda. We continue to afford significant appropriation to the national budget. We continue to implement social and education programmes to curb crime. We have adopted a multipronged approach to engaging our youth at risk. We continue to reach out to our youth to encourage budding talents in education, employment and entrepreneurship, and a way from deviance, crime, incarceration and the morgues.

Mr. President, I brought this as an example to show that we have commenced training with COSTAATT, to ensure that we turn out as many

as possible SRPs within the period of now, from June as we had promised, to December 31, 2013, and this approach to training the SRPs, thousands of them, will be done through COSTAATT as we started here, the University of Trinidad and Tobago and the University of the West Indies.

Mr. President, I now turn to a topic which my friend, Sen. Dr. Wheeler spoke a bit about and, may more elaborately than the other things he said—that is health care. The Pan American Health Organization reported in October, 2008, that there was dirt, a small amount of health care professionals in Trinidad and Tobago. As a matter of fact, at that time the then Government went on to import—because of the scarcity—persons from abroad who are doctors and nurses, physicians and pharmacists. It might interest all of us to know and the national community, that at the Faculty of Medical Sciences, Mount Hope, our capacity for training medical practitioners in the year 2009/2010 amounted to 194 students, but this was dwarfed by the number of applications—even though we had only 194, the number of persons who applied was 634 persons.

The medical programme of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Mount Hope campus, continues to be oversubscribed, but let give you and give the Members of our Senate an idea of the comparative cost of training because this is important as we address the building of capacity locally for our boys and girls, our young men and women. The medical programme at Mount Hope cost taxpayers $711,000 per student over a five-year period, or an average of $142,200 per student, per year. GATE as you know cover 50 per cent of the total figure. Let us compare that with some of the other institutions in the Caribbean.

The medical programme at Mona, Jamaica, costs taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago, through the GATE Programme, $863,395 per student over a five-year period, or $172,679 annually. At the Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, for medical students, it costs $1.4 million per student over a period of five years, or annually $280,000 per student. At St. George's, Grenada, which is a phenomenon which started before our time, the St. George's University in Grenada cost taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago, through the GATE Programme, an estimated amount of $1.5 million per person for the five-year period, or an average of $300,000 annually. But what was the response? What was the response on the other side? Import health care professionals. Import and import as opposed to building local capacity.

Mr. President, this Government has taken a decision, and as we build new hospitals and as Sen. Dr. Wheeler indicated and he was very proud of the Scarborough Hospital, and thereto that we are doing that, as we build hospitals in Trinidad and Tobago, what we are doing is attaching to that hospital a teaching facility of the University of the West Indies and COSTAATT. We will be training our own students here, in Trinidad and Tobago, and saving the exodus of taxpayers. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, for last three years, we admitted 709 new students at Mount Hope—216 students in 2010/2011, 251 students in 2011/2012, and 242 students in 2012/2013. But, what was very sad and lamentable, is that while we had persons, our students who exiting the CAPE exams, some of whom may have done a first degree, applied to the University of the West Indies, Faculty of Medical Sciences and may have been appropriately

qualified to enter med school, because of the limited space some of them were given spaces for the next academic year—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Senator:** That is true.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:**—and what they had to go in most cases, they stay at home if there were no jobs. They probably did something else or found something to do in the meantime for the year.

Mr. President, this Government and our Ministry has started an innovative product call, OJT Sectoral. For the first time, we have now used the OJT Programme, for example, the medical programme to provide a better understanding of hospitals and health care centres, for our students to work in the RHAs, for them to have a better appreciation for the social context of work itself, and to get better insights into the medical fields.

Mr. President, when they enter medical school in the following year, it is my view that they are better equipped that those who stayed home and did nothing. [*Desk thumping*] Therefore, what we are doing is, we are looking to expand these facilities and these services. In fact, we are looking at the Scarborough Hospital to have some students attached there, even those are accepted in Trinidad and Tobago. Recently as well, we had the launch of the children hospital at Couva. That will be an opportunity for training. But yet still, you have persons who will say that those initiatives and what you are doing is not the right thing. Well if that is not the right thing, I do not know what is. We have to ensure that we build local content and local capacity.

Mr. President, I want to turn now to the tertiary education sector and more, particularly, to the GATE Programme. As you know the GATE

Programme was started in 2004, and it had as its predecessor, the Dollar for Dollar Programme. But since 2005—2009, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the taxpayers have spent a total of $1.8 billion for the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses, or an average of $366 million per annum. Sometimes what is very difficult as Sen. Cudjoe indicated, she said she has a little difficulty, and sometimes where people have a difficulty in understanding or accepting, is that when these persons and our young persons and not so young who are ambitious and want to pursue tertiary education invest their time and we invest the taxpayer dollar in sending them or paying for them full tuition cost at the undergraduate level, and they graduate, we are faced with the following situation.

We hear comments, for example, like these graduates are not work ready. We hear, for example, that the jobs for which they applied are in sectors that are saturated. We hear, for example, that they have pursued courses which are not aligned to the workplace, and I ask myself: so what is the legacy we are leaving for them? What are we leaving with them? How can we say on the one hand that we care for these persons, when we leave them to wonder? When we allow them to contribute statistically and to add to what I call the graduate glut, or the discouraged graduate, or the frustrated graduate, it is very simply to under these three terminologies. It really says that you are turning out graduates for which sometimes they write letters of application. Ten, 20, 30 times they will tell you in their own way and they sometimes do not even get a response, an acknowledgment because the jobs are simply not here.

Therefore, the Minister of Finance and the Economy is absolutely

correct, and he spoke to this in the 2013 budget presentation, about what is the rate of return on the investment of the taxpayer dollar. Therefore, we are now task with this responsibility of preparing the mistakes of the pass, with the problems that have been left for us to handle, but we care. We want to ensure that the Government is now challenged and we will address it with the poor quality sometimes of those who are entering the job market. We want to ensure that we are not like some persons will say on that side, and maybe it might be a self-fulfiling prophecy, that they make decisions by voops, vaps and "vaille que vaille", and that is what in some cases have led to the mistrust after 24th May, 2010.

Mr. President, there is a phenomena where the GATE Programme seems like a free for all in some cases. It has been said of that by some persons and, therefore, I want to give you an example that internal audit showed that one institution, which I will not name, received overpayments in GATE to the extent of $3 million.

**7.30 p.m.**

Mr. President, when you take one institution with $3 million overpayment, you can calculate that on the basis of what I just gave, the figures, of how many other students might have been able to benefit from that. Therefore, what that means is that between the period of 2005 and 2009—even though GATE policies existed to monitor student performance—the institutions and the organizations, the training providers, as well as the Funding and Grants Division of the then Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training; no, now, before that it was Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, did not have the resources nor the

manpower to ensure that you had close scrutiny at the institutional level. We propose to do that.

As a matter of fact, Mr. President, I now have a note before Cabinet, not about email, but about e-GATE; that is, e-GATE is to ensure that you can register electronically for the GATE programme. We must be able to have real time data. [*Desk thumping*] [*Interruption*] Very good, thanks.

As a matter of fact, I must be able, when asked how many students are now in the tertiary sector, not only must I be able to list 55,000, I must tell you where these institutions are; how many are in each institution. We must have that student identity card that when you swipe, it electronically comes up on the database. Therefore, I am telling you now that we would be able to meet and exceed the participation rate of 60 per cent in each tertiary centre. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, we have a GATE standing committee which is headed by the Chairman of the Accreditation Council, Dr. Michael Dowlat. They have conducted public consultations and, for the first time—we talk about manifesto being a social contract with the people. We talk about the fact that the manifesto moves from where it is, as a commitment, to policy; from promise to policy.

Item 2 of the 120-day action plan of the People's Partnership Manifesto. Among all the others that we have held, for the first time in the history of Trinidad and Tobago, we have secured and expanded the GATE programme to include technical and vocational education and training. This Government has spent over $173 million in the three years it has been in existence, in the vocational sector. Never before did we have this level of

commitment to those persons who are sometimes seen as less than equal to those in academia.

Mr. President, we also want to ensure—Dr. Bernard is very well aware of this. He has seen the success of—from extramural studies to the School of Continuing Studies to the open campus; and I will make some reference to that very shortly.

We want to enforce, as well, the Grade Point Average (GPA). We want to finance success and to assist our students to be successful, not to be continuous students or in a three-year degree programme and be in the institution for six years. We have to look at those because the longer you stay in the institution, what is going to happen is you are going to lengthen the line for those persons who are waiting to get into the institution. We have to, therefore, maximize the investment of the taxpayer dollar. Therefore, we would be enhancing the auditing, and monitoring, of private and public institutions that benefit from the GATE programme.

The hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy also said in his budget presentation that GATE must be aligned to the economic development strategies and the sector. I repeat, for those who may want to engage in propaganda: It does not mean that we will not have the other courses. What it means is that we must be more aligned to national economic strategy so that when our students graduate, there are jobs for them. We are not graduating unemployment, we are graduating for the job market. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, we want to ensure, as well, that—In fact, I want to tell you I have now asked the accreditation council to consider that all

institutions applying for GATE funding should also present to the Accreditation Council some basic labour-market information. If you want to promote this programme and this course, or this degree, tell us what are the projections now, what are the vacancies existing now and what are the projections for the labour market.

In other words, justify the programme you want to put on; do not just get up one morning and feel because a university somewhere else in the world is putting on this programme and it is new and it sounds good, it will work in Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr. Tewarie told you earlier on that the Michael Porter model, as good as it is in the rest of the world, may not work here. It has to be adapted. We cannot simply bring things here and expect that they will succeed. Therefore, I want to also exhort people, when you look at what has happened in the United States of America, President Obama is now saying that tertiary level institutions are going to be incentivized on the basis of the jobs that the students get when they graduate. Let me repeat that I am not saying that is what is going to happen here. I am saying we must learn and look and listen and see what is happening outside, in the rest of the world.

First of all we are saying that when you want to put on a programme it is your responsibility, as well, to help to justify.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Thank you for giving way, hon. Senator.

If I understand you correctly, is it that now the tertiary institutions, especially private tertiary institutions, will have to conduct their own labour market research in order to qualify to be a GATE? Further, if it is you are suggesting that the schools will be incentivized via the type of jobs their

graduates get. I mean, what jobs they get after they graduate is, to a large degree, out of the control of the school.

So, if you could just clarify, please.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:** Thank you, very much, Sen. Deyalsingh.

I never said that that is what we are going to do. [*Interruption*] No, let me answer the first part with respect to the labour market. In fact, what will happen is that we also have now the National Training Agency and very shortly we will be launching, on the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus, for the first time, again, a centre for workforce research and development. We are doing that in conjunction with Georgetown University's; a centre for workforce research and education.

What we are also saying is—we are not saying that it is a sine qua non; we are saying that you could present that data to support your application, but that data might reside with the National Training Agency.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Okay, that is different, thank you.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:** You can get your help there; that data might reside with the centre for workforce research and development. I am not at all suggesting that institutions must submit that or no, but I think it is important for us to get from institutions a justification—a support to your proposal to promote new courses of study. The reason for that is simple. If we do not have that data—I refer to $D^3$, data-driven decisions—then what we would be engaged in is a situation where education and training is supply driven and not demand led. We have to change the paradigm. [*Desk thumping*] It cannot be that we want to put on—that we are asking the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy to give us money for a lot of things in

here—institutions—to expand access and it is because we feel what is required , as opposed to what the economy really requires.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Thank you, again. Is it that, then, schools that cannot supply the data to support their proposal for a particular programme, would it be then that GATE would not be available for that programme?

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:** No, I do not think I am saying—let me say that is not—

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Just for clarity.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:** I just want to make it abundantly clear, because you know it could be reported differently—

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Exactly, exactly.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:** Let me just clarify: I am saying that it will be a good thing; it would be useful information—

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Okay.

**Sen. The hon. F. Karim:**—if training providers who want to promote new courses can supply that. And, we can assist you. It does not mean that if you do not supply that, you are not entitled. That is not the GATE policy.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Thank you.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:** But I am also advising that when you look at what is happening around the world, I am giving instances how countries are also moving ahead in the tertiary sector. What is happening is this: I was giving the example of the United States of America; I am not saying that there is any policy decision here with respect to that. I am saying, as an example, to avoid the graduate glut, to avoid the discouraged graduate, to avoid the frustrated graduate and to ensure that the education and training

programmes are more responsive to the job market and to demand—that President Obama, in his case, has said that he is willing to consider incentivizing institutions that may get a benefit or reward.

I want to say this as well—I will tell you what I propose to do in Trinidad and Tobago, Sen. Deyalsingh. What I propose to do is to engage in research to see, after six months, after 12 months, after 18 months and after two years—I am saying two years for a particular reason—what has been the absorptive capacity in the economy, how many of our graduates have gotten jobs after graduating for six, 12, 18 and 24 months? I want to tell you we have now over 8,000 young persons in the OJT programme. Many of them could not have gotten jobs. Could you imagine having 8,000 persons unattended or left alone?

**Sen. Dr. Bernard:** Mr. President, would you take a question?

**Mr. President:** Sure.

**Sen. Dr. Bernard:** Sen. Karim, but no doubt you will have a caveat for that, which will allow us to still be able to teach the humanities. There is adeath in the humanities; history is dying all over the world because of the same industrial model to everything. Would you allow for a caveat that would allow enrichment activities for humanities to also survive?

**Sen. The Hon. F. Karim:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. President:** The speaking time of hon. Sen. Karim has expired.

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Sen. The Hon F. Karim:** Thank you very much, Mr. President; thank you

very much, Sen. Deyalsingh and colleagues. I did not realize I had reached—

I have quite a lot I wanted to say, but let me respond to my colleague, Sen. Dr. Bernard. I want to make it abundantly clear, it is not to stymie the liberty and the freedom of academia, research and knowledge; therefore, all of those things are dimensions, like the arts and the humanities. They do have a place in our society. As a matter of fact, Sen. Bernard, it might interest you to know that many of the companies now, even with those persons who are doing Executive and MBAs, are asking that they have arts as an important aspect—the creativity.

In the United States of America, in Hong Kong, in China, in Japan, in Korea and many of the countries that Prof. Ramkissoon would have visited, he will tell you—with his very good friend, Prof. Waff from MIT—that while some countries are focusing on the STEM subjects, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, they are now adding "A" and making it STEAM ; and the "A" inside there is the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics. So, there is that all-rounded nature for the delivery of curricula.

Mr. President, I want to move along very quickly and to also indicate that with respect to the OJT programme, we continue to expand it in terms of the number of trainees and hence the reason why we are asking for the additional sums of money in this allocation of $20 million.

One of the things that Sen. Dr. Bernard was hinting to and—in fact, I want to assure him that we are doing—is we are now revising the life skills. I think Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight had asked about this earlier on, in

another presentation I made, about the life skills curriculum. I want to assure her that we have now taken on board her suggestion.

We have revisited, revised and we are going to be launching, within the next two weeks, a new life skills curriculum but, additionally—I think you would be happier to hear this—a workbook, a student workbook. This is really going to be learning how to learn; learning how to live; learning how to love; learning how to leave a legacy. It is going to be all incorporated there in terms of—what I want to suggest is that all our students be exposed to that national life skills curriculum that will include ICTD technology and that will include not only life skills in terms of the values, the mores and the social aspect of living, but also in terms of entrepreneurship so that we are not creating people who are just looking for jobs but many of whom can create their own jobs.

Mr. President, I also want to indicate that we have expanded the OJT programme to more offices, both in Trinidad and Tobago. As I indicated, we have approximately over 8,000 persons right now.

Another area in which we are asking for assistance is the MuST programme which started in the year 2004. I was part of that MuST programme and it continues to focus on construction, hospitality and tourism. Therefore, we see that it will address persons like single parents, the economically disadvantaged, academically challenged, differently abled and re-entrance into productive society.

Mr. President, as I move along very quickly, I also want to make mention of the fact that we have recently signed with the MIC, which has the responsibility for the MuST programme, with the National Commission for

Self Help, where the students can now move from the classroom to the workplace. We have gotten contracts from the Ministry of Local Government to construct houses and our students would actually be constructing homes for the Ministry of Local Government through the National Commission for Self Help.

Mr. President, YTEPP is another area that we are asking for some money for. As a matter of fact, the allocation we are asking for is approximately $42 million. Since 1988, YTEPP has trained over 170,000 persons in Trinidad and Tobago and it is now celebrating its 25th year—25th anniversary of success in this country.

I want to also indicate, with respect to COSTAATT, we are expanding, and I just want to indicate to Sen. Drayton that, yes, we are expanding the COSTAATT campuses. COSTAATT will soon have its own main campus in Connector Road, Chaguanas. I am sure it might interest you to know that we are presently paying $1 million rent per month which means that since we have been there we have spent $91 million in rent and what we are asking for is approximately $23 million here in terms of project managing fees and in doing some certain site works. We expect that by the end of 2014 and, certainly, the first quarter of 2015 we would be able to take possession of that.

Mr. President, COSTAATT is our largest single national institution, having over 11,000 students to date. It continues to play an important role, particularly as a community college and as bridging between those who want to go to university.

We have asked, as well, for assistance, and for moneys for the

Penal/Petrotrin Workforce Development and Technology Centre and that centre will have approximately 25,000 square feet with 20 members of staff and we would do a number of vocational programmes.

I want to turn, quickly, to the University of the West Indies, South Campus. I want to also say that we are very proud of the fact that we are able to provide additional places for our students from the south area. Let me just indicate to you that for this year the social sciences faculty has received—for the last academic year, sorry—3,960 applicants. We were only able to give places to 2,629 which means that there is a shortage of space of 1,331. We said that we are opening the law faculty. We have 565 applicants for that law faculty, only 116 were offered spaces, which means we have a shortage of 449 persons for the law faculty.

Let me say and present to this Senate the fact that we are on target; we are moving. This is the photograph of—I think there was a question in the other place about the University of the West Indies, South Campus. All our buildings are off the ground; off the foundation. [*Desk thumping*] Therefore, we are looking forward to our students going through the front doors—[*Desk thumping*]—of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Penal/Debe Campus. We have asked for an additional sum—I think Sen. Drayton made mention of this—of $80 million.

Mr. President, as I almost go down to the end as I conclude, I want to say that we are also asking for $9 million for our fourth university campus, UWI, which is the open campus. Sen. Dr. Lennox Bernard had been—as a matter of fact I recall the days when he invited me to give the feature address in 1999 when he was the resident tutor—at that time he was called the

resident tutor of the School of Continuing Studies. There and then we offered to the University of the West Indies, 10 acres of land, prime property, north of the Divali Nagar. [*Desk thumping*] That money is going to be used for academic programme and a delivery division, computer and technology services centre, early childhood and daycare centre; vocational and job-oriented facility and student services.

Mr. President, I want to place on the record the name Esmond D. Ramesar who started—[*Desk thumping*] Dr. Ramesar is the one who started the extramural, which is called outside of the walls of the university, based on the concept that he saw in London at the London University. He really pioneered, promoted and expanded from extramural studies unit to the School of Continuing Studies, to the open campus now and Dr. Bernard, like myself—both of us who are associated in a similar position as Senior Programme Coordinator of the University of the West Indies, School of Continuing Studies at the time now, the open campus.

Mr. President, as I conclude, I want to say that just like my colleague, the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, we are committed to building the brain power of Trinidad and Tobago. We have seen what other countries have done with this brain power. Oil and gas will come and go, but our people and the knowledge base will continue to propel the diversification, the wealth creation, the creativity and the innovation of this country.

I thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. President:** Sen. Al-Rawi?

**Sen. Faris Al-Rawi:** Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise to make, hopefully, a short contribution on this Bill which is one which is intended to be an Act to provide for the supplementary appropriation for the services of Trinidad and Tobago—[*Interruption*] Sorry? [*Interruption*] There is no committee stage, fortunately, I am reminded.

Mr. Chairman, sorry, Mr. President—I said Mr. Chairman, thinking of committee. Apparently I have somewhat of a reputation of being a little thorough in the committee stage and I sometimes tend to be a little impassioned at committee stage as well. I hope that my colleagues recognize that that passion is born out of a sincere love for doing my job the best that I can, in terms of defending the system in which we operate, which is an adversarial system, unfortunately. But, it is certainly one in which we must take time to pay deep attention, close attention, to what we do.

If at times I do come across as a little anxious or hot under the collar, I certainly apologize for the appearance, but I do not apologize for doing a thorough job. I think that we are here to do a good job and that it is a privilege to sit in this Parliament and that we must do good work.

Mr. President, I wish to start off on the point of how we have come to be here today. It is a point mentioned in part by Sen. Cudjoe a little while ago in her opening. We come here, of course, under sections 114/113 of the Constitution which are the provisions under chapter 8 dealing with finances in the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. In coming here, we do for a Bill like today, by way of a supplementary appropriation Bill. That is where the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is in the position of finding itself with inadequate resources, we must come to Parliament as we do now and bring

this matter forward.

Our Standing Orders, Mr. President, prescribe, under Standing Order 48, that we are to have certain requisite notice in dealing with Bills like this. In fact, the usual position in relation to a money Bill is that you ought to have no less than five days from the laying of a Bill and the debating of a money Bill. There is the provision, however, to allow for an abridgment of time by way of a Motion under Standing Order 48(2), but there is a standard inside of this Parliament which says that you ought to at least have documents 24 hours before you debate the Bill and, certainly, the requirement in the Standing Orders that the Bill must be printed and circulated.

Now, I have mentioned this because I found myself in quite an invidious position. In coming to the Parliament today to deal with this Bill, I in fact received the package this afternoon on the desk, at 1.30. I did have sight of an electronic copy of the Bill; we have an Electronic Transactions Act so that is as good as paper, but most specifically, we were not permitted the privilege, as alluded to by Sen. Cudjoe, of seeing the background and detailed material for a budget like this.

Indeed, we are precluded, the Senate that is, from participating in the committee, the Finance Committee's work; something which I think we, as a Parliament, ought to look at very seriously when we propose to make an amendment to Standing Orders. Even though the Senate, by law, has no vote in relation to a money Bill, and so therefore, it is almost obiter in all of its dicta, there is still germane contribution had in the Senate, particularly when the Minister of Finance and the Economy points to—in answer to

Members of the Lower House—statements of the kind that say, "Well, I will answer that in the Senate" or "A Minister will speak in the Senate".

Now, in the Senate, of course, we are regaled by having the Minister of National Security sitting next to the Minister of Justice; sitting next to the Minister of Finance and the Economy, we have the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs; we have the Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment; the Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development; and the Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training. Those are very significant Ministries sitting in the Senate. So, unless and until we have a position where Senators who are Government Senators speak in the Lower House, attend the Finance Committee and give answer to the interrogation that goes on there by process, then what we have without following the due time frame available to us—which is a five-day period—is that we are having a rushed debate; we are having immature consideration and we are really not doing our best purpose.

So, my first point of advocacy this afternoon, if I may be permitted one, is to say that we certainly need to amend our Standing Orders; we certainly need to be more included and properly included into the process of a budget analysis because a supplemental budget falls under section114 of the Constitution as a budget. So this is a budget. It cannot be apposite to our best interests to receive documents at one o'clock on the table with no details behind them because we are left in a situation where the structure of our Parliament is not meeting the structure of our Constitution.

Chapter 8 of the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago contemplates there in dealing with finance matters not only the fact that you cannot

expend money from the Consolidated Fund of Trinidad and Tobago unless you have an appropriation bill—in this instance a supplementary appropriation bill—but that you cannot as well, do that without some very important factors. They include the Auditor General; they include the Public Accounts Committee; they include the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee; and that is there in the chapter, by my position, by my analysis, because it is part of the architecture which we should be working with. So, we are not here today considering this supplemental appropriation which is, really, two clauses long and one schedule with 74 heads numbered one to 74, not in sequential order; about 20-odd heads of increase.

We have nothing to tell us what nearly $3 billion of appropriation is for in the dynamic detail that we ought to know. We are not using the provisions of the Constitution by having the Auditor General's Report factored into this debate as it properly should by way of pre-work, pre-analysis, committee stage; we are not having reports of the Public Accounts Committee and the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee factored in the mechanism which has, I dare say, from my reading of the Constitution, a considerable breadth and one which we would do well to seek to explore.

Now, I have raised that as my first point because the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy did not dwell on any of the details or justifications that are, in my opinion, required to be produced to this kind of supplementary appropriation. And he perhaps, did so because he is familiar with the material that he has been provided as Minister of Finance and the Economy, and because it has been a marathon week for him. He has had to sit for 18 hours in the House of Representatives; there would have been F &

GP; there would have been Cabinet, et cetera; and, three, because he knows—because I saw him in Parliament Wednesday night and I reminded him that the Senate does not get the Senate documents until the end of the debate in the House of Representatives. But not only is that document on our desks today, but it is materially deficient. It does not speak with fullness and with frankness so as to allow Senators the proper opportunity to interrogate the purpose.

So, the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, in his delivery to today, ought to have gone into justifications. He ought to have circulated the minutes of the Finance Committee; the questions and answers that he provided.

Mr. President, I dare say that this Senate ought really to have sat after the production of the *Hansard* contribution in the House below.

When we look at the Bill itself, we realize that the Bill is really bifurcated. It proposes that this $3 billion, nearly—it is $2.89 billion—be split into two. One, into certain capital expenditure items and, two, into recurrent expenditure items. The capital expenditure items come up to $300-odd million and the other items in this Bill come up to some $2.3 billion. That is my disaggregation of the entire figure. So, of the 2.898091400 billion the CAPEX is actually 380, 719,700 million and the recurrent expenditure is 2.517371700 billion.

Mr. President, in this particular presentation today, I listened very, very carefully to the key points which we should have heard in terms of detail from my learned colleague, the Minister of Finance and the Economy. The first thing I looked for, in his analysis which he grabbed us for, was

what he was going to say that would inspire confidence amongst the citizens of this country. He spoke to issues of confidence by reflecting upon macroeconomic indicators which he said continue to be excellent. He spoke to inflation rates; he spoke to vague concepts of what inefficiencies existed in terms of preventing the type of expenditure in the timeframe that it should happen, but all in all, he centred himself also upon the concept of this Minister of Finance and the Economy and this Government, as he puts it, being the most scrutinized government; with a population that reacts quickly to issues, as he puts it.

Indeed, this sentiment was reflected by the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs who gave a very erudite contribution this afternoon. In his reflections of when the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs speaks the country listens and that people listen; and that for that reason he is conscious to be positive in his fulminations and expressions.

Mr. President, what was not said—therefore it is incumbent upon me to say it—is that the very macroeconomic strength that my learned colleague, the Minister of Finance and the Economy, spoke to are the exact strengths that he inherited; and the Opposition, which is now the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, when it was Opposition, deprecated beyond belief. The sky was falling; the system was the worst; the Scott Ryder Report which Trinidad and Tobago publishes, uniquely, Ryder Scott Report, forgive me.

Mr. President, there was a time in this country when the Ryder Scott Report was a feared thing. So brutal was the UNC, in particular, in its reflections on gas is going to run out; oil is going to run out; the Ryder Scott

Report is the worst possible, that the people came to fear the words Ryder Scott. Yet, we have the privilege of the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs quite correctly reflecting on the fact that the Government needs to speak positively to it, but so too must an opposition.

We can safely say today that Trinidad and Tobago has immense capability and immense potential in oil and gas. I give the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs open credit for continuing excellent work. He is on record as having said that he kept on many of the technocrats that he inherited and he moved forward in that regard, Mr. President. Indeed, I will come to the specifics of his contribution in a moment.

Mr. President, the state of our macroeconomic indicators certainly, in the days of the UNC in opposition, do not resemble my learned colleague, the Minister of Finance and the Economy's reflections today and that is what puts us on a dangerous path because the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy is pleasing to listen to. He comes across as innocuous and fact-driven, and you definitely have the tendency to go along with him. But, the fact is that this tendency to move along takes us, sometimes, into difficult places where we do not ask hard questions; where we do not engage in the process of adversarial analysis, as the Westminster system prescribes.

Indeed, a little while ago, my learned colleague, Sen. Karim, asked: What is wrong with CEPEP? Why is Sen. Cudjoe deprecating CEPEP, or asking why CEPEP is bad for creating jobs? I did not understand that Sen. Cudjoe put it quite that way. She asked about the conversion out of CEPEP, but my learned colleague, Sen. Karim, forgot that the demonization of CEPEP was never from the mouths of the People's National Movement; and

that the demonization of CEPEP really stood only in the camp of a few particular members who, in fact, now occupy the Government.

Mr. President, I think it is incumbent to put on the record the contribution of a few members in 2004. In answer to my learned colleague, Sen. Karim's, contribution: What is wrong with CEPEP? If you would permit me, Mr. President.

There was a debate in the House of Representatives; it was a Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (Government Mismanagement) Motion in the House of Representatives. It happened on March 02, 2007, May 04, 2007; May 25 and September 28, 2007. Forgive me, I said 2004 earlier, I meant 2007.

Mr. President, it was very interesting to note the contributions of one Ganga Singh, former Member of Parliament for Caroni East; Dr. Roodal Moonilal, MP for Oropouche, an opposition Member then. On Friday March 02, 2007, the Opposition then in contributing to the CEPEP, (Government Mismanagement) motion, had this to say at page 508.

> Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am of the considered view that CEPEP was conceived in the lust for power and the desire to retain at all costs and by all means necessary the Office of Prime Minister by the hon. Member for San Fernando East. Consequently, commitment to principles of transparency, accountability and good governance were never vital ingredients in the conception and implementation of this programme.

It goes on to say:

> Mr. Deputy Speaker, this billion-dollar programme, this billion dollar slush fund as the reports will indicate, provides compelling evidence that the programme is a means by which to get state funds into the hands of persons who are supporters of the ruling party and…

Hear this one, Mr. President:

> It is billion-dollar pork barrel politics and the pigs at the trough are the friends and family of the PNM, in a feeding frenzy.

Let me repeat that.

> It is billion-dollar pork barrel politics and the pigs at the trough are the friends and family of the PNM…

Mr. President, I am sure that my learned colleague will distinguish that contribution, perhaps, speaking to contemporaneous events then, but listen to what Dr. Roodal Moonilal, then opposition member, had to say on Friday May 04, 2007. Listen to this one. Here is what Dr. Moonilal had to say, Mr. President. He reflected, firstly, on the CSO at page 378; and Dr. Moonilal said this on the CEPEP Motion, Friday, May 04, 2007:

> So the programme was conceived as a political device to transfer the taxpayers' money to private persons linked to their system who would benefit.

Here is what he said, Mr. President.

> No, no, no. Mr. Speaker, when you keep corbeaux as pets, eventually they will dig…

your eye out

That is what they did. They kept corbeaux as pets and they dig out their eye and they wonder what happened to crime. Why are people being kidnapped and why is crime taking place?

Mr. Speaker, that is the genesis of the criminal activity we face. They were keeping corbeaux as pets. That is what led them here.

He goes on to say:

First, you will not deal with crime that way…

Speaking about CEPEP.

so it is counter-productive. The other issue in dealing with this matter is the social programme. Did it help?

So, Mr. President, when I hear my learned colleague ask me: What is wrong with CEPEP? I, personally, think that it is a good transformation entity. I think that it helps to deal with mopping up of unemployment issues. I think that if properly implemented it can certainly have an impact upon crime. I think that the conversation into social adjustment can happen as well. I want to be charitable to my learned friend, the hon. Leader of Government Business. In his Motion he would have been speaking about crime and in view at that time, I am sure, he was speaking of the ineffectiveness of CEPEP from that perspective. The problem with contributions that are as vitriolic as the words that I have just read out, is that it can be read out; and it is that they can be twisted. I do not want to twist it this afternoon, I want to put it into the context of the position of the CEPEP as a budgetary item by way of allocation tonight—as we stand here at 8.10 p.m.—that the CEPEP positioning has not been explained by my learned colleague, the Minister of Finance and the Economy. He has not

demonstrated where we are going to in terms of crime reduction; what the analysis of the programme looks like; what the social conversion figures come to. He has not done any of those things, and the fact is that it is incumbent upon us to consider, as a nation, the value for our money; the return on our investment.

Mr. President, the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, gave a very, very interesting position, but before I come to his own, I just want to touch on Sen. Dr. Tewarie's position. He spoke about love and country and people. He spoke about the Government putting thought into its investment. He spoke about policy being policy that we must work together by coming together. He said that while the PNM was talking "commesse", they were planning.

I found it rather amazing that my learned colleague would talk about "commesse" because Wednesday night, while sitting in my office, I had a very unusual experience. I was listening to the debate then going on and the Member for Diego Martin East was speaking and he raised, in the system of procurement and the Airports Authority as it falls under this particular appropriation, he raised the issue of the Deputy Chairman of the Airports Authority, one Kirk—I forget his name now. It will come to me in a moment; but the Deputy Chairman of the Airports Authority now possessing qualifications as he alleged he had on his CV.

**Hon. Senator:** Adjodha.

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** Kurt Adjodha, that is his name. And, he raised it in the context of the fact that the Deputy Chairman chairs the tenders committee and that the Deputy Chairman is, in fact, acting as the Chairman right now,

of the Airports Authority. That is because of an injury on the part of the Chairman, Mr. Jerry Hadeed, whom I think may be out, I am not quite sure. But he raised it in that context. He raised almost an impossibility of having a degree in architecture and a degree in engineering whilst working full-time; and then many years later coming into this position. He asked the Government to have a look at this and he said that there was fraud.

I am advised, in fact, Mr. President, that the University of the West Indies is where the gentleman is supposed to have gone and obtained his Bachelor of Engineering. I am advised, Mr. President, that it has been confirmed that he did not attend the University of The West Indies and obtained the degree in engineering. But, the point was not so much to condemn a government only, it was to raise an issue of checking things carefully.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Governance.

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** Governance issues which lead to confidence, but what caused me surprise while I sat in my office working on an agreement and listening to this on the Internet at eight o'clock in the night, is that I heard the hon.—I am almost tempted not to use that word. I heard the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, Errol Mc Leod—stand up in answer—in his quite familiar tone and say something which is, in fact, reported in the *Daily Express* today. The *Daily Express* today says, at page 19:

"McLeod: Party PRO unqualified"

He talks about the issues as quoted in the article here. He says, as reported in the article reads:

"The Labour Minister was making his contribution following Diego Martin North East MP Colm Imbert, who called on Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar to check the CVs of all board members…"

et cetera, and in relation to Kurt Adjodha and that it did not check out.

Mr. McLeod is quoted as saying this:

"'It seems it is a virus that has mutated across the board,' McLeod retorted.

'I have information…'"

This is Mr. McLeod being reported here.

"…that there is a particular PRO of a political party in Trinidad and Tobago, who applied for a job with a reputable and well known chamber of lawyers and the particular individual claimed to possess the master's degree, and was interviewed and told 'okay, we are going to be in touch with you'.

'That law firm decided it must do due diligence, only to find out that this person doesn't have such qualifications…you know who I talking about,' he asked the Opposition benches.

'This super-qualified, super-talented person is in the media every Monday morning,' talking about the kind of behaviour he wants the country to follow.

McLeod warned the Opposition not to throw stones when they themselves live in 'glass houses'."

So, I stopped there for a minute, listened on, but then I said, "Hold on, as far as I am aware, the only PRO of a political party who is a lawyer, that I am aware of, who happens to be on television quite frequently, is, perhaps,

me." So, I said, "This could not be in reference to me, particularly, in answer to the fact that someone had forged their qualifications." I am talking here to Sen. Tewarie's point about being honest and working together; and he does not know why people are so nasty at times. But, this is what a leader of a one-time political party, who has distanced itself from him, has to say in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. So, I swung around on my chair, in shock, looked for a second and said, "You know, a lie can fly—Roosevelt, I believe it is; or Churchill, sorry—said a lie flies around the world faster than the truth has a chance to pull its pants up; to that effect.

Mr. President, I immediately said, "Nah, I eh leaving dis ting like dat." You know what I did, Mr. President? I grabbed this Ipad, swung around my chair, immediately took a picture of my wall upon which my LLM certificate hangs from King's College; copied the certificate from King's College—which reads University of London King's College, Faris Al-Rawi, having completed the approved course of study and passed the examinations has this day been admitted to King's College, London, Master of Laws. Right?

I grabbed this, I come down to the Parliament and I say, in case Mr. Mc Leod is mistaken, let me show him a copy or my Master's certificate. I grabbed a copy of my alumni magazine from King's College with my name on it which is sent to me; every month I get a copy of it, *King's In Touch.* I bring it down here as well and I said to myself, "Surely, he is mistaken." Showed it to him, so, at least, I know he has seen it. Let me put on record today: I have only worked at one place—as an employee—J. D. Sellier and

Company. I worked there for three years and I left that company; I am in close contact with them all the while now, I have been in private practice for a very long while now, Mr. President, and I can tell you, I surely, have a Masters of Law.

And, Mr. President, that article which quotes Mr. Mc Leod says, literally, this person does not have such qualifications. I raised it with Sen. Jamal Mohammed this afternoon who told me he is not going there. I said, "Sen. Mohammed, I think it incumbent that we tell the truth in relation to positions, because we must, at least, do that." So, there it is, you have a position of a person's qualifications being called into question, a person who sits now many years from when he said he went to the University of the West Indies and obtained a Degree in Engineering, the information is that he does not have it; many years later when he is now on the Airports Authority. He is sitting there now, does not possess that qualification and a senior member of the Government stands up and says something like this. A man on every picture—Look at the manifesto of the People's Partnership, face on it; so-called leader of a political party. Well, I do not know what political party any more, but he is the man in every picture, representing the labour movement.

I then said to myself, I recall him calling my learned colleague opposite me, Sen. James Lambert—What it is he called? [*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** It is unparliamentary, it is unparliamentary.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** An incontrovertible idiot.

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** He called him an incontrovertible idiot.

**Hon. Senator:** A fool.

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** A complete fool, as I remembered it. [*Interruption*]

The fact is, a week later I saw him shaking his hand opposite me here and welcoming him to the Bench, and I asked myself: Is this, Sen. Tewarie, what you associate yourself with? This is why our country has question marks over your Government. [*Interruption*] Yes, I accept. Sen. Tewarie is saying that the problem is on both sides, and I recall and I am able to say that I think that our level of politics has really descended in the wrong direction.

I, in fact, think it incumbent upon me to say that the contributions tonight by Sen. Deyalsingh, by Sen. Ramnarine; by Sen. Karim, have all been excellent contributions; the tone set by Sen. Larry Howai. But I took great offence to this allegation and imputation put out there, because that was in answer to something which is in the domain of governance issue in Trinidad and Tobago. I am a self-employed man. Moreso, the allegation is untrue. So, I just wanted to put that on the record. I have, certainly, never applied for a job anywhere that I can remember. I think I had an interview when I was a student or just coming out of school—

**Mr. President:** I just wondered—

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** How far I would go?

**Mr. President:** Yes, you know, I did not know what head of expenditure this falls under.

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** Mr. President, actually, the head of expenditure is under the Airports Authority; it is in the Bill,. [*Desk thumping*] It is exactly there; it raises the governance issue of that board. The chairman of the board is the person whose position is being called into effect. The answer to that given

by the Government was to raise an allegation about a certain PRO who, strangely enough, fits my characteristic. So, it is definitely there and very relevant. I thought I had pointed that out to you a little earlier. [*Interruption*]

I would tell you why it is not an assumption because the *Daily Express* carries under it, "PNM: He has a master's degree"; a whole page dedicated to it. Twenty calls, et cetera. So, this is what the Government does by way of answer. So, we have seen what the CEPEP position is; you now know, Sen. Karim, why it is people have question marks over CEPEP pigs feeding at the trough; they keeping corbeaux and they "digging yuh eyes out". Not my words, other persons' words.

Sen. Tewarie, you understand now why it is we are a bit jaundiced in our association with some persons in your party. Because, I cannot say that I have seen you on the outside—You and I and you and the Opposition may spar in relation to issues of procurement, which is an issue in this Bill. We may talk about that, but the debate never goes further than that and I think that the ad hominem approach to debating really has to be confined to its propriety. It looks exactly like something that happened in another appropriation debate where the hon. Attorney General said, on record, that Sen. Hinds and I had received—sum of 10 persons—$84 million in legal briefs from the Government. I challenged him to find one legal brief and today he cannot do it yet.

It also looks like when the Member now resigned, who occupied Chaguanas West, Jack Warner, had to say he is the HNIC, the head "beep" in charge—I blanked out the word. That reference on the record was in relation to me, as well, where he said that he should sue me, alleging that I

owed money to a certain entity when, in fact, I was representing a client who he alleged had lent money. So, the fact is, this Government does not seem to associate itself with positions of the truth at times; not all.

Mr. President, getting back to the Finance Bill, Sen. Howai spoke to the Bill. The word revenue came out of his mouth once; very short, fleeting reference to revenue. I went back and I checked in the following Bills: Exchequer and Audit (Amdt.) Bill; The Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation)(Financial Year 2012); The Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation)(Financial Year 2011); The Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation)(Financial Year 2013); The Increase in Borrowings (Development Loans); The Increase in Borrowings (Guarantee of Loans); The Increase in Borrowings (External Loans); today's Bill; the Motion on the Treasury, which is set on our Order Paper, is coming and the Motion on the Treasury, there are two on the Order Paper to come; and then there was the State of the Economy Motion by Mary King in July 2010.

So, we had, Mr. President, including today, 11 Bills/Motions to deal with finance since we have sat as a Parliament from May 2010; two Motions to come, but let us take the 11. The concept of revenue in those items does not exist. The concept of inspiring confidence as to where we are going in terms of how revenue will be generated does not exist in any one of those explanations. Yet, we find ourselves today, with a debt to GDP ratio of 49 per cent. Yet, we find ourselves, today, being told by the Government, "Listen, we are bringing to book, in this Bill, for instance, $2.3 billion in

recurrent expenditure which is largely because of wage negotiations. And, they are doing as if this is an anomaly when, in fact, it is not.

We must put it in context, Mr. President. The PNM, for some reason—which I, certainly, do not have the answer to—committed political hara-kiri in May 2010. [*Interruption*] Yes, it committed political hara kiri. There were two and a half years to go and it is normal to have wage negotiations dealt with in arrears. As my learned colleague will know opposite. All wage negotiations are dealt with in arrears. In the private sector; in the public sector, collective agreements are dealt with like that. But, the People's National Movement had a very useful tool. The tool is—or was, because it was disbanded—the Public Sector Wage Negotiation Committee.

Mr. President, I want to put on record that that Public Sector Wage Negotiation Committee was an exceptionally useful tool and it resulted in the fact that Trinidad and Tobago never protested in the manner in which the labour movement has protested against this Government.

**Sen. Lambert:** That is incorrect. That is incorrect.

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** I said in the manner that.

**Sen. Lambert:** That is incorrect.

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** I am not saying that there were never protests, but I am saying that the manner in which—[*Interruption*]

Mr. President, we forget that we were in the Parliament in the Red House, suffering with the blue flu. We forget that there were people marching around and Watson Duke was living on the doorstep of the Parliament. So, there is nothing anomalous about bringing to book today,

$2.3 billion in recurrent expenditure because that is what would have happened had the PNM stayed in office any way.

Had it not committed political hari-kiri—

**Sen. Singh:** Suicide.

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** Suicide—it would have dealt with this, but I dare say, it is my view—it may not be shared by those opposite—that you would not have had the extent of protest. Certainly, one may reflect on the fact that the MSJ started with this Government and left this Government.

Anyway, Mr. President, the point is there is no real anomaly; there is no real legacy item with any malfeasance behind it. This is a legacy item which had to come on to the books; it would have come onto the books in a much better fashion; we would not seen ourselves in the industry gaps that we are seeing in terms of the wage negotiations where the public service is having one standard of wage negotiation versus the OWTU. That committee was the leveling force to know that the left hand knows what the right hand is doing.

Now, Mr. President, the Minister of Energy spoke to an issue of procurement. He spoke to, first of all, the fact that deep water—if I come to before procurement; that there has been deep water contracts signed on. It is the first time, he says; two. [*Interruption*] Two and four.

Mr. President, whilst that is commendable, the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, only gave half the story. It is true that he is bringing deep water contracts now, but he is not reflecting upon the fact of what happened by way of continuity in the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs. He is not reflecting on the fact that the Ministry of Energy and

Energy Affairs had negotiated, re-negotiated, very sincere royalty arrangements to yield a higher tax yield for the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago under the PNM; and that that is the reason why the deep water blocks were not that attractive.

**8.30 p.m.**

**Hon. Senator:** True, um-hmm!

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** And that that is the reason the deep-water blocks were not that attractive.

**Hon. Senator:** That is true!

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** He is not reflecting upon the fact that the PNM Government sought a veryspecific plan; it sought to get a better yield off, of its gas. Sen. Ramkhelawan once put it, in one of our debates, that our gas yields for us crumbs off the table; that 4.75 netback value yields crumbs on the table. This has been confirmed by the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs who agrees that the trading in cargo—in LNG cargo—can yield better results for us. But, the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs did not reflect upon the fact that the People's National Movement did not enjoy the deep-water blocks because it was not ready to do that yet.

**Sen. Singh:** [*Laughter*]

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** It was busy bringing on gas on shore, created industries like the smelting industry, created the TGU, created the industrial estate, developed Galeota, so that we would get more than crumbs off the table. He did not reflect upon the fact that this building where we are, was intended to be the IFC—the financial hub of the Caribbean.

He did not explain that this Government met a then small, fledgling

entity at its door sitting in the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs office. A small entity that came to us and said, "Listen, we have an idea that we think is going to be big. We want you to come on board with us as a partner. We want to be your partner. We want to be a global partner with you because you have positioned yourselves"—Trinidad and Tobago—"as the geopolitical force between South Africa, Venezuela and China. You, little Trinidad and Tobago; you have done that. You are in Africa! We want to take your LNG cargos, we want to put them and trade them on the stock exchange. We want to bring Merrill Lynch"—then it was in existence. "We want to be a partner with you in Africa, et cetera. We have a great idea as to where we are coming, and by the way, we have some interest in the United States."

You know what the name of that company is? It is Cheniere. Cheniere which is now responsible for the entire shale gas boom in the United States of America which would see 2020, the United States of America being 100 per cent self-sufficient in gas and exploring in oil. Cheniere was in Trinidad and Tobago talking to the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries under the PNM, ready to sign a deal, met the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries—not this hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs—and promptly was dismissed. It was thrown out! "Who are you? We doh have time for you. We doh know you!"

So the mighty Cheniere, which has shifted us now, which was taking us into the Ecopetrol, which is the Colombian model, taking us into a commodities exchange, taking us global, that entity was shooed away by the People's Partnership. The hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs did

not reflect upon that.

**Sen. George:** Speculation!

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** That is not speculation, that is fact; ask the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs behind you. Tell me I am wrong, Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs. I will give way, tell me I am wrong.

**Sen. George:** "He is speculating, doh answer him, leh him talk!"

**Sen. Ramnarine:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** No, he is saying is speculation.

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** No, he said it is speculation so I will give way.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Tell him it is not speculation, I dare you!

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** So, Mr. President, the fact is—

**Sen. George:** Speculation!

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:—**it is a fact that the giant in the gas industry, now global, was here. But, you know what the consequence of that fallout was, Mr. President?

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** He is still saying it is speculation.

**Sen. George:** Speculation, yes.

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** Here is the consequence of that. The hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs quite correctly reflected upon the fact that Ghana is interested in us; Trinidad is a global player for 3.4 per cent of our people; we can export our enterprise, we are all over the world. Trinidadians, you will find in every place; you will find Trinidadians in the oil and gas industry. You know why? Because there are entities like Kenson—Kenson Production Services Limited led by Ken Ferguson—that is in Africa training people, is in Trinidad training Africans; that we had people—we had Eric

Williams, past Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, who was vilified by an untruth in this Parliament brought by no less than a Member of this Parliament, who is now Prime Minister, something which turned out to be grossly untrue, which ruined his reputation, and for which, mind you, she was not even taken to the Privileges Committee, and for which she has never apologized to this day; ruined the reputations of one Franklin Khan and Eric Williams. Eric Williams who had the foresight as Minister of Energy and Energy Industries to do seismic survey in which, albeit was 2D and which the hon. Minister has bettered now—and I commend him—as 3D. [*Crosstalk*] But, not even an apology from the Member for Siparia, now Prime Minister, for bringing something which turned out to be "ah hot untruth".

So, Mr.President, Africa was born out of a purposeful maneuvering of Trinidad and Tobago, and the reason the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs has not yet found the rationale for the dip that he said he needs to find in the 2009 zone, why the FDI looked the way it did—

**Sen. Ramnarine:** And the drilling.

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:—**and the drilling. Well, the drilling is a good point, and I think the Minister is correct on his point. But, the FDI, Mr. President, is because the FDI was to come on board in the aluminium smelter, in the industrial estate, which is—you know, I heard the hon. Minister of tertiary education, hon. Fazal Karim—sorry, not tertiary education. Yes, tertiary?—saying the shame that you feel when you see the iron and the tsunami shelter—I feel shamed about the tsunami shelter—the stadium—I do. But, you know what is equally shameful? The absolute destruction that went on

when you came into office.

Genuinely, I wonder if the Minister of National Security could look at me with a straight face and tell me that cancelling SAUTT was a good idea. SAUTT is in this Bill.

**Hon. Senator:** It was a very good idea.

**Sen. George:** "I could look at yuh straight in yuh face [*Inaudible*]"

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** Dismantling the security services in Trinidad and Tobago. But, I wonder if my friend, hon. Sen. Karim, feels a sense of shame when he passes the Union Industrial Estate and sees it rotting; sees the Sural entity rotting; sees all the capital works there rotting; sees the Government of Venezuela who has interest vicariously in that Sural project, who is begging on a daily basis for it to restart, all the equipment in a warehouse, Mr. President. Does he feel a sense of shame?

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

*Motion made*: That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by15 minutes. [*Sen. T. Deyalsingh*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** Thank you. You know, Mr.President, I heard my learned brother, Sen. Jamal Mohammed a little while ago say "about time" when my time had come up; about time.

**Sen. Singh:** "Yuh too sensitive."

**Sen. George:** Very!

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** I am not sensitive, I think that—you know—

**Sen. George:** "He not sensitive, he just thin-skinned." [*Continuous*

*crosstalk*]

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:—**the issue on the table here is the sense of shame that we feel; the sense of shame in watching the Union Industrial Estate go. My learned colleague, in dealing with procurement, said that it was not unusual for the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, for TGU to have been financed—sorry, he said that, because TGU was financed to the tune US $700 million from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's revenue, that the PNM should be ashamed to complain about the procurement issues on the highway which stand at $7billion.

Now, Mr. President, I just do not quite understand that.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** The logic.

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** There has been no complaint about the procurement issues and value for money issues at TGU, but there is bitter complaint—

**Sen. Singh:** No, no, that is not true. The Sural issue.

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** I am talking about TGU—Trinidad Generation Unlimited. Mr. President, what I am saying is, $7billion is the extent of our PSIP for a year. Sevenbillion dollars was intended by the PNM who was dealing with the highway to be dealt with under the IADB.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Correct!

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** And why? Not only to ease the burden on the revenue so that we pay "ah couple hundred million dollars a year" as opposed to billions of dollars a year from our recurrent expenditure, from our Government revenue, but, because it came with the scrutiny of IADB, and that public procurement is the heart of it. So we are not comparing apples with apples, we are comparing apples with oranges.

The issue, [*Crosstalk*] Mr. President, is all the much more so stark when you contemplate on the fact that the procurement allegation against this Government is that the highway should have cost maximum $4billion, land acquisition: $800 million; and we are now close to $8 billion on the highway. How did we get there? How are we financing our deficit, hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy? You spoke about the United States of America and its debt financing, how are we debt financing? That is what we want to do.

When you rack up the debt, having obtained a debt ceiling limit as we have with our debt to GDP ratio climbs, it was dark, doomy, gloomy days, Mr. President, when our debt to GDP ratio was 25 to 30 per cent. How come 50 per cent is not bad now? I do not know. How come the Government has the ability to have an Opposition say, "Our energy is good"? Did you, as an Opposition, do that? Not you, hon. Minister, of course, you were not there. Did the Opposition then, which is Government now, say that the Ryder Scott report was good? No!

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** No! [*Continuous crosstalk*]

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** Would the Government now say that gas is going to run out, oil is going to run out? The Opposition—did it say that? It said that.

The fact is, [*Crosstalk*] we have our Uff report from a Commission of Enquiry which cost our taxpayers a lot of money. There are 91 recommendations which stand unimplemented to date. I join Sen. Drayton in saying that we have not seen anything to encourage us that our public procurement is going to be dealt with expeditiously. In fact, that is why an issue such as a fire truck can cause problems. That is why when something

could cost you $2,000 and cost you $6.8million instead, that the people of Trinidad and Tobago raise up in arms. That is why there is a current query as to a fire truck being repainted for $100,000.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** What?

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** Yes, Mr. President.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** "Ah 100,000!"

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** "Ah fire truck is being repainted right now for $100,000." I am putting it out; I hope the Minister pays attention—Minister of National Security. But, Mr. President—

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Serious?

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:—**apart from the procurement issues, the fire trucking issues—as people call it now—there is the—[*Crosstalk*] I certainly do not pay $100,000 to paint a car, I am not—

**Sen. George:** "Ah tellin yuh!"

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** Mr.President, the fact is that public procurement is the heart and soul of confidence. The fact is that in dealing with public procurement, we want to hear—as we have asked Sen. Tewarie before, for an answer in relation to the Invader's Bay project.

**Hon. Senator:** "Dem fellas doh know!"

**Sen. F. Al-Rawi:** Whether the Government can, in fact, give the land to that project, because there are hard-working citizens in this country who want to know that when they bid for something, that when they engage in procurement exercises, that they can get the benefit. Can we give a deed to that land? Can we?

Our position—my research of the law—tells me that we are offending

a legal notice and that we cannot—because it is state land—have procured via the—by the method that we did because of the Central Tenders Board's operation, and that not having gone through the Central Tenders Board that we are in troubles. We have the Ministry of Justice with unanswered allegations. I have put it to my friend, the hon. Minister of Justice, umpteen times in the Parliament and had been met with deafening silence as to the unlawful procurement of the judicial complexes for not having followed the Central Tenders Board's rules. The unlawful—I am telling you it is unlawful, I have said it umpteen times and no answer comes.

So, Mr. President, how do we inspire confidence in relation to procurement? I do think that we have some talented people opposite, I do, but, Mr.President, where are we going? We heard the hon. Leader of Government Business say across the floor that "ah debt is ah debt when you inherit it".

Mr. President, I heard the Minister of Sport in the Lower House give the most amazing explanation for the payment on the fire truck issue—by the way, which I must comment on. Mr. President, he said that it having been granted that it had to be paid. The contract having been performed, when you are presented with the bill, you must pay it. He spoke right after the Leader of the Opposition and said that. Well, you put equal to match equal so he spoke with authority.

The Minister of Sport is telling, after the Leader of the Opposition speaks, that the fire truck was an issue which had to be paid otherwise you going to court, and then you will end up paying something close to $35 million when interest and cost and things go down; you had to pay it. Not

even a contemplation that the fact that there is no authority by the accounting officer who is the PS, to go beyond a million dollars, and therefore the contract lacked authority.

And, therefore you could have met it on a quantum meruit basis in court and told them prove it. So it is not true.

**8.45p.m.**

So, Mr. President, when the Government of Trinidad and Tobago puts its senior member, the Minister of Sport, to respond to a serious issue, which the Prime Minister has labelled a fiasco, how are we to take them seriously?

In the couple of minutes that I have left, I wish to focus on something which I think can help us into the right direction. I urge hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy to look to the move that we should make to hold-of- Government accounting; the move that we should make to have each and every Ministry mandatorily operating under audit committees and auditing bodies, much like Jamaica does.

In its Financial Administration and Audit Act, the Jamaicans have added into their laws mandatory inclusion in every state body or for audit committees which are in turn supervised by another entity and the fact is that we really do need to move to hold-of-government accounting so that we can have the benefit of understanding our accounts in totality. We should have a statement from you—and the PNM's statement, I am sure, would be to support—which says: we want to move away from cash basis to accrual accounting, we want to move to hold of government accounting so that when we come to a budget like this we are assured that the process behind us is solid, hon. Minister. We want to reform our tax administration. We want to

hear your views on a consolidated entity of the type, but perhaps better rolled out that would equal to the Revenue Authority of Trinidad and Tobago. We want to hear about your reform on public procurement.

We want to hear the implementation of the work from the PAC and the PA(E)C and the committees of Parliament, so that we use the auspices provided in the Constitution better in dealing with appropriations. It is in Chapter eight. We have scrutiny happen in the PAC and the PA(E)C in relation to these and that way everybody can be included. But we have to, as a nation, take the step to a hold-of-government accounting, meet modern practice, step out of archaic zones and deal with the fact that we have an Auditor General's report like an elephant in the room, with 1,300 per cent increase in one Ministry in 2012, from where it was budgeted to be; 300 per cent increase.

Listen to this the Auditor General's report says in the Ministry of Sport there was an increase of 1,275 per cent; Ministry of Works, 378 per cent; transport, 386 per cent; planning, 232 per cent; justice, 222 per cent; gender and youth, 195 per cent; housing, 90 per cent. Only moving from a billion to 1.9 billion. How can we debate a Bill like this when we have an Auditor General's report staring us in the face and we have not even answered any of those issues? Nothing in this Senate has been said about that. So, I genuinely think that we are on very slippery slopes.

I think that the Government needs to coalesce and get its act together. I think we need to start hearing about positive policy statements that are codified in one spot. Having several greasy polls around us are not going to help us in the right direction. We need to understand where we are going.

We need to have a line of sight as the oil industry uses, where the man on the bottom sees the man on the top and understands the line of sight. Mr. President, I really do think that we ought to have more notice in relation to issues like this and Bills like today so that we can give meaningful participation.

I thank you for the opportunity to contribute, Mr.President.

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I just want to let you know that dinner is available. You may file out singly and not too many together, leaving me with a quorum. And so you may leave when you choose, other than obeying those provisos.

**Sen. Dr. Rolph Balgobin:** Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to speak to what I consider to be an important issue and that is the provision of supplementary funds to the tune of about $2.9billion to fund urgent and critical recurrent and capital expenditure, particularly in areas where insufficient funding or no allocation at all was provided.

By my estimation, this takes our deficit well over $9billion. At least it is a projected deficit by this point. And given the size of what we are talking about in monetary terms, it is therefore important, notwithstanding the fact that this is a money Bill, that we have a full and appropriate discourse. It is, after all, a lot of money and the danger, of course, with interim appropriations is that the sum never looks big in relation to what was approved before. But, of course, allocations like these do tend to push the boundaries of our expenditure outward year on year.

And so, as a jumping off point, I would wish to express concern, not just about our growing expenditure and our growing deficit, but about the source

of some of that, in particular on the revenue side. And I know this is something which has actively engaged the imagination, the logic, the best intelligence of the Government. Fundamentally, the question is: How can we earn more? And this is where I have a little challenge because I have heard several answers to this question and that is good. My concern really would lie in being able to make the observation that the answer sounds a little less concrete than the estimates for additional costs we are incurring in the meantime and an economy, as business, the budget of a household they are all, in some respects, very similar.

There are, of course, very significant differences. But if our spend is growing faster than our revenues then that would be cause for concern. And this is, of course, something that our Minster of Finance and the Economy would be well aware of and acquainted with and I trust that he is paying very close attention. But it is something that we ought to pay attention to so if he is looking at it, and I am sure he is, then it is worthy and justified that he do so, simply because if that continues for an extended period of time, concern will grow into alarm as problems arise.

Now, in looking at the spend proposed, what I gather is 87 per cent is appropriated for recurrent expenditure and about 13 per cent really goes to capital spend through the PSIP. When I look at the structure of the spending proposed, what occurs to me is that quite rightly one would say the majority of the spend allocated really goes towards defence, defence, defence, defence. Defence of what defence? Defence of our social stability, the very fabric of our society as we push to try to recapture this notion of a law-abiding society. And so the police service, under Head 64, gets 22.8 per

cent or thereabouts. If you add that to the Ministry of National Security, which is about 7 per cent, you are looking at about 30 per cent of this additional allocation. Really it is going towards things that are meant to aggressively protect the peace, and that is national security.

But, I think that even with this, the Ministry of National Security really is having to contend with something that the society itself has radically or drastically misdiagnosed and we, I think, really underestimate the social conditions which prevail in some parts of Trinidad and Tobago. And I say that in making the observation that people would generally make, that there is a kind of seething anger building up in the society, and in some places it has already built up. It is no longer something that is in an early or an embryonic stage. It has already bloomed, blossomed and is releasing spores into the air into the ether and spreading and we here are talking about economic growth. We are talking about education. We are talking about a lot of laudable things even as something very dangerous is starting to happen here.

Mr. President, what I mean by that is from my observation; there is a significant and growing community of people who do not care about these things at all. They are not concerned about developments in the education realm or in the energy sector. They do not care if we start to drill more or we do 2D or 3D seismic analyses. They do not care. This is not the society that they are living in. This is a very dangerous development.

In Australia, one of things that always surprises me is how the Aborigines can occupy the same physical space as a white Australian and they not see each other at all; they do not acknowledge each other. Here it is

not like that. We acknowledge a criminal element. We are afraid of bandits and we have a stereotype about what that looks like. We look at violent films and violent TV shows and play violent videogames and all the while we become desensitize to the very dangerous and radical development happening right here in Trinidad and Tobago. This is now a society where decapitations occur, some not reported, but decapitations occur here. This is a society where Corporal Clapum was shot seconds away from a police station, right behind it, metres away. Even the police did not reach out to help him. Fireman up the road did that.

**9.00p.m.**

The killer, Mr. President, had the peace of mind after has accomplish was shot and killed by Cpl. Clapham. The killer of that same corporal had the peace of mind to stop and pick up Clapham's gun, before he made his escape. It is not true to say that police officers and soldiers are not being attacked, they are. They are being killed when they are off duty, and there are places where a police officer will not go unless he goes in force; army too.

So you look at the growing courage of this section, this new society which is emerging, and you ask yourself whether we are talking about one society now or more than one, and to what extent these budgetary allocations really help us to address this growing dangerous phenomena. And when you get to a point where you enter as big and as fenced a facility as the Port of Spain General Hospital, and shoot people in broad daylight, no mask, no attempt at hiding your identity. You just walk right up and "shoot de people" and, of course, one of them is fearing for his life.

When did buying "ah doubles or ah sandwich become such ah" dangerous activity, deep in de heart of ah hospital" where there is no easy egress. "You walk right up deep inside of there and you just have the confidence to do something like that." How do we explain that? Is it really right to have social workers and social activists tell us that, well, you know, these are children of underprivileged homes? There is something far more insidious which has happened here, and we need when we are thinking about budget and allocations and so on, to think about that because all of this is symptomatic of something much, much bigger. The base of the iceberg has not yet been revealed. We have not yet seen it, but it is there, and it is bigger than we think.

Then you look at this and you say, well, we are spending a lot of money here, a lot of it looks like it is very, very well positioned and well targeted, but this spending is occurring against a backdrop of something that I can only described as rage, as rage! In school a 14-year-old is killed by a 16-year-old for a girl, that should cause a panic in the society, but it does not because on YouTube and people's phone, children are routinely beating children especially or I should not say especially, including girls beating girls. Where is the tenderness in our society? Where is the sympathy? We have lost a lot of—more than we know. We have lost more than we know, and so there is rage even in our schools, on the roads. You know taxis make no—they have no hesitation now to just stop in the middle of the road to pick up and drop off, you know, they do not care. You can have a line up of 150 cars behind you, there is no concern. So we are talking about rage. We are taking about indiscipline.

I listened to the radio and someone was talking about this revised set of allocations and so on, and it was immediately after the Indian Arrival holiday and so on. And do you know what the person said, Mr. President, on the radio? The talk show host said "its going to be a looong" week, no holidays this week. [*Laughter*] That was what the man said, and I thought but, that is peculiar, but that is what he said. "Its going to be a looong" week. No holidays this week, and so you are talking about a society that has a very advanced notion of what leisure is, an addiction to entertainment.

It used to be not so long ago, that we could say it has nothing to do in Trinidad; not again, not again! So people are looking for the next lime. Carnival is expending now, it extended to Wednesday, now it is extending to Thursday and Friday and so on, for some people weekend starts on Thursdays. If you look at bars on the roads, people spill out onto the streets from Thursday night. Now, you see sometimes Wednesday well, it will start with Monday just now.

So how do these things affect the culture of indiscipline which is also entering the—has woven itself into the social fabric. So even as—I have to circle back to my earlier point—a whole alternate society develops in our midst, we are feting, and not paying enough attention. We pay attention when one of "them" comes and kills one of "us". We grieve, we bury, we fete again, and that is the attitude of an addict, that is the behaviour of an addict.

So, what is the third element in the cocktail which again, the Minister of National Security, bless his heart, congratulations Sir, on your appointment. I commend you and I commiserate with you at the same time.

What else does he have to address? What is the third element? I call it hyper drama. It is not regular drama, it is hyper drama, where everything is hyped up, controversy is manufactured here now; every day. I read the papers for entertainment now. I do not expect to find much truth there. I read it for entertainment. There is entertainment everywhere.

And so really, we have no clue about what is happening and we continue through our behaviour and through the approach of our media, to reinforce the idea that we do not know the truth about what is happening. So we spend an enormous amount of time talking about fire trucks and so on, and then the explanation when it comes out is more much innocuous than one would have hoped, but you know what is interesting with that, Mr. President? Is that the truth of it is never as widely circulated and distributed even as Sen. Al-Rawi said. So what do we have? We have claim and claim and claim and claim.

When last have we had a Government for the last 30 or 40 or 50 years which has not been racked by allegations of corruption? And how many of those allegations have been true? I do not know. But things like what happened with a fire truck are really in my view opportunities for systemic improvements. Even if somebody makes a mistake, a public official may make a mistake, they may make a bad call; people do that, okay. It is an opportunity to improve the system, improve the way that we do these things to make sure it does happen again. Our public sector is rich with those opportunities, we have them every day. Instead what we do is, we take anything that looks weird and make rampant corruption claims about it, and I do not think we realize as public figures, Mr. President, how much this

sickens and disgusts people. It sickens and disgusts people, and it polarizes the population.

What I noticed with "email gate" although it is an active police investigation, I will stray so far only to say this, is that the people I meet, depending on their political affiliation had very strong views on the veracity of those claims. So you know, you meet someone who is a supporter of the Opposition, they say: "Ah glad is licks for dem", you know. "Bandits in power!" And you meet someone who is a supporter of the Government and say: "Ah glad de Leader of the Opposition geh wah coming to him. He should never be so irresponsible. Look at how these people trying to destabilize the Government." And nowhere in there is any language about what the truth is. Nobody knows and to me, nobody cares.

So what we do instead? We polarize a population through the destruction of character. So everybody is a target. We target people and we destroy them, and you can tell, you can just look in the papers at whoever the media is focused on, and that is the new target. So I feel very sad I want to say for Mr. Rabindra Moonan. I feel sad for him only because if he is guilty of something well, do something about it. There is a judicial arm of the State. If he is not guilty or has not been proven guilty, well, why are we dragging his name this way and that? [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*]

I think that we ought to take these things very, very seriously. For people to suggest well, I do know it is true or not that some party PRO would not have their qualifications and so on, these things are distasteful, and we should stay away from them. We have no idea how much—[*Crosstalk and laughter*]—our negativity is being magnified in the wider

society. We are unaware of the unintended consequences we are having, and we are creating space for the development of an alternate society.

I think that if we are going to give all this money to the Ministry of National Security, I have no problem with that. The police service gets another $667 million or something like that; 661 which is fantastic. I would love to see about four million of those put towards the appointment of a commissioner. Crime is the major problem in our society, and we do not have a Commissioner of Police—

**Hon. Senator:** Well said.

**Sen. Dr. R. Balgobin:**—and that is not acceptable. So I am hopeful with the appointment of a new Minister of National Security, that we will resolve this kind of issue. We—

**Sen. George:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. Dr. R. Balgobin:** Yes, of course, and they need—but I am hopeful that you could use your good office. [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Senator:** "He doh hah dah power."

**Sen. Dr. R. Balgobin:** The improvement of our intelligence capability in the TTPS is vital; is vital. If I look at the criminal gangs and intelligence unit, they are gathering intelligence, they are patrolling in Laventille; they are patrolling. The IATF and the Guard and Emergency Branch, ask them what "more for less" means. Ask what "more for less" means, and they will tell you. Well, they might, but what "more for less" means is more money, very view cases. Ask them how many cases they have in the courts, "dey patrolling, dey patrolling", and they get overtime, they do very well. So, more for less.

How are we going really build the efficiency and effectiveness of our society this way? Too much of our surveillance infrastructure appears to me to be directed at politicians or people in public life, and not enough on criminals, and by that I would say that to my mind criminality is everywhere and there are ethnic and class dimensions to it. When we talk about criminals we are only talking about East Port of Spain and Laventille and so on, but some of the criminal master minds in this country wear "ah" suit and tie—[*Desk thumping*] and we are not addressing these people. So violent crime is one thing, but I can tell you drug running, look "ah lil" further west, look central, look at Chaguanas and Couva. [*Crosstalk*]

If we continue to spend, Mr. President, on recurrent things ahead of earnings, of course, I do not think we are going to be able to sustain that. Well, mathematics says that. And I expect, Mr. President, what very few people have come forward and said so far in this whole discourse about crime and what is happening in the society, and that is society will convulse as it experiences withdrawal, when the day comes, and we have to slow some of these things down, because we cannot sustain a lot of the things forever. So I think that we have an opportunity here to say to the Minister of Finance and the Economy and by extension the Minister of National Security, we need to cool things down.

All of us here need to change our language and the way that we speak to each other, and we need to start getting people to stand on their own, because that remains the number one economic problem we have.

**1.00 p.m.**

Our people are not productive and so, if I look at that question of

productivity, it leads me to education and we have educators all through here. There are professors here and doctors and administrators and so on. Parliament Chamber is filled with educators, but there is a fundamental problem here and the Ministry of Education gets 10.85 per cent of this new allocation—all of it recurrent.

The fundamental problem here, Mr. President, is the system does not work. Maybe it used to work, but it does not work now and so I am very pleased to hear Minister Karim's contribution and it is clear to me that a great deal is being done, but I wonder, from my own experience, how much of this work that we are doing in our tertiary institutions really is remedial and what kind of graduate quality can we expect when it is impacted upon so heavily by intake quality.

So the issue is not just that our graduates are mismatched for the economic system. People like to say that, that the education and the economic system are somehow mismatched; but even where matches occur, employers will tell you that the quality of what is coming out of our tertiary system continue to be wanting in material respects.

In a second or so, if I roll down and say what is the input of the education system, I would say that our secondary systems are broken. They are broken. Seventy per cent of people who write maths fail it. Forty per cent of people who write English, which is really what we use to communicate with, fail it? English!

And so, what kind of graduate from the tertiary system are you going to get with someone like that? What are you going to get? And so our secondary system is broken, so let us roll down to the primary. What is

happening there? Dangerous behaviour! And this is not just evidenced in students, but parents too. Parents want to beat teachers. They want to beat other children. They want to beat other parents, so the paradox for me, the irony is this, a school is supposed to be an agency, an artefact, an instrument of civilization.

When your schools become undisciplined, wild places, what happens? When they become bastions of incivility and bullying, what do you think you are going to get 10 or 15 years later? And so you have major infrastructure issues and teacher issues and all sorts of things, but the truth of it is you have serious curriculum misuse and you have serious class issues that are evidencing themselves even at the primary level.

So this country is becoming rapidly like an all-inclusive fete. You pay to go to an all-inclusive fete, not for what you getting to eat or the entertainment, but to keep a certain type of people out. And that is what we are doing with our education system. You have private schools developing and people pay to go to them just so that they do not have their children exposed to a whole alternate society.

It is a behavioural admission of what we have cognitively not processed and articulated and that is, an alternate society has in fact developed. It has taken root and it is big. It is bigger and bigger every day and we are afraid of it, but we have measured it.

By the time a bunch of children reach SEA, they are carrying more than their body weight in books. They are carrying more than their body weight in books. You have to buy a suitcase as if you are going on an aeroplane and roll it, those children.

**Hon. Senator:** Except for obesity.

**Sen. Dr. R. Balgobin:** You have all of that, yet they enter the secondary system illiterate. Illiterate! Five years, seven years of education by the time you are 11 and you are illiterate or partially literate entrant into a secondary system.

So it really breaks my heart and troubles my cognition and disturbs, I suppose, my equanimity to no small extent to see us pontificate here about who did what. Our future is imperiled by an outmoded system of education, which is producing broken people and it is resistant to anything but incremental change and this is contributing to a growing alternative society.

I think that people misunderstand why CEPEP has been expanded and why it exists. I think I understand perfectly well what the Government is trying to do. They are trying to give economic opportunities to people who might not otherwise have had them, but it is a dangerous game to pay for social peace. The hunger, the appetite of dangerous people is rapacious. It will not stop with whatever contract you give them. You will strengthen them and they will come for more. When the dogs of war are loosed, only then we will understand the size of the problem, but do not feel that we can settle this down with social programmes.

Our people do not have the equipment to be productive and this starts very young, far younger than Minister Karim's intervention could ever hope to touch. By the time they get to Minister Karim, their personalities are already set. It is a Herculean task to change their prospects then at 21 or 18. But not only do they lack the equipment because they may be poor or downtrodden or lack opportunities—they may lack water and a toilet; they

lack so many of the basics, they live this alternative life and then they get a bad education.

Not only do they lack the equipment, increasingly they lack the will and so the Ministry of the People, which I see here gets 7.2 per cent of what is proposed, $210.4 million, really finds itself dealing with the symptoms, but not the causes of a society in deep trouble. The problem is, or at least one of the problems would be that our people are unproductive and you are depending on the State or somebody else to take care of you.

So I saw someone has sextuplets, the first thing they say is, well I want a house. A hard breeze blows, your roof flies off, the first thing the people say is, I want a house. And so there is this notion that somebody else, the Government, somebody should mind you, take care of you, support you because you are obviously incapable of supporting yourself. And this I think masks the true tragedy that some of our people experience and have to live and that is that there are a small number of people who really deserve that help, but they find themselves crowded in an elevator, a goodwill elevator, by people who are perhaps not as needy.

This notion of people having to take care of you is what stood out to me when the leader of China comes here and says, I will give you US $3 billion in loans. I was very proud to see that Trinidad and Tobago did not get as excited as the rest of the people in Caricom who look like they were going to get some of this money. I thought, well, how peculiar that you would see this as manna from heaven. A man just turn up and offer you a loan; did not give you anything, you know; he is offering you a loan in exchange for which you must recognize his political position and agree with

it; and, of course, he may influence your voting patterns in the United Nations or elsewhere and for that privilege you get to borrow his money and then pay him back! And "yuh" glad. I was so surprised I just shaved off all my hair. [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** I thought it fell off.

**Sen. Dr. R. Balgobin:** No. I could not handle it, so I just shaved off all my hair.

**Hon. Senator:** Protest.

**Sen. Dr. R. Balgobin:** So, I would say, Mr. President, through you to the Minister of Finance and the Economy, what he would already know and that is, an increasing deficit is only justifiable really to me if it is going to improve productivity. So while there are laudable developments in the energy sector, either the energy sectors needs to employ more people, which is a possibility because that 3 per cent is simply too low, but, of course, it is a capital intensive sector. So if it cannot, then we must diversity in employment terms and sustainable development therefore is key.

While there may be criticisms of the growth pole logic and so on, some work has been done and what it suggests is alarming. Even the economic growth that we are looking at, some of it comes from a source which I consider to be alarming and that is a rise in distribution. Everywhere you look people are buying and selling things. Trucks selling fast. You buy a truck, you hire two "fellas" and you import things and you selling them. And distribution business is growing, but that does not help us in the long term? [*Sound of glass falling*]

I am pleased to see the power of my words having such an effect.

Value adding activities are key. We must find a way to capture—to create and capture more value. So, yes we need services, but we also need to make stuff. So we are giving $3 billion here, okay fine, but we need to figure out how we can give a boost to our services and how we can make more stuff.

The US, the UK, all of the developed countries in the world, are going through a manufacturing renaissance, you know. They are suddenly recognizing, oops, the idea that we can just survive on intellectual capital and have somebody else make it for us cheaply might not actually work.

And so that is what Barack Obama says: Make stuff. And you look at the UK system where they are actively engaging universities as well to say, well, how can we bring manufacturing back to our countries because they recognize now that the creation and capture of value, the more of that in the value chain you hold in your economy, the better off you are.

This is what, Mr. President, we need, but value is not created by machines, it is created by people and so our families and our schools are not doing us justice and this really redounds to our economic disadvantage; all of this against the backdrop, Mr. President, of a society growing increasingly apart.

Some of us live a high life. We have a boat or two. We have security. You know, we have a nice place. We shop in nice places. When we want some clothes, we go to Miami and get them, so we have a high life. Some of us live a life like that. And then some of us live a wannabe life where you acquire the trappings of those who have a high life. You just do not have the earnings. They are the ones who wrack up a lot of debt. Banks love them because they also have some earning capacity, so they can pay. Car

companies like them too. There are some who live a simple life—some by choice, some by necessity. They are honest, law-abiding citizens and they live how they can. They do not interfere with anybody and, hopefully, nobody interferes with them.

**9.30 p.m.**

And then, some live a criminal life. And some of those criminals do not live in the places we normally associate with them. A subset of those who live a criminal life also live the high life and, of course, our police service has absolutely no capability to identify a single one of these people, far less prosecute them.

And so, Mr. President, I would say here something that I think would be on many of our minds but too often unsaid and, that is, our democracy is more fragile than it appears. We are talking here about things that matter to some but increasingly do not matter to all of us.

And, therefore, I would say, our transformation, our economic transformation continues yes, good, perhaps too slow and our rhetoric—the rhetoric of public figures—is building pressure. People say well, you know, it is $3 billion. The kind of quality of national conversation is, "Well, how much ah dat dey going and tief". I mean, this is not how we should be speaking about our leaders and our Government, but this is what is happening.

And so, we need to change our talk, change our actions, change our views and change our behaviours if we would keep our society and our loved ones safe because if we do not do that—if we cannot stop fighting each other and cannot focus enough on where we are, we are never going to

get our heads around what that alternative society that is developing, and how we are going to deal with that. It is only a matter of time before that alternative society rises up in force to challenge us and ours. I thank you for the privilege to speak, Mr. President. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. President:** Sen. Lambert.

**Sen. James Lambert:** Thank you—[*Desk thumping and crosstalk*] Mr. President, thank you for allowing me to participate at this hour—it is 9.32—on the debate as it relates to the supplementary appropriation Bill before us.

**Sen. Karim:** The debate is young.

**Sen. J. Lambert:** Mr. President, it is not very often that I have the opportunity to speak in this honourable Senate, but I understand the reasons and they are very simple. It is because of the composition and the competence of this hon. Government Senator and Ministers on this side of this House. The team on this side is like a national cricket team. One has to be able, one has to be skilled and one has to be competitive to enable one to play in those matches, therefore, each and every one of us has to wait to be selected based on the condition of the pitch. Because of that, Mr. President, I have been selected to play tonight because what we are debating, it falls within the arena of which I come from. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, before I go to the meat of what I really intend to say tonight, permit me to deviate slightly or digress slightly, to make some corrections relative to my friend on the other side, Sen. Faris Al-Rawi. He is a gentleman that I think really, I like the manner in which he is aggressive, he is enthusiastic, but I would have liked him to be in the place that I come from, the institution, as it relates to trade unions. He has that dynamism

about him.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** All right. Thank you.

**Sen. J. Lambert:** But, Mr. President, whilst he has been making statement, he was not in this country. He was away. So, therefore, some of the facts that he needed was not told to him [*Desk thumping*] and, therefore, I would make the record straight. Because, Mr. President, he spoke in terms of the ministerial team that was introduced by the People's National Movement. Mr. President, each and every trade union in Trinidad and Tobago demonstrated against that ministerial team because we felt it was not in the best interest of the working class of Trinidad and Tobago.

We felt that the CPO did not do justice to the trade union movement. So often we would say to her we were not able to interface with the ministerial team because as you would be fully aware, politicians cannot negotiate as it relates to collective bargaining and the negotiations. Sometimes his very uncle who was the Minister of Administration—

**Sen. Singh:** His "mamu"!

**Sen. J. Lambert:** I may not know the term, but the hon. Saith, this was a gentleman. If you had taken something or you take something from him it is very good. Sometimes we used to get redress singularly from him.

But, Mr. President, as it relates, there is no political party in the history of Trinidad and Tobago—because I have been there all the years. I have not had the masters as fortunate as he was and what he got, but I got the opportunity to go to Cipriani Labour College to learn the trade of where I am. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Member:** Are you saying Mr. Mc Leod is a liar?

**Sen. J. Lambert:** Mr. President, I would not digress from my learned friend because at one time both of us were in the said house and we were treated almost the same way. So I will not [*Inaudible*] with you. [*Desk thumping*] The point that I want to make, there is no political party in the history of Trinidad and Tobago that the trade union movement has demonstrated against as Manning's PNM. I am not speaking in terms of Dr. Eric Williams or even at the point when we had the hon. Chambers, but from the time they came into being.

In 1987, Mr. President, I was approached, after the PNM was destroyed by the NAR party 33/3, to become a local government representative in the Carenage area—Glencoe, Chaguaramas—and I won convincingly in 1987 until 1996 when the snap election was called. I could recall very vividly that I lost favour with the then leader of the PNM in that period, because we went to central Diego Martin. Almost 20,000 workers demonstrated at the doorsteps of the hon. Valley that died, unfortunately, and they went and tell that very said leader—because I was the chairperson of that particular meeting. Although I was a local government representative, it was the first time I was forced to demonstrate against the own Government of which I was part and parcel because of anti-trade union movement that was demonstrated by Patrick Manning and the People's National Movement. [*Desk thumping*] We demonstrated in San Fernando and throughout the country. We had something that you call "Jdey".

In 1994, the People's National Movement, through your political leader and mine at the time, sent home 15,000 daily-rated workers. So when you come here and making statement that is incorrect about the People's

Partnership Government about demonstration, I demonstrated against the People's National Movement. But we demonstrated because you spoke in terms of Watson Duke on the doorsteps of the Red House and the Financial Complex, and he demonstrated with the same 5 per cent because we felt the manner in which the 5 per cent was imposed upon the trade union, that was not collective bargaining and the process was not done correctly. So we demonstrated, and the very said Watson went and took the same 5 per cent behind our backs and I stood my grounds.

Mr. President, what we are dealing with here today, while my learned friends on the other sides have been saying, it is three years, PNM has since gone nobody wants to hear, but some of things that we are dealing with here right now today was inherited by the People's National Movement. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, when I tell you tonight that—

**Hon. Senator:** Warming up man. Warming up.

**Sen. J. Lambert:**—in 2008 to 2010, the trade union movement demonstrated throughout Trinidad and Tobago because no offer was made by the then Government for almost two and a half years. So, Mr. President, I really have to congratulate and to commend the Minister of Finance and the Economy, [*Desk thumping*] the hon. Prime Minister and, by extension, the Cabinet of the People's Partnership Government today that when the hon. Howai came into office on June 22, 2012, he brought credence to the labour movement. When we met and we discussed and we told him that the 5 per cent was unacceptable and, therefore, we will not accept 5 per cent, he saw the wisdom and, therefore, he decided that, yes 9 per cent would be

given of which we accepted.

Based on that, Mr. President, today the request that has been made relative to that appropriation Bill and we all say now, "What are we doing with this money, nearly $2.9 billion?", but out of the 2.9 over 1.8 billion is to pay arrears that was created by the People's National Movement; 1.8, salaries and wages. I feel very heartened tonight that the Minister of Finance and the Economy went to the other House and brought it here tonight that we could sit here because there are suffering people out there.

Mr.President, some of them speak here and they are not aware of how the structure of public sector, particularly, daily-rated workers is structured. I being a president of one of the largest union in this country, I "does be" abused day and night. So when I saw that the sum that was put aside for the purpose of paying the arrears—and the arrears came about which you cannot blame this present Government, because we signed the collective agreement through negotiations on October 30, 2012. The budget was read before. So, therefore, no provisions were made in the national budget, 2012/2013, to pay the arrears.

So in light of that, when the new rate was put on the wages of the daily-rated workers, within a month thousands of daily-rated workers in Trinidad and Tobago was happy to see that they got a new rate, but emanating from that you must have to realize that there is a sum of arrears that has to be paid. In light of that, today, tonight, we are now asking that you should take into consideration, there are other areas of subheads and so forth that moneys have to be also allocated to.

Mr. President, then I say to you and this honourable Senate tonight, I

am happy when I saw Head 15, the Tobago House of Assembly with $222,818,100. All of us are aware that when you go to Tobago—Tobago, based on the cost of living, is much higher than Trinidad—and, therefore, my union, in particular, as one of the public sector unions, represents all the daily-rated workers in the Tobago House of Assembly.

**9.45 p.m.**

So this Appropriation Bill here tonight with the sum is close to me because there will be peace and comfort as it relates when this passes here later, because it has already been passed in the other place. Mr. President, it is approximately 6,000 daily-rated workers in the Tobago House of Assembly that is represented by the National Union of Government and Federated Workers; they call me and abuse me, "What is happening to our arrears?" When I saw the children that came, the school children that came earlier in this Parliament today, coming from Tobago, my thoughts run on the parents of those children that most likely had to pay to ensure that they come to this hon. House to listen to a debate. The parents out there have suffered under the PNM Government because of their negotiations. Mr. President, those of us who are now aware, every three years you have to renegotiate.

Mr. President, proposals ought to be given to the CPO, who is still deemed to be the employer according to the IRA. Therefore, the last increase that daily-rated workers would have received is from 2005 to 2007. So therefore it was outstanding from 2008 to 2010, and no increase was given, not before when the hon. Larry Howai came and on October 30, 2012, so almost four to five years there had been suffocation out there under the

People's National Movement.

**Sen. Singh:** Shame! Shame!

**Sen. J. Lambert:** Because if they had done what they were supposed to have done, we would not have been sittings here today asking for $1.8 billion to pay arrears.

Therefore, Mr. President, when we speak about that, you have also the Tobago Regional Health Authority. It is not included in the $222million that is going to the Tobago House of Assembly. So I took the opportunity to ask the Minister of Finance and the Economy before I speak, "I have not seen anything about health", as Sen. Dr. Victor Wheeler would have mentioned earlier on, and he indicated to me that provisions are made. While it is not inserted on the paper here on the schedule, but therefore through transfers and other Ministries and so forth, provisions are made to pay the daily-rated workers in the Tobago Regional Health Authority.

They would sitting on the other side, hearing that all the daily-rated workers in the two, in the Regional Health Authority, the four in Trinidad, they had been paid. There are other Ministries that were paid, but they were paid by way of virement. While the Tobago House of Assembly—my understanding that they did and in fact before the agreement was signed, made provisions in the estimate for 2012/2013, 5 per cent. So I had asked myself the question, "How could you have made estimates for something where there was no agreement?"

So what we have learnt, based on investigation—I went to Tobago up to last week trying to find out. I understand that there was some moneys there, approximately $83 billion. So when someone spoke earlier today and

said if this $222 million would be sufficient to pay the arrears, only to indicate that they have already received some of the moneys from the national budget, so this is in addition because the Ministry of Finance and the Economy could not have paid or allocate moneys that was not catered for through the national budget. So my heart goes out and I really want to congratulate the Minister of Finance and the Economy and, by extension, the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago, for ensuring in this midterm review that those workers out there would be paid shortly.

Mr. President, as it relates to that, there are several places that have not been paid. You have Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation—demonstrated up to yesterday, up to yesterday, Mr. President—not being able to receive moneys when they would have realized that some of their counterparts, their other colleagues, would have received moneys, but they have not received. So therefore, that also will take care of some of the cases. I think I have some of it that I will put on record that has not been paid.

Mr. President, tonight I want to allay the fears of the people in Tobago; I want to allay the fears of the people in Tunapuna; I want to allay the fears of the people in the Civilian Corps in the defence force; I want to allay the fears of some of the people in the Forestry Division also that have not been paid and that is only a few that I would mention that have not been paid.

Mr. President, you have a central and local—as itemized. You have lands and surveys because if I do make the mistake by not calling those who have not been paid their arrears, they will say there is discrimination and therefore, I will only be seeking interest of some and not all, and being the

President General, it is prudent that I should mention all those who have not been paid. So you have Lands and Surveys Division from the Ministry of Housing, Land and Marine Affairs; the Tobago Regional Health Authority of which I mentioned; you have the Tobago Regional Health Authority; you have Licensing Division in the Ministry of Transport; you have Youth and Gender Affairs workers formerly of the El Dorado Youth Camp; you have the National Museum; you have our National Archives; Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation; Mayaro Regional Corporation; Insect Vector in the Ministry of Health, watchmen overtime; you have Brickfield Plantation/Cap-de-Ville of Forestry Division; no overtime, Namdevo; defence force; you have Amalgamated—I am the President of the National Trade Union Centre—and you have Amalgamated. You would have heard the sort of problems that they encountered with the Mayor, Lee Sing and others who blaming the CEO, and this one saying this and this one saying that, right in Port of Spain where we need our city to be clean. They have not been paid.

Mr. President, you have Postal Workers Union that communicate and send mails throughout the country—and go and drop mails for people to ensure that they get their mails—have not been paid. You have Contractors General Workers Union in San Fernando in the San Fernando Corporation have not been paid also. So, when one speaks in terms of—you are hearing demonstrations and you are hearing these sort of things—when because the people that I have just spoken about, they are in the lowest strata of the ladder; $200 a day labourers work for.

If you are in the private sector and you want a mason or something, they tell you three, four and five hundred, labourer taking—they work in the

public sector. There are no provisions that have been made for over the years. So, Mr. President, tonight I really want to say that I am a happy man. Yes, I am happy because of the fact that we were able to make a presentation tonight on a request, so I am just saying to the hon. Senators and them here, whilst, yes, it is right for justification and indicate what are the reasons, nothing is wrong with that, but as it relates to the arrears, it is factual, it is not assumption. And I am saying that the sort of "abusement" that I have received over the years, over four, five years, for the daily-rated workers not getting paid, I am happy tonight that we have decided that they will be paid shortly.

Mr. President, I am doing best what I could; I am speaking primarily on labour matters. Mr. President, whilst we speak in terms tonight of the arrears that have to be paid that the People's Partnership Government inherited over the period because of the fact that the last regime, the last Government did not think it fit to resolve and to ensure that these negotiations and so forth were collected. Mr. President, it seems to me that even the Opposition on the other side, after being in the corridors of power for over the years, approximately 40 years, the NAR Government was in power for five years, the UNC, three; PNM, 40 and they expect in three years—

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Six years.

**Sen. J. Lambert:**—three years, Mr. President, they expect the People's Partnership Government to do everything possible to rectify all the mess that they made over the years—[*Desk thumping*]—and it cannot be done. All of us are aware that this Government had not had one day holiday from the

time they came in power from May 24, 2010—if it is flood, is this, it is everything and they "stoop to their guns", so when I heard the Minister of Finance and the Economy speak in terms of growth in the economy—

**Sen. Hinds:** "He stoop to our guns."

**Sen. J. Lambert:**—I felt good. I felt good.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes, man.

**Sen. J. Lambert:** And therefore, sometimes I see brother Hinds, I say, "Brother Hinds, we were on the same table. We were around there and therefore you knew what went on." But I never will want to come to bash the things that were before to come and really make, you know, claims about it.

Mr. President, whilst I speak in terms of the arrears of which I just mentioned I am happy, Mr. President, there is also a negotiation for 2011—2013. As I speak, today is June 14, the sixth month in the last year of this negotiation. It expires on December 31, 2013, and we met in one session and I have indicated quite clearly to the CPO that therefore, we should try to complete this negotiation by the end of this month, but up to this day we have not had another call to sit.

So, we would find ourselves in the very said situation that if 2011—2013 is not complete before this national budget that is expected in October, somewhere around there, that arrears again will have to be tabled here to pay. Because being in the business of which I know well, starting as President of County Council, President of Local Government, National Officer today, President General, and also President of the National Trade Union Centre, so while my brother on the side there, on the other side,

comrade Al-Rawi could boast of his Masters and so forth, I have my Masters in Industrial Relations also. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!

**Sen. J. Lambert:** So all of us are very good in what we do. Mr. President, whilst I speak and I have indicated that 2011—2013 has not yet resolved, proposals are preparing now as I speak for 2014—2016. So, therefore, I am saying again that the People's Partnership Government met something there that will continue to overlap, and the Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development made it abundantly clear, from the time the People's Partnership Government came into office, they have ensured, out of 75 approximately 66 negotiations—[*Desk thumping*]—were completed.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah! Yeah! Well done. Well done.

**10.00 p.m.**

"So when yuh hear Sen. Dr. Lester Henry and dem saying, nothing is being done, today we are more satisfied in the labour movement."

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Ahh! [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. J. Lambert:** When we hear those on other side they have lost their way; that is all I have say. [*Laughter*] They have lost their way, but I am aware that the trade union movement and the workers of which they represent are much more comfortable today than they were under other governments gone by. [*Desk thumping*] I was here. I have had over 30-something years' experience in this, "so ah could tell yuh."

**Sen. Mohammed:** Tell them.

**Sen. J. Lambert:** We had forced the leader of the People's National

Movement—Sen. Hinds will tell you—to remove Minister Valley as the Minister of Local Government through demonstration with 20,000 people in Central Diego Martin. So when you speak in terms about this here not going and this—

Mr. President, I am appealing to the Government, this present Government, let us ensure that we resolve 2011—2013, get it out of the way. Offer the trade union leaders or the various trade unions that represent public sector workers within the Government something that they could accept, something acceptable, that we could resolve it because if we do not do that we will continue overlapping, seeking arrears, seeking to ensure that we have supplementary appropriation Bill coming here requesting more money to people.

Mr.President, one of the things that I am really appealing to, we are of the view, very strongly, that the CPO does not really bring credence to the labour movement, as is deemed in the IRA, to see after the affairs of public sector workers. We consider it, and I personally also, consider the CPO's office to be a hindrance in good collective bargaining because the reason I am saying this; how could you as an entity with the responsibility for negotiations meet with the various trade unions to negotiate, but you do not know what is happening out there? They do not know. They do not know what is happening on the ground. They are within the room of their air-condition and they want to sit.

Because you see, Mr.President, while the monthly paid has regulations that they operate with, daily rated public sector workers have what you call a collective agreement that has to be reviewed every three

years; is their terms and conditions of employment. So therefore, it is necessary to ensure if you speak in terms of love of people and to ensure the level of productivity continues to rise, you must ensure that the conditions of those workers be taken care of.

So I am really appealing, Mr. President, that we try to bring to fruition these negotiations because six months prior, before the expiration of the last one as I indicated, you have to ensure that you really have proposals to deal with.

Mr.President, emanating from that we have something that is of a burning issue not only to me as a leader of the largest union in Trinidad and Tobago, it is a burning issue for all daily rated workers within the public sector in Trinidad and Tobago under central and local Government and the Tobago House of Assembly because whilst I speak, there other daily rated workers in public sector that have a pension plan. Central and local Government and the Tobago House of Assembly daily rated workers do not have a pension plan.

It is inconceivable to have people working for the State 20—30 years of their whole livelihood and at the end of their working livelihood you have something that we negotiate that you call severance pay. It is a formula that the CPO and the unions may have agreed with two week's pay for every year and all these sort of things. When you go home through the severance it is a pittance that you receive; pittance that you receive.

So how could treat—and I am not bashing this Government—it is something that I mentioned earlier on, that the People's National Movement was there for 40 years; 40 years suffocating and oppressing public sector

daily rated workers in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Sen. J. Lambert:** How could you rationalize that monthly paid is given a pension at the end of their working life to live comfortably with their families, but the daily rated workers, "they doh have no 33 1/3 as how the monthly paid could so do. So sometimes based on the early age that you might start your work 30-something years, at the end of your working life they gih you $80,000, $100,000. Yuh have to now come to rush to go and look for CEPEP and URP work to survive; watchman on de outside".

So I am appealing that we ought not, as a Government, Mr.President, to continue to be paying this volume, this sum of arrears as what we are asking for tonight because whilst we speak in terms, and I would say that the workers are happy, those who have already received and those who are expected to receive from what we are doing we are doing here, it is not worth anything because the point remains, after five years what I should have been working for in 2008, you giving in 2013, so you have devalued—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Of what you get.

**Sen. J. Lambert:**—what you get. So whilst we speak in terms of arrears and it is 1.8 and what we are doing with all this money, "it does not really be beneficial to workers because what you could have bought in 2008 for $1 you cyar buy it in 2013, it might cost five."

So, Mr.President, as I am saying again, we would really like to see, very feverishly, I have said if it the last thing that I intend to ensure that we have in NUGFW, singularly, as speaking in terms, but as President of the National Trade Unions Centre, it encompasses everybody, is to ensure that

daily rated workers have a pension plan. And that saves the taxpayers out here that you do not have to go every Monday and look for money to pay severance because you would have had the pension that would gravitate with interest and so forth, and it is less burden that you would have on this consolidated fund that we operate.

Mr.President, as I said the people in Tobago, we have a situation really in Tobago where you would have had the Studley Park, you have a quarry out there—

**Hon. Senator:** The quarry.

**Sen. J. Lambert:**—the quarry, and that falls under your Ministry—Mr. Minister, Studley Park has the best aggregate—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Senator:** Correct.

**Sen. J. Lambert:**—in the entire—must be in the world, yet it is not properly developed. The workers out there, as it relates to the quarry cannot be considered to be as the ordinary quarry that you might have in Wallerfield or somewhere in the country; it is separate and apart because of the type of the material that emanates from there. And therefore, the people at Studley Park in Tobago ought to be treated much better than they are.

We have often made representation to take them away, the bargaining unit under central and local Government. We tried with the Tobago House of Assembly. They did in fact, make some efforts. They wrote to the CPO's Office trying to ensure that if we could enhance their pay because the people out there that work in the quarry, Mr. Minister and Mr. President, are dying, sometimes before that severance pay reaches. Therefore, when you have—there is a haven. We have to consider Studley Park as a haven that could

really improve and generate the type of income because if it is properly marketed and put in its proper perspective, we could generate income also coming from that.

So I would really like, as you are here, through the President, that you look at the Studley Park, and therefore, see how best that we could be able to deal with it in a more meaningful way than it is presently being done.

So, Mr.President, there are so many things that could be said relative to the labour movement, but because of what has transpired here tonight with that peace that will come to me and other leaders by way of the passing of that supplementary appropriation Bill and the extension of what has been given.

Mr.President, I have also seen—[*Crosstalk*] my presence is well accepted by all the Members, boy, "not like you as when Manning had thrown you out. [*Laughter*] Yuh did not have any friends, yuh know. Yuh had no friends. When Manning threw you out everybody took a side."

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** He said he was an apprentice.

**Sen. J. Lambert:** Yeah. Today because, Mr. President, he knows well, I think he came down and spoke on my platform.

**Sen. George:** "Eh heh?"

**Sen. J. Lambert:** Look him there, we know, we are very, we know each other well because I, in all my years, I live in the Diego Martin West constituency. You leader is my representative. I introduced your leader in the Carenage/Diego Martin area because when he came as a Senator I was really a local Government representative, "he from Tobago, he did know Diego Martin."

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Ahhh. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. George:** "So you responsible for forcing him on de people down there then?"

**Sen. J. Lambert:** I am sorry. [*Laughter*] No, but I showed—if while we laugh—if you take a survey now, whilst you leave me here and send anyone of your employees and say, go to anywhere in Carenage area and ask who is the only and best representative that they ever had, including the present representative in the lower House, they will tell there is only one representative, James Lambert. [*Laughter*] [*Desk thumping*] That is not a boast, it is well known because I am a people's person.

**Sen. George:** Ahh. Yes.

**Sen. J. Lambert:** And therefore—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** It is a political fact.

**Sen. J. Lambert:** I took the opportunity—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** To run from the seat?

**Sen. J. Lambert:** No, but I am coming to that. [*Laughter*] I took the opportunity—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** To run from the seat.

**Sen. J. Lambert:**—in 2002 when we were unceremoniously removed from Government by the then president, in 2001 in the 18/18. Yes. He gave PNM, he just call—I was going up Henry Street, I was a Senator in 2001. You are not even aware of that.

**Sen. George:** Something of moral value.

**Sen. J. Lambert:** Yes. Yeah, with all this sort of thing. And because of the dissatisfaction of the representative notwithstanding—he could tell

you—I was his main speaker throughout the country in the Diego Martin West. I fought against him in 2002 for UNC, you know. "So is not no fly by night that the People's Partnership do on meh"—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah. Yeah. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. J. Lambert:**—"jus' come to give meh something"; because I knew that if you would listen on the radio on a daily basis you would here the complaints upon complaints for someone who has been there for 20-odd years. Nothing to show whatsoever to the people of Diego Martin West!

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Show them the colour of yuh shirt, man! Show them the colour of yuh shirt, man!"

**Sen. J. Lambert:** But we know because of a PNM stronghold that I would not have won, you know, but I knew that my deposit was secure. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah. Yeah. Well said.

**Sen. J. Lambert:** You knew that. So therefore, I could walk in Diego Martin West freely. "I and the gentleman very good. Still whenever he see me, he does say dat is my councilor, you know; well done." But the time has come that you cannot only take friendship when people are suffering.

[Madam Vice-President]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes.

**Sen. J. Lambert:** And I could go in a series of things, but that does not warranty that tonight. I am saying, the time here, there are other speakers, Mr. President, I do not believe that—Madam Vice-President, sorry. I want to say that, I think, all of us here to tonight should applaud the Minister of Finance and the Economy.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Ageed.

**Sen. J. Lambert:** Applaud the Cabinet Ministers. Applaud the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Sen. J. Lambert:**—for bringing Trinidad and Tobago—because in 2010 it was like "ah miracle"—it was a miracle that took place in Trinidad and Tobago where the heavenly Father sent someone to ensure that the oppression that the people were going through in Trinidad and Tobago, enough was enough. Therefore, we are saying, I am of the view, very strongly, I have seen all Governments, I was there, "I aint sure if you were when they had raise the flag in 1962 on the Red House." I was there.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** I was about five years old.

**Sen. J. Lambert:** All right, you could not have been there, you was under the bed, but you heard the sound, you know. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Under the bed.

**Sen. J. Lambert:** And, you know, and then we had—I am saying while others will have said, PNM did things that was good, but the PNM up to George Chambers, I have always maintained that—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes.

**Sen. J. Lambert:** PNM up to George—from Eric Williams to George Chambers, after that PNM gone through.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah. Yeah. Good point.

**10.15 p.m.**

**Sen. J. Lambert:** Therefore the people are aware—so when you are fostering here that the time might come and you will say I do not believe that the people of Trinidad and Tobago are that backward after 2010 with that

suffocation throughout what you have done to this country that they will want to put you back in power. The People's Partnership Government will continue to reign because we are seeking the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you, Madam Vice-President. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Fitzgerald Hinds:** Thank you very much, Madam Vice-President. [*Desk thumping*] Madam Vice-President, I do not propose to waste too much of my time responding to my good friend, except of course in the courtesy and the long tradition of this House to compliment him on his maiden contribution here this evening. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** It is not maiden—[*Inaudible*]

**Sen. F. Hinds:** It does strike me as maiden anyway.

**Hon. Senator:** "He does not be in the House, you see.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "He doh be around enough to"—[*Inaudible*]

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Madam Vice-President, I just want to say to my friend in passing, that he is obviously not only out of touch with the trade union movement; he is obviously out of touch with all the people of Trinidad and Tobago, because he is saying that the people—he is saying that the trade union movement is all happy now and things are really good for them. As the Prison Commissioner said recently, they are all like well-fed babies in a dry crib with a rattle.

But where are they now in relation to this Government? He will not even be able to attend the Labour Day celebrations next week in Fyzabad. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Lambert:** I will speak on that at the end.

**Hon. Senator:** "He can't go."

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Where is Ancel Roget? Where is Vincent Caberra? Where is David Abdulah? So, I know my friend is completely out of whack and therefore I will not detain myself further on him and on that, except further to say, he complimented his comrade, the Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development.

I cannot compliment him because Sen. Al-Rawi pointed out here today that not only did the Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development speak a blatant untruth in relation to his qualifications, attempt to blemish his good name and character, but he was shameless in so doing, obviously desperate. When a Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, in the course of a contribution in a debate such as this, could descend to the level that he did, it is desperation. So much said for that.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** What letter you are talking about?

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Madam Vice-President, I am sure that the Attorney General who obtained his masters' degree at the University of London will know and he should have been able to tell the Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, that Sen. Faris Al-Rawi, might be brighter than him, but he did the same, of course, at the same university.

Madam Vice-President, it is well-known, well-rehearsed this evening that we are here in respect of a provision for supplementary appropriation in the sum of $2,898,910, 400; to fund what the Bill and what the Government seeks to convince us, is urgent and critical recurrent and capital expenditure. Just for the record and just to remind those of Trinidad and Tobago who may

have missed it, 87 per cent of this $2.8 billion extra that the Government is seeking the Parliament's approval this evening—well, they sought it a few days ago in the other place—87 per cent of it is to be spent on recurrent expenditure. That is to say expenditure to deal with salaries and transfers and so on, but not items that would lead to capital improvement, improving the capital stock which is expected to generate more money, more profits into the future, only 13 per cent of this substantial extra amount that the Government is seeking this evening, will be so spent. Of course, the documents before us will show in greater detail what some of those expenditures are and, of course, we are obliged to address some of them.

Madam Vice-President, I would like to look at the additional allocation that they are seeking tonight of $203 million for the Ministry of National Security under Head 22. Of course, it says that this funding or at least a part thereof, $1,203,000 is to fund, or is funding that is required to meet the cost of rental of an office to accommodate the Hoop for Life Programme which was established in 2012 as a crime-fighting initiative. You would remember, Madam Vice-President, that coming out of the ill-fated state of emergency, when we pointed out to the Government that they had abused not only the constitutional and legal rights of many people in this country, but they had physically abused them, incarcerated many.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** How much case you fight? How much case you win on that, to say that?

**Sen. F. Hinds:** When this Government realized that the thing had flopped, and I remember Sen. Deyalsingh, Sen. Al-Rawi and I towards the end of the state of emergency on every radio station, telling the people of this country,

this Government passed emergency powers and established a state of emergency with a few days left to go, they had not arrested one single person under the preventative or the prevention powers under the law, the proclamation. The Government hearing it in this Parliament panicked and it went out there and found 13 Muslims to arrest to make the record look good, because it would have been a travesty if the state of emergency had begun, run its course and finished and not one person arrested under emergency powers.

In fact, the 8,000-plus people they arrested were people for whom the police for months and probably years had outstanding warrants for maintenance, for tickets and all manners of things—

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Driving offences.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Relate that to the Bill now.

**Sen. F. Hinds:**—so they went. Madam Vice-President, when they recognized the serious and grievous embarrassment, they picked up 13 Muslims and then they released them at the end of the emergency powers because there was no evidence to go any further, and they did so on the suggestion that there was a threat on the life of the Prime Minister and we now know that she had a report from the very police saying that the threat did not exist at the time they arrested the men.

That is the record of this Government. But, Madam Vice-President, the Government went a stage further, they introduced the Hoop for Life Programme which is what I want to speak briefly about, and that was supposed to be a palliative, a softener to the brutality of the state of emergency. They decided to offer the people of the east-west corridor that.

All they had offered them since they came into Government then, and up to today, is a new prison at Santa Rosa, for which they have so far spent over $100 million and spending almost a million dollars a month in rent; having spent $60 million to repair the roof which had caved in a few weeks after they bought it.

Realizing that is what they had given the people—the people had asked for water and they gave them vinegar—they came up with the Hoop for Life Programme and they have spent a lot of money. You would remember Madam Vice-President, that they brought Shaq O'Neal to launch it. That beautiful brother out of America; talented son he is. [*Interruption*] You would remember he lifted the Prime Minister, making her high, as I am sure she enjoyed.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Don't get nasty like that.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** And, Madam Vice-President, having so done, we were told and we still have not gotten clear answers, we understood was the private sector paid the $10 million, then the Minister of Sport say the Government paid it, then the Minister of National Security at the time say it is both State and private sector. We still do not know but they spent $10 million on Shaq, and after the first cycle of the Hoop for Life they told us that they spent $12 million more. So, 10 plus 12 is 22, and I asked the question in this House in the course of another debate; you spent under $2 million in prizes, what has become of the other $10 million out of the $12 million you said you spent? But we know enough to know that when this Government tells you it spends $10 million it is more like 50.

So, they come tonight and they tell us that they need another $1

million to pay rent associated with an office which I am told is situated on Tragarete Road opposite to the COP building or office down there towards the end of Tragarete Road. And they tell us that this was introduced—Hoop for Life—as a crime-fighting initiative that was targeted as Prof. Bernard would tell us at so-called at-risk youth, but like everything else with this Government, they come with a wonderful facade. They sent Sen. Dr. Tewarie to launch it, and give you all manners of comfort and nice impression in Goebbels-esque fashion and at the end of the day there is a vicious sting in the UNC tail.

Madam Vice-President, I want to tell you tonight, at-risk youth remain untouched by this Hoop for Life Programme. Most of the players who participated in this were persons who played basketball long before it was introduced and most of them are police officers, soldiers, coast guardsmen, other public servants, men working in the construction industry; it did not affect at-risk youth and I am venturing to tell the Government tonight that 99 per cent of those who played and benefitted were not at-risk youth.

**Sen. Maharaj:** And it was very successful.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** I know it was very successful. How could it be successful if it did not reach the target you were talking about? [*Interruption*] That does not make sense.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** It looks like one team played the whole tournament.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** And I would tell you about the Laventille team—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes.

**Sen. F. Hinds:**—and the Marabella team—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** You upset that they win.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Madam Vice-President, let me tell you, the top players in each of those teams were members of, either the defence force or the police or the coast guard. That is the fact.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "They are role models for the youths, wha wrong wit' dat?"

**Sen. F. Hinds:** But that is not the point, hon. AG. Would you allow me to speak undisturbed, and be courteous? That is not the point. [*Crosstalk*] I know that is asking a lot of you, but please. [*Interruption*]

Madam Vice-President, I need your protection from the Attorney General, otherwise I may have to protect myself. [*Laughter*] So, Madam Vice-President, as I was saying, 99 per cent of those who played, and I venture to 75 per cent of the youngsters who took part were gainfully employed. "Yeah"? They employed some coaches, not the best. There were no advertisements. It was done in a very ad hoc and haphazard manner. They paid coaches between $4,000 to $5,000 a month and, as we know, from those in the know in the basketball fraternity, not the top, not the best that you could have found. They rented vehicles and they hired drivers to drive them. Most times the drivers had nothing to do, but brand new vehicles were rented.

The question is—some of the money was spent on that—who rented these vehicles? Who had the lion's share from the money that was supposed to be for the at-risk youth on the corridor who they had brutalized and introduced this as an anti-crime measure? [*Interruption*] They now have an office that they want us to allocate money for rent for. I understand the

office is decked with all kinds of modern hardware, computers; people are in there, you cannot get no basketball statistics, and the people are fearing that this must be another strategy on the part of the Government, like they did with the Colour me Orange Programme, to get ID cards and nicknames and addresses so that they could target people under the pretext of offering a programme to assist at-risk youth. Hence the reason I say there is a deadly sting in the tail.

If you went to the office now that they want us to allocate money for rent for, you cannot get a basketball statistic, but something is happening in there and the people are becoming weary of it. I am telling you, Madam Vice-President. They do not know what they are doing.

**10.30 p.m.**

Who did they rent these vehicles from? Who are they renting that building from? Imagine you need a dedicated building for Hoop for Life.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Show the people some dignity man. What did you do?

**Sen. F. Hinds:** I know, I know.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** You were representing them too long.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** I know, I know. And the note before us also goes on to say, Madam Vice-President, that the Movant/Laventille initiative must cost $8 million again. They had "ah" function in the savannah for Laventille. They fed them well on that day, but the tents, the chairs, the catering, everything, the money went far from Laventille. The people understand that. And they tell us here tonight that funds are required for the Hoop for Life Programme including for the award of prizes for Cycle 1.

As far as I know, they have already paid those moneys. They must have taken them out from some other fund, but "dey" coming tonight to get money to pay prizes. They paid a first prize of $1 million, "ah" second price of $500,000, "ah" third prize of $250,000 and Minister Warner as he then was, he got a "vaps", "pajama energy" I call it, and on the evening when they announced the three prizes, he suddenly say we will make a fourth prize and he gave $100,000 to another team, I think team Marabella.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** From the "Train Line".

**Sen. F. Hinds:** And that is how they do it.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** From the "Train Line" in Marabella.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** That is how they do it.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** I am very proud of them.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** But they come tonight for money to pay prize and they want $8 million in this Morvant/Laventille initiative to pay prize and the prize is less than, as I just demonstrated, $2 million. What is happening to all the other money? Well I want to tell you, Madam Vice-President, I have filed a question in that regard and they will answer in this Parliament at the first opportunity.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Thank you. Well at least you will know we will answer at the first opportunity.

**Sen. Herry:** Or let it lapse.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Madam Vice-President, so while those who played, enjoyed it, those who won, enjoyed the success, as a whole I will be courageous enough to say this programme was a failure.

**Sen. Mohammed:** Wrong.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Oooh my."

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Because it did not meet at-risk youth as it was supposed to, and the bulk of the money that this Government has allocated and intends to allocate to it, did not go to the benefit of the at-risk youth and the people in these communities who were supposed to be the key beneficiaries. That is a fact. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Lambert:** "Yuh cyan go back and run in that community, why you doh go and run for Diego Martin?

**Sen. F. Hinds:** That is a fact.

**Sen. Lambert:** "Doh go back there."

**Sen. Herry:** "He know he cyar go dey."

**Sen. F. Hinds:** So, Madam Vice-President, having so said, I wish to press on.

**Sen. Mohammed:** Please do.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** They could grumble as they like. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. George:** "You is the only person who is grumbling."

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Head 42, Madam Vice-President. They have come here tonight telling us that they want to increase the allocation that we agreed in the last budget debate, [*Crosstalk*] money that they did not budget for.

**Sen. George:** Grumbling, grumbling.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** They told us that they want another $257 million for local government. Well of course local government elections are on the horizon, [*Crosstalk*] impending—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Ha, ha. Ha.

**Sen. F. Hinds:**—and other contracted services $17 million. And listen to

this, Madam Vice-President, Cabinet agreed that funds be provided to meet outstanding moneys owed to 38 contractors who completed work in August 2012 following severe flooding in western Trinidad. You saw it, I saw it, and there was indeed severe flooding in western Trinidad at that time.

**Sen. Karim:** That is correct.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** And of course the Government came in, and they again in Goebb fashion, pretended to be noble and offered something good which the people would want to welcome. But what are the facts? What are the facts?

Madam Vice-President, I have here with me some information arising out of that. I have here with me the list of the 38 contactors who they brought into the Diego Martin and Carenage areas to deal with the flooding issues at that time; pretending to be noble. But they give you with one hand and they take with another, probably more than another.

**Sen. Coudray:** Payments to help.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** I would not say four, I might say ten.

**Hon. Senator:** Say it.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Madam Vice-President, I have a list here—let me show you "eh". I have the list of the 38 contactors. Let "meh" start off by telling you. One of these contractors is call M-A-S-T (MAST Vacuum Services) from 13 Allum Street, Siparia Old Road, Massahood Junction, Fyzabad; that is one. The other one Ramesh Banwarie Construction Limited, from 55 Garth Road, Williamsville, Trinidad, West Indies. The other one; Blue-Stream Services Limited, from 7 Perseverance Road, Carapichaima. [*Crosstalk*] The other one that provided meals—I am just taking a sample

of the 38, I am just taking a sample.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Call out all 38! Boy de PNM—

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Isaac Ramlal from 18 Mile Mark, Main Road, Tabaquite. Understand, Isaac Ramlal Construction. And the one that was supposed to have provided meals—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** The vendetta of the PNM will never stop!

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Churkoo—let me see—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Read out all 38, do not be selective.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Madam Vice-President, could you ask the hon. Attorney General to conduct himself with some—[*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Coudray:** Are these places in Trinidad?

**Sen. F. Hinds:**—No. 173 Churkoo Village, Manahambre Road, Princes Town.

The point I want to make, Madam Vice-President, is that for the most part—I do not have, I "doh" have all the time—for the most part, the Minister of Local Government and his friends brought contractors from their constituencies and all outside of Diego Martin. They have one or two from Diego Martin and environs. [*Laughter and desk thumping*] And when I say one or two, I mean one or two, but the bulk of it—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Call them out.

**Sen. F. Hinds:**—they brought their friends, and I will develop this themeshortly, but worse than that—

**Sen. Mohammed:** The mud was cleared.

**Sen. F. Hinds:**—I want the people of Diego Martin and so on, who suffered to understand [*Crosstalk*] that Ramesh Banwari who claims to

have cleaned up Morne Coco Road from Alyce Glen to Pinewood Gardens, part of the money we have to allocate tonight is to pay him for that, $356,850. He claims to have cleaned up the Morne Coco Road, the ravine by the pan yard, $316,000-plus. The ravine off the Morne Coco Road, another 316—exact figure "eh" $316,350—and Farm Road, Richplain 213, a total of $1,400,000 to Ramesh Banwari.

And I want the people of Alyce Glen and Morne Coco Road and Farm Road who experienced this to decide for themselves whether that was worth the money that the Government paying to their friends. [*Crosstalk*] Everybody want to get cleaned up. It was a devastating flood, and I could understand the desperation, but there is a sting in the tail with the UNC. And that is the point I want to make. [*Crosstalk*]

Madam Vice-President, Diego Martin Highway, "ah fella say he clean ah portion ah that", $193,000. This is Blue Stream: St. Lucien Road, $213,000; Progressive Drive $138,000; Dorrington Gardens $239,850; Gopaul Avenue; Thomas, Ann Avenue; Vanderpool; Charles; and the list goes on. This Blue Stream claiming out of the $17 million they want tonight, $2.1 million, $2,190,405. That is how they do it. Let me give you one more example before I close on that.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Gih we de one from Diego Martin."

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Just now.

**Hon. Senator:** We anxious to hear that.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** MAST Construction, they say they clean part of the La Horquette Road, in Glencoe, $80,000; Rodney Street, $80,000 and they go

on, Abbe Poujade, Raymond Street, Jellicoe and all that. They have provided the Government in this Bill with $1.6million. But, I "aint" tell you the worse yet. Let me give you the example of MAST, because you see, I have two lists before me. I have an original list, where these 38 contractors together—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Call out all 38.

**Sen. F. Hinds:**—including MAST who I just told you, billed the Government for $1.6. Let me give you the exact figure before "dey" put me before the Privileges Committee and try to get me out of here, right.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Nah, nah, nah, we wah you here."

**Sen. F. Hinds:** $1,673,250; now that is MAST construction. This is the final bill. But the first bill that they had submitted to the Minister of Local Government was for the sum of $2,944,000, and when they submitted—and all the rest is like that, I can call the figures. They submitted a total claim of $20,729,211.09. The Minister of Local Government I understand went to them and say, "Oh God fellas. All yuh embarrassing me. How all yuh go do that? It looking bad."

By then, we know this week that the Government had knowledge of the issue with the fire truck. Now I know. So they realize the fire truck coming down the shoot and they did not want this come down. So they spoke to their friends—[*Crosstalk*] and they said, "how you go do we that?" So you know what they did, for the same work, having already billed $20 million, MAST construction, by way of example, they cut without any adjustment, because by then like the fire truck, [*Crosstalk*] the work was already done. [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Senator:** We are telling you how it happened.

**Hon. Senator:** But it was a cover up—[*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Madam Vice-President, as they tell the country now, by the time they came to deal with the fire truck, it was already pulled out from the 60 feet ravine or wherever it was—

**Hon. Senator:** Thirty feet.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** The 30 feet, and they were committed and they had no choice.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Dat is the truth."

**Sen. F. Hinds:** In similar fashion here, MAST construction, after they whispered to them and tell them this looking like the fire truck, cut his bill, no adjustment in the work, the work was already done. He cut his bill by $1.2 million. So how genuine was the $2.9 million in the first place?

**Hon. Senator:** Obviously. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. F. Hinds:** You understand? And the story goes on. Another one, cut his claim by $1.2—Ramesh Banwarie, his final Bill here is now $1,412,890. He cut his Bill—I will tell you from what. His first offering was $2.6million. He just cut his own by $1.2 million. This is what they are doing to the people of this country.

**Sen. George:** "You obviously doh know what went on." [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. F. Hinds:** "Ah know. Ah know these figures are here and they speak for themselves." And you are now before us in the Parliament asking for 17 million to pay these 38 contractors. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. George:** Read on.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Bottom line, [*Crosstalk*] Madam Vice-President, may I

continue?

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** What you have against Banwarie and [*Inaudible*]?

**Sen. F. Hinds:** May I continue? So I am saying we have had natural disaster. The people of Trinidad and Tobago were affected and afflicted. They deserve support. Their streets and their homes deserve to be clean, but this Government also has to come clean with taxpayers' money in this country.

**Hon. Senator:** "Yuh now know that."

**Sen. F. Hinds:** That is what they have to do.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** They profit from the misfortune of others.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** They profit from the misfortune of others. Then I heard—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "You is ah lawyer, you cyah say that."

**Sen. F. Hinds:** "I cyah say that". And I heard Sen. Al-Rawi remind us what one of your colleagues had said about CEPEP workers and calling them pigs feeding at the trough. Well this, I want to submit, is the epitome of piggish behaviour.

**Sen. George:** You do not know, boy.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Madam Vice-President, may I continue.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** He "ent" walk in Diego Martin.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Might I continue.

**Sen. George:** "You ay even know what yuh talking about."

**Sen. F. Hinds:** I know, I know. I see here they want money to purchase more vehicles for the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Well this is an interesting development.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Because all "yuh" did not buy any for the police.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** No, we never buy so all the police used to just walk. [*Laughter*] That is the logic of the Attorney General. [*Crosstalk*] "Dat is wha ah tell yuh." That is what former Minister Jack Warner calls "donkey logic", and he would only say to him, "hee haw"; [*Laughter*] "donkey logic".

MadamVice-President, just to help the Attorney General in his simplicity, I recall when I was in the Ministry of National Security up until 2007—

**Hon. Senator:** "Awww."

**Sen. F. Hinds:** We added at least we added at least—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Tell us why yuh leave."

**Sen. F. Hinds:**—a thousand vehicles to the police fleet. [*Crosstalk*] The problem with vehicles in the police service has to do with the problem of Trinidad and Tobago, that is to say, maintenance, a systematic approach to maintaining fleet management of vehicles. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Why yuh did not put in dat?"

**Sen. F. Hinds:** You will not see any allocation for that here. They are not about that. They are about opportunities. That is why they are here for more money now. We are running a deficit budget. MadamVice-President, I have said before and you know I am not an economist, but I know enough to understand what is happening with our economy.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Remember Ish and his Cherokee jeeps.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** I know enough to understand.

**10.45p.m.**

I know enough to understand, and I want to say to the Minister of

Finance and the Economy just before I come back to this, he gave us a very rosy picture of the economy, and some of my colleagues have dealt with that. I would not join Minister Karim in complimenting the Minister of Finance and the Economy; I will not join my friend who is estranged from the trade union, James Lambert. [*Laughter and desk thumping*] I will not join them in complimenting the Minister of Finance and the Economy. I have to watch this thing with a different eye.

**Sen. Ramlogan:** A racial eye!

**Sen. F. Hinds:** "Yuh see?"

**Sen. Ramlogan:** "Manowarie eye."

**Sen. F. Hinds:** "Yuh see?"

**Sen. Ramlogan:** "No, speak de truth." Call out all the CEPEP contractors.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** "Yuh see?"

**Sen. Ramlogan:** "Is a PNM racial agenda yuh come here wit." Call out all 38 contractors!

**Sen. F. Hinds:** You think I should engage the Attorney General in that scandalous discussion? [*Interruption*] I would not. It is not worth my while.

**Sen. Ramlogan:** The racial matter of the PNM!

**Sen. F. Hinds:** It is not worth my while. Let me tell you, Madam Vice-President—[*Interruption*] I have said before without apology and without fear of contradiction, that this Government is an imbalanced Government!

**Sen. Ramlogan:** Yes—

**Sen. F. Hinds:** All the development that you are talking about—

**Sen. Ramlogan:** "And de PNM was balanced!"

**Sen. F. Hinds:**—I am not seeing it on the corridor. I know that. I "doh" have to apologize for that. That is a fact.

**Sen. Ramlogan:** And the PNM was balanced. [*Interruption*]

**Sen. F. Hinds:** It is a fact. But, Madam Vice-President—

**Madam Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, Hansard has indicated it is getting in difficulty to register exactly what the Member is saying. Kindly allow Sen. Hinds to continue in silence.

**Sen. Ramlogan:** He needs to speak a little louder.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** I am most grateful to you, Madam Vice-President, for the courtesy of your protection and I can revert now to my usual calm style. Madam Vice-President, I cannot be as sanguine about these figures as they want me to feel. You know, it is like, as Malcolm X said, you stick—you inject my face with Novocane, "my whole jaw numb", and you are pulling out my teeth with a pliers. "I not taking that!" Ripping up my face with a pliers because, you see, they want you to be numb and dead.

Madam Vice-President, listen to this: public sector debt. The Minister of Finance and the Economy told us all the good things about the macroeconomic indicators and Sen. Henry was quick enough and truthful enough, to point out, you met them so. For an example, the Heritage and Stabilization Fund, he told us that there was US $4 billion in the Heritage and Stabilization Fund. But he met $3.8, so nothing to scream about.

He told us about revenue continued to be all right. It held its place. He told us about inflation, all the macroeconomic indicators, but he did not tell us too much. In one line he mentioned debt. Am I right? But what is the

reality of this? The total public sector debt is on the—public debt is on the increase: public sector debt, Central Government debt, the contingent liabilities where you guarantee money for the state enterprises like EFCL, which we are having no end of trouble with. Right?—letters of guarantee to the state enterprises and the statutory authorities as well, and then Central Government debt, both domestic and external, all of them.

Madam Vice-President, the economist say—he admitted that we, up to two years ago, were at about 36 per cent, and that is safe, where you have 36 per cent of your revenue being used to repay debt—the debt to GDP ratio. When you are 36 you are all right. There are some countries in a very bad situation, all over 100 per cent—bankrupt countries, failed states. So when you are at 36 per cent GDP you are not too bad. When you start to get in the realm of 50-something, 54—like we are at 54 now, Trinidad and Tobago is watching down the precipice.

I have in my possession—and can tell my friends on the other side that the Central Bank, looking at the figures—published figures—which my leader quoted in the debate in the lower House, which he quoted—showing that the Central Bank projects public debt in this country to go to 71 per cent by 2015. So we are not heading in the right direction when it comes to that macroeconomic indicator. Seventy-one per cent in two years! And the Minister of Finance has already told us, having come to this Chamber as a Senator, having come to the office of Minister of Finance and the Economy, he told us upfront, we could expect deficit financing until about 2016, when he anticipates by then he would have left office.

So all of the borrowing, all of the increased debt that I have just

demonstrated, it is to utilize in the ways that I have showed you, whether it is in Agricultural Development Bank, through a company called Top Design, which I spoke about here before; whether it is in the EFCL, where they are raping that company, and I use that word in metaphor, and I speak as chairman of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee which looks after their affairs. I know what I am speaking about. And when we raised issue with them, Madam Vice-President, instead of coming in front of us and their colleagues on the other side, they decided to run away. They took off, the entire EFCL board, which comes under the purview of the Ministry of Education. Well, with the one exception. Everybody else "run". When they realized "we zeroing in on them and calling them to book, they take off."

The chairman—a former chairman called Ronald Phillip—you remember that?

**Sen. George:** Sad.

**Sen. F. Hinds**: Um? One called Rudy Narinesingh.

**Sen. George:** Sad.

**Sen. F. Hinds**: Mr. Shafiat Ali and others.

**Sen. George:** Sad.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** "You could say sad how you want, is I feeling sad"—[*Desk thumping*] because I know what you all are doing to this country with a smile and I do not like it.

**Sen. George:** Sad. Sad.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** You could say what you want.

**Sen. George:** You could say what you want too.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** As far as I am concerned, if I may be permitted a

colloquialism, all the borrowing of which I speak, you all borrowing to take.

**Sen. George:** Sad.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Because that is what is happening in my country. My country is bleeding.

**Sen. George:** Sad.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** And that is what I want "all yuh" to address. "You in Government now. Doh tell me about wha happen 30 years ago!" [*Laughter and desk thumping*] "Dat is wha ah want yuh tuh address! All ah de board members take off. And dis ting about Moonan in CAL, our former Senatorial colleague, that is not new, yuh know." We had a "fella" who was a project manager in the EFCL called Ramlal. He left there under dubious circumstances and he went to the NCRHA, the North-Central Regional Health Authority. His name appeared again in the papers "de odder day." Problems there again.

It is like in termitic fashion "dey going around". Moonan lost us $800 million in CAL. He was fired by the Minister of Finance and the Economy for bad governance, and this heartless, shameless Government offers him to the country again as Chairman of the HDC.

**Hon. Senator:** "And yuh frighten for that?"

**Sen. F. Hinds**: Frighten? "We not frighten"; we are ashamed!

**Sen. Ramlogan:** He came from the bosom of the PNM, do not forget that!

**Sen. F. Hinds:** But he had UNC genes.

**Sen. Ramlogan:** "Now he have UNC jersey too and he proud."

**Hon. Senator:** No, he is COP.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** And this is what we are facing in this country. I encountered

them in the Agricultural Development Bank. I came in this Parliament, Madam Vice-President, and spoke about the conduct of the then chairman, Rudy Maharaj, and I remember the Minister getting up here—Minister Devant Maharaj—and challenging me and saying all manners of things. You know what? Since then, you know what is the post note? "Rudy Maharaj gone! He, self had to turn around and fire him when the burden became too heavy and too embarrassing to carry."

And everywhere you go, whether it is CDA, whether it is PTSC, whether it is Airports Authority, whether it is ADB, whether it is EFCL, whether it is EMBD, whether it is Namdevco, whether it is NP—and that was the first one, a $40million contract, which this Attorney General scuttled when I raised it, and it is now gone. And they do not want you to talk. Right now "dey taking notes here, Madam Vice-President." They want to report me to you for the Privileges Committee.

**Sen. George:** Anybody taking notes of what you say?

**Sen. F. Hinds:** That is what they want to do.

**Sen. Ramlogan:** You are our greatest asset.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Madam Vice-President—and this is not only my view. The people of Trinidad and Tobago feel this way.

**Sen. George:** If Penny was talking I will take notes.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** The people of Trinidad and Tobago, even one of their own—let me quote quickly for you, Madam Vice-President—

**Sen. George:** "If Penny talking I will take some notes."

**Sen. F. Hinds:**—from the *Daily Express*.

**Hon. Senator:** "Yuh making mischief."

**Sen. F. Hinds:** "Just now, nuh. Leh me quote—doh study him"—from the *Daily Express* of Thursday, April 18, 2013. One of their colleagues—well we still call him Mr. Justice Volney—hear what he told the country in an article under the rubric: "Volney: tokenism on the state boards." He said, and I quote.

> "If you look at the boards, most of the chairmen are related to Chandresh Sharma or the deep south UNC posse—

**Sen. Ramlogan:** Yeah, but dah is foolishness!

**Sen. F. Hinds:** "Black people put on the board like those in the Cabinet, is tokenism, which is the philosophy of UNC leadership."

Now, Madam Vice-President, those are Mr. Herbert Volney's words, their colleague. [*Interruption*]

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** "All yuh disown him already."

**Sen. George:** "Yuh making de people behind yuh laugh, fuss yuh talking—

**Sen. F. Hinds**: Those are his words, and he said that. He said other things but I "doh" have to dwell on it. Those are not my words, those are his. He said he remembered the Prime Minister from time to time talking about looking at balance and all of that, and he knows that it was mere tokenism. I am not in the position to test the veracity or otherwise of this. I simply put it on the record.

Madam Vice-President, may I continue? May I continue? This Government has a track record. Minister Tewarie told us that he could identify 14 projects in and around Port of Spain. "Ent he told us that today?"

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** East Port of Spain.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** East Port of Spain. We challenged him to name them. I remember being called by one of—or a group of my former constituents of Laventille East/Morvant and I was not surprised at the call because many citizens are incensed at this Government's behaviour. Sen. Tewarie and an entourage came with food and drink to launch and to open the development of a box drain in Mon Repos, Morvant. I went to see it for myself, in disbelief—about 100 or so feet of box drain.

**Sen. Ramlogan:** "The reason is becor all yuh never build one feet ah box drain in Laventille. Dah is why he gone, to celebrate dat."

**Sen. F. Hinds:** They, Madam Vice-President—we have told them before. Three Ministries of Government, they have announced, will be moved from Port of Spain to somewhere else.

**Sen. Ramlogan:** "And what wrong wit dat?"

**Sen. F. Hinds:** The Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Trade and some other.

**Sen. Ramlogan:** And what is wrong with that?

**Sen. F. Hinds:** COSTATT is to be removed. YTEPP head office is to be removed. Minister Karim spoke of the oncology centre here today. He criticized what is there—foundation laid, everything; another one going somewhere else; law school going somewhere else. And when I hear Minister Tewarie talking about, "If you walk anywhere you will see development", I used to think he is going crazy, but he is right, but it depends on where you walk and where you look!

**Hon. Senator:** "It have place tuh walk in Port of Spain?"

**Sen. F. Hinds:** And Port of Spain is dying. This Government is overseeing

the death of Port of Spain, and Minister Tewarie who spoke glibly today about development planning, he knows that modern development deals with both—you develop cities to include residential space as well. He knows that, and he knows that he met a plan in there to do some development in this place. They "doh" have no time for that. Everything is taking place elsewhere. But God is a good God.

And while they do that, Madam Vice-President, they have some very special friends who they look out for. I am putting this Government on notice that I will be filing a question in this Parliament for the Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development, or the Prime Minister, to tell me every single contract that SIS has gotten since May 2010.

**Sen. Ramlogan:** No problem.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Not just the Siparia; not just the licensing—what is the name of it?—the Transport Authority; not just the one that was scuttled in WASA for $800 million; not the Siparia one that was—the estimate from PSAEL, the project manager, for $36 million and it ended up in SIS hands for $51 million. Not only that—and SIS doing work on the Prime Minister's residence, "hide" the logo on their vehicle. "What yuh hiding for?" You sponsor toys—

**Sen. Ramlogan:** "I already debunk dat already! Dat is not true!"

**Sen. F. Hinds:** That is not true? That is not true? So I am putting you on notice—

**Sen. Ramlogan:** "Dah is foolishness!"

**Sen. F. Hinds:—**that I will be filing a question—

**Sen. Ramlogan:** File it and stop talking!

**Sen. F. Hinds:**—and you all will tell the country, you will show the country with the answer, why and how he is such a wonderful, favourite friend.

**Madam Vice-President:** Sen. Hinds?

**Sen. F. Hinds:** My lady?

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

*Motion made*: That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. S. Cudjoe*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**11.00 p.m.**

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Thank you very much, my colleagues. I am very grateful to my colleagues on this side for their support, but I want the world to know, the manner of man I am, when I stand up for what is right and righteousness, once I walk with God, I do not need no other friend. [*Desk thumping*] I will do it by myself with God, and I will take you all on any day, any time, any place with God and wind. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** That is the Prime Minister lineman. Oh God!

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Madam Vice-President, let me continue. This Government is squandering our money as far back as, I think, 1995 or 6. When that Attorney General was on Petrotrin Board, this Government paid $35 million to a lawyer or two in London. He knows all about this. I filed a question here the other day—I think the lawyer is called Ackbar Ali—asking about legal fees paid by the Office of the Attorney General and I got a half picked duck, and when I ask supplemental questions, ask another question. Well, I have filed another question.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Praise God!

**Sen. F. Hinds:** So we will get to the bottom of it.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Of course!

**Sen. F. Hinds:** All the millions of dollars paid out of the $345 million that was allocated to the Office of the Attorney General.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** And you jealous.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Jealous? I told you already I grow up on bread and salt butter. I drink no alcohol.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Tell your neighbour that who you are suing for one foot of land.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** I eat no meat. I could live on a shoe string budget—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Tell your neighbour that who you are suing for a foot of land, "nah".

**Sen. F. Hinds:**—and I "doh" need no favours from nobody.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Why you doh give her the land."

**Sen. F. Hinds:** But let me continue, Madam Vice-President. You heard Minister Karim get up here this evening—I just have a short time left, so I will not waste my time on you—and told us about the training programme that they have put in place for SRPs. Couple days ago, I heard the wet behind the ear Minister of National Security—I have to excuse him because he told the country that they will be recruiting thousands of police officers. Well, that is his understanding.

This Government, understanding that we have a shortage of manpower in the police service and women power to, understanding that these officers need serious training so that they could modernize their

technique, so that they could become more scientific in the days like today when the IC witness is almost a thing of the past, instead of focusing on that, they want to give the society the misdirected, misplaced comfort that there are plenty police officers about, so they have decided to mass produce 2,500 police.

When I was in National Security, we went down to the police training college because every time you ask the police for support to do something they identify the problems they have, their resources that they lack and they wanted. So we found ourselves running from behind all the time. You want some patrols in a particular hot spot, we need vehicles, we need manpower. When we get them the vehicles—well, they have vehicles, but not every police could drive police vehicles. Since then we changed it so every police must have a drivers' license now. We say we want more police, well attrition, fellas resigning, fellas dying and what have you, and we are not getting enough. Well, you need to recruit some more. We cannot because the police training college is in a mess; cannot take 2,250 at a time. So spent about $20 million and repaired it. It is in pristine shape today, modern air conditions classrooms, a far cry from when I was a police recruit and a police instructor. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** You?

**Sen. Hinds:** We did that. But instead of using that and training 500 police properly for a year, this Government wants to give us the mistaken impression that we are very secure, so they decide to train civilians for two weeks, 40 contact hours at COSTAATT and the university, and put them out there. We did that before. Ken Gordon had made a recommendation which

you all supported, and we had a project called "Project 1,000". They recruited 1,000 persons or they attempted to.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Are you saying Ken Gordon was a PNM?

**Sen. F. Hinds:** It failed. It failed. Training is where it is at and these young men and women who you recruit as SRPs they want to work. They are productive citizens of this country. Once they are given the right training and given the opportunity, they will do it. But this Government wants a short cut and to make matters worse, they criticized the Mastrofski's initiative. I have documents to show Mastrofski served this country from about 2003 to about 2007—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** How much did you pay?

**Sen. Hinds:**—or more.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** How much did you pay Mastrofski as opposed to Babwarrie?

**Sen. Hinds:** We paid Mastrofski $81 million for six years' service to this country.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Oooh, and you quarrelling about Banwarrie and $1.6?

**Sen. Hinds:** Yes. Six years' service.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** What is difference between Mastrofski and Banwarrie?

**Sen. Hinds:** Mastrofski and his team, they developed a new appraisal system, the model station concept, middle management training—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** And crime went down.

**Sen. Hinds:**—a whole lot of stuff was done. I could go through it. I just do

not have the time. There will be time enough. Another time.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** The same way you went through Banwarrie, go through Mastrofski.

**Sen. Hinds:** And after all of that, would you calm down. Did you have your green tablets today? Just calm down.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** When you relinquish your racial agenda, I will calm down. The racism is what I object to. The racism! The PNM racism—

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the chair*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Mr. President, could I be protected from the rampaging Attorney General?

**Mr. President:** Please proceed, Sen. Hinds.

**Sen. Hinds:** Very warmly, thank you. And I was saying for six years work, and I could go into the details. Mastrofski contributed substantially to the reorganization, the restructuring of the police service, notwithstanding all the political small talk and it cost this country $81 million.

You know something, Mr. President, this two-week training, 40 contact hours which would not yield the kind of result that this Government wants us to expect, will also cost this Government—because I have the figures here right—between the university and COSTAATT—Minister Karim is who designed this—it is to cost this country $40 million.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Half for Mastrofski.

**Sen. Hinds:** Two weeks training, 40 contact hours,

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Half for Mastrofski.

**Sen. Hinds:** Two weeks training and they outlined the cost content, questions like the history and development of law enforcement, the role and

authority of a police officer, morals and ethics, work life balance, first aid and their community orient. They have given the outline of what is intended to be conveyed in 40 contact hours.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** But they getting training than Mastrofski.

**Sen. Hinds:** And that is to train 1,000 police.

**Hon. Senator:** That information is not correct.

**Sen. Hinds:** Well then you get up and tell me. Look, I have it here. You get up and tell us what the correct information is. I am not in the Government. This is your plan. I have it here. Get up and tell us what is correct. So I am say, that we are having a serious issue supporting the increase that the Government is seeking here today, because we would have expected, one, that the bulk of this would have been used to generate more revenue, more capital investment. This is all for transfers and subsidies, recurrent expenditure, more of the same—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** More of the same, that describes you.

**Sen. Hinds:**—and from a Government that has been approved getting this Parliament to approve the large budget in the history of this country. Even in 2008, when this country had record breaking revenues from gas and oil, we did not have budgets of the size you have been bringing to this country, and we just not seeing anything for it. I have given a thousand examples of leaks, mismanagement, graft, corruption, stealing and, therefore, Mr. President, as I return to my seat, I conclude by saying, they would not have liked what I have had to say. They would have liked me to get up and praise the budget, and beat the desk, and say what a wonderful speech that was. I cannot. If it were so, I would have done it. I am an honest man. I cannot do

it.

I know, Mr. President, as I conclude, this country is in deep trouble, and as an ordinary man told me in a plannings in Belmont, day before yesterday, in St. Francois Valley Road, he say, "Mr. Hinds, plenty ah we we make ah mistake but we learn we lesson now. Yuh ha to taste it before yuh buy it."

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Dey learn dey lesson dat is why dey won't put you back as dey MP."

**Sen. Hinds:** And he said so to mean, they made an out with voting in this Government into office [*Desk thumping*] and they are looking forward, Mr. President, as I do, to 2015, or some time before that, if Father really smiles upon us, to see the backs of this hapless, mismanaging bunch that passes for Government in Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Prof. Harold Ramkissoon:** Thank you, Mr. President, fellow Senators, for giving me an opportunity to take part in what I call this annual ritual, a debate on the Supplementary Appropriation Financial Bill, 2013 [*sic*]. But, Mr. President, before I do so, let me commend all those who have spoken before me, including the Finance and the Economy and, of course, Sen. James Lambert for his maiden presentation, which I thought was a very powerful presentation. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Hinds:** It was his maiden, but I seem so.

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** Ah!

**Sen. Hinds:** He spoke before.

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** Oh, he spoke before. Well, this could be his

second maiden contribution. [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** I like that. I like that. That was slick.

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** Mr. President, the second thing I want to do before I make my contribution is I want to make some comments on scenario planning mentioned by Sen. Dr. Tewarie and Sen. Ramnarine. The global population today is about 7 billion people. You heard Sen. Ramnarine mentioned, I think, the population of 8.5 billion by the year 2030, and by the year 2050 we are going to get up to 9 billion people.

The challenge of the 21st Century, Mr. President, is how do we provide clean water, food and energy for these 9 billion people. This is the challenge of the century, and let me say before I continue, that the scientific community has already started addressing this problem.

Mr. President, I want to give you an example of the challenge we face and let us get to water. There have been reports that we are going to be having water wards in the not too distant future—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. George:** Water wards?

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** Water wards and I want—

**Sen. Dr. Tewarie:** We have that already.

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** Precisely, I am coming to that. Three, four years ago, we were talking about possible water wards, and what is happening now today, the Nile, which is probably the longest river in the world today that passes through many countries, the Ethiopians are planning to build dams on the Upper Nile that is passing through Ethiopia, and the Egyptians are threatening action because it is going to affect their water supply which they use for drinking and for agriculture. And then we see

clearly the nexus between energy, water and food. Clear example of what you were talking about, Sen. Tewarie.

Mr. President, with respect to energy, we have a challenge, with respect to food there is even a greater challenge, and the steak we eat today, in ten years time would look much different than what we have today because of the scientific research work that is taking place.

But I want to come to Trinidad. How are we going to fare with respect to providing clean water for all our citizens, food, and energy? Let us take clean water. I do not see it being a problem. I think with proper planning we can have water for all our citizens, clean water, once we deal with the distribution problem.

So I think the distribution problem is the problem we need to tackle.

**11.15 p.m.**

I want to talk about energy. Well, with energy, I think, if we play our cards right, we would not have a problem with energy. What we need to do is come up with a mix of traditional energy and renewable energy. We need to focus a bit more on renewable energy, and Mr. President, here I want to commend the Government on the idea of having a renewable energy centre. [*Desk thumping*]

With respect to food, that is more challenging. Despite the efforts of the previous Ministers, including the current Minister, Minister Devant Maharaj, who is probably on an extended honeymoon, I think.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Be happy for the man, nah!" [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** And we want to congratulate him.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes, man! [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** In spite of the efforts, I do not think we are making the dent that we should be making with respect to food production. The food import bill is still extremely high and we need to be a bit more focused with respect to food production.

Like Sen. Ramkhelawan, when I drive to the south past the Caroni bridge, going into Debe/Penal, I often wonder what are we doing with these abandoned Caroni lands? Then the first thing that comes to my mind, why is not part of these lands under agriculture production? I ask myself the question that we got out of sugar but we did not know what we were getting into. There was obviously no planning. Before we got out of sugar, we should have had a plan for what we are going to do with those lands so that today they are not staying idle. So, Mr.President, these are some of the comments I want to make with what I consider to be the major challenge that is going to confront mankind in the 21st Century.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Very erudite, man!

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** Mr. President, I now get on to my contribution. The Government is seeking to raise spending for fiscal 2012 by an additional 2.9billion. Last year, it was 2.7billion. What does that mean is, Mr. President, the budget would be increased from 58 billion to 60.9billion and the debt to GDP ratio will move to 54 per cent. It has increased over the years.

Now, Mr.President, this 54 per cent is approaching what I call the threshold limit of about 60 per cent. I think once you get to 60 per cent, you have to worry, so we are approaching that threshold limit. Therefore, what this tells me is that we have to start containing our debt—there is no doubt

about it—and start thinking about balanced budget somewhere down the road. Increased public debt, Mr. President, could lead us down a path that is now being traversed by countries like Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain; a path characterized by high unemployment, particularly amongst the youth.

So, Mr.President, a debt to GDP ratio of 56 per cent is no cause for major alarm. It does not trigger off the red light. Coupled on with an unemployment figure that is under 6 per cent, an inflation that is under 7 per cent, and a Gross Domestic Product per capita of over US 20,000, tell me that while the economy is not galloping, it is certainly in a fairly stable condition—[*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah!

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:—**particularly given the continued unsettled and uncertain global economic environment. However, Mr. President, that does not mean we have to be complacent and for two reasons, we cannot afford to be complacent. There is, as I said, this continued global uncertainty and given the interconnectedness of the world today, any economic virus abroad can reach us almost instantly.

Let me remind the fellow Senators that the Eurozone continues to be its region of concern; that the American economy has started on a positive growth path, but it is still very slow; that the emerging Asia economies have had to lower their forecast and their expectations; that the forecast for global economic growth has gone from 3.5 per cent to 3.3 per cent. We cannot afford to be complacent for yet another reason, and that reason is because our economy continues to be, what I call, a mono economy. Sen. Ramkhelawan talked about, I think, a one-horse economy earlier. Forty per

cent of GDP comes from oil and gas and 80 per cent of our exports come from oil and gas.

So, while I acknowledge, Mr. President, the commendable efforts of the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs in increasing activity in this area, we need to intensify our efforts to diversify the economy. We have been talking diversification for a long, long time and I am sure many of our citizens would like to see actual realization of diversification of our economy. Mr.President, let me once more state that while we are weathering the economic storm reasonably well, we cannot afford to be complacent.

Mr. President, the Bill seeks permission, as I said, to raise the level of spending by the Government. These moneys would be transferred to various ministries. While I do not have any major problem, apart from a desire for greater details, I worry about the accountability down the road given the recent 2012 Auditor General Report—"ah damning report", Mr. President.

From the report, there are individuals in our society who believe that once it is taxpayers' money, they can play loose and fast with it and do not have to be held responsible. You may recall in this very Senate sometime in the not too distant past, I spoke about transparency and accountability as being one of the pillars of our democracy. I went further, Mr. President, and said that transparency and accountability are the Achilles heel of our country. The Auditor General report fully supports what I said before.

The report highlighted and I want to mention some of the highlights of that report: contracts not drawn up or not specific enough and yet payments were made; significant increase in cost with year on year in a number of

cases with little or no accountability. Now, this may be justified but someone has to explain it. Let me give you an example. In one case, expenditure increased by 1,275 per cent. To understand the magnitude of that, let us assume that the Ministry got $100, that Ministry went on to spend $1,275; almost thirteen-fold increase on the original amount.

Mr. President, I ask the question: was not a detailed year on year variance analysis done to determine why expenditure skyrocketed? That is not the only case of substantial variances—386 per cent, 376 per cent, 237 per cent. I continue with other issues: possible fraud issues; lack of inventory controls; misappropriation of inventory may go unnoticed without proper control such as regular stock counts; non-compliances with financial instructions and regulations; no responses from 19 Permanent Secretaries and Head. The Auditor General seems to live an exciting life, chasing after information, reports, documents, et cetera.

Mr.President, while in some instances, there might be tardiness, errors, omissions—and I believe Minister Jamal Mohammed alluded to this—what will be the perception of this report by the public? You need to get across to all departments—Minister of Finance and the Economy—that their watchwords should be: accountability, transparency and efficiency. The Minister of Finance, Mr. President, in some other place had promised that within two years, he should take care of most of these problems with respect to accountability and transparency. That is a challenge and we wish him well.

Mr.President, let me give you another example of lack of accountability—glaring lack of accountability. I am a member of the Joint

Select Committee (Group I), ably chaired by my fellow Senator here, Corinne Baptiste-McKnight, and that Group I has over 125 entities under our purview. There are two things that stuck me when I got the first list giving the names of the entities. One was the large number of entities under our purview—over 125—but the second thing that stuck me, when I look at reports submitted, over two-thirds of those entities have never submitted a single report. That, to me, really is a lack of accountability.

I ask the obvious question: why have these entities continued to get funding if they are not submitting reports—annual reports? I think Sen. Drayton talked about a similar problem. So something, Mr.President, has to be done in this area. If annual reports are to be submitted, somebody needs to follow this up and ensure that, in fact, the reports are submitted in the various departments.

Mr.President, the Bill relates to the economy which should be of interest, of course, to all citizens. I now, want to focus on an area that I believe can help strengthen our economy as it has been done for many countries, and that is, I want to focus in the area of research and development. But, let me first take a look at innovation, and we have heard two or three Ministers mentioned innovation during the debate. Innovation is key to the development and progress and competition in this world today. What is innovation? Innovation is a process. It is a process. You have an idea, you research the idea, you develop the idea fully, you develop a product, and then you try to commercialize that product.

So, Mr. President, innovation involves research and development. But, how do you go from an idea to a marketable product? That involves, in

most cases, science and technology, and that is why, Mr. President, you normally see science and technology coupled onto innovation—STI. Some Ministries in some countries, you have, in fact, Ministries of science, technology and innovation as is the case in Malaysia.

The point I wish to make, Mr. President, is that research and development is critical for our development, and it is a core part of today's business world. Mr. President, that is why South Korea and Japan spent 3.7 per cent of GDP on research and development. The US spends 2.7 per cent, Brazil spends approximately 1 per cent of GDP, and Rwanda, coming out of the ashes of civil war, is now spending 1.6 per cent of GDP on research and development, because they want to leapfrog into the information and knowledge economy.

**11.30p.m.**

The People's Partnership Government recognizes this, for in their manifesto they promised, and I want to quote from their manifesto:

> To increase expenditure to at last 3 per cent of GDP over the next 10 years.

I would have preferred to see a forecast for five years, rather than 10 years, but I guess politics is politics.

**Sen. Hinds:** Politics trumps economics.

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** Yes, right. Mr. President, if you would work this out, 3 per cent over 10 years, on a proportional basis, at the end of year three, we should be spending .9 per cent of GDP on research development. Mr. President, we should be spending .9 per cent on research and development at that rate.

You can, therefore understand, my consternation, my reaction, when in a recent response to one of the questions I brought to this Senate the line Minister said that the expenditure on research and development by the Government—remember it should be .9 per cent, the line Minister said—it was actually .05 per cent. I repeat, expenditure on research and development is .05 per cent. And while I commend my good friend, Minister Karim, for talking about setting up a research council and putting $7 million in it, that is a small step in a long, long, journey; a long, long journey.

**Sen. Karim:** One institution "get" 50 million.

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** Mr. President, as I said, I was very disappointed and in fact to say that I was disappointed is an understatement. I would be overly kind and too generous if I were to say that the Government is paying lip service to research and development. I want to warn the Government that if we continue to neglect research and development, we do so at our own peril.

And you know, Mr. President, what is rather interesting that in the year—I did some research and I found out that in the year—2004, nine years ago, the amount actually spent on research and development was .13 per cent. Today it is .05 per cent. So in 2004, we spent twice what we are spending today in research and development.

So, it is my hope that this Government would understand the gravity of the situation and act in a responsible manner. As I say, it is a good start to set up a research council. You have to make it is peopled by the right individuals. You have to make sure it is well structured and you have to put a bit more funding in it and over the next two years, my advice to the

Government is to try to raise expenditure on research and development from .05 per cent to 1 per cent to .5 per cent of GDP.

Now, Mr. President, another question I asked in the Senate concerning research and development: When will the Government be able to lift it to 1 per cent, which is the recommend amount? Now I do not want us to even get to 1 per cent.

**Sen. Hinds:** That is right.

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** But the response from the Government was that meant going from $67million now, that is devoted to research and development, to $1.5 billion. That is a quantum leap. And I agree completely with what the Government had to stay, that to do that you would need to develop the structures, put the right structures in place, and develop your human resources to accommodate that quantum leap in research and development. But that should have been start three years ago. If you recognize the importance of science and technology, research and development and you want to devote up to 3 per cent of this, you should have seen the structures that exist in place and see if they need strengthening or you need to build new institutes.

Again, let me clearly state my position now, with respect to investment and research and development. Increase expenditure in research and development over the next two years from point .05 per cent to .5 per cent. Forget about 3 per cent. We are never going to get there, Mr. President. We will never get there. Let us go from point zero five to point five over the next two years and then over the next five years, we can think about taking it from point five to the recommended amount, which is 1 per cent of GDP.

This is my recommendation to the Government.

You know, Mr. President, Malaysia, which has made tremendous progress in science and technology and higher education, is spending .6 per cent and doing well. Costa Rica is spending .5 per cent of GDP on R&D and doing extremely well.

**Hon. Senator:** That is right.

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** I was at a meeting in Malaysia about three/four weeks ago and one of my good friend, the Minister of Science and Technology from Costa Rica, Dr. Alejandro Cruz Molina, an engineer by profession, made a presentation on the status of science and technology in Costa Rica and said that they are spending .5 per cent. They want to get to 1 per cent and they do it over the next five years, gradually. But they are spending .5 per cent of GDP on research and development. And do you know what they have been able to accomplish with that .5 per cent? They have been able to diversify the economy. We are struggling still to diversify our economy.

Let me state it again, I think the core root of our problem, one with the core root, is not spending sufficient money on research and development. Let me emphasize that. So, let me get back to Costa Rica. Point five per cent, diversify the economy, make strides in innovation. In fact, Costa Rica now, is the number one country in Latin America and the Caribbean when it comes to innovation; the number one country.

In terms of export, 40 per cent of the manufactured goods exported are high-tech goods in Costa Rica today. So they are making tremendous progress and they have only gotten to .5 per cent of GDP on R&D. So my advice,

again, is let us move in that direction. My advice to the Government, R&D can help, treat it seriously. Look at existing research and development institutes, see how you can strengthen them. Creating a renewable energy centre, as I said, is a step in the right direction. [*Desk thumping*]

I should tell you that we are planning a major Caricom conference on renewable energy next year in Grenada to look at the status of renewable energy in the Caribbean. We are not making the kind of progress we should be making in renewable energy, we are not. So we are going to be hosting, in fact, Prime Minister Keith Mitchell, who is the Prime Minister responsible for science and technology in Caricom, will be hosting that meeting next year and we are going to do it with a number of stakeholders.

Mr. President, to emphasize the point I am making about research and development, I want to now go to a document and it is a document I would recommend for anybody interested in science, technology, research, development with respect to the Caribbean and tertiary education. This is a Caricom/UNESCO report 2006. I was very involved in this report and we got and expert, an internationally-renowned scientist, South African, Dr. Khotos Mokhele, to come down here, travel throughout the Caribbean, meet with all the stakeholders, look at the status of science technology and our tertiary institutes and come up with a number of recommendations and the document is called *Using Science, Technology and Innovation to Change the Fortunes of the Caribbean Region*. I want to quote from a special section here, page 15, I think, of the report. Let me quote. Let us see what Dr. Khotos Mokhele had to say about the region.

The Caribbean region is one of those developing country regions

> where government spending on research, development and innovation is extremely low. For this situation to change, governments at national level will have to somehow come to realize that investment in research, development and innovation, painful as it maybe in resource-constrained countries, is the best and only way out of the trap of under development.

Mr. President, I was also pleased and happy to hear two of our Senators talk about entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship okay. Two of our speakers.

**Hon. Senator:** Very erudite speakers.

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** Our economy, like most economies, depends on the expansion and strengthening of our entrepreneurial class, and even creating what I call a new-age entrepreneur class.

Our traditional business sector has been and is risk-adverse, merely mercantile and secure in their comfort zone of a captive Caricom market, but that market has been struggling, as many of us realize today, has been shrinking due to weak economies in general in their island states. Guyana and Suriname in Caricom are the exceptions that we heard earlier today. Their economies are doing quite well.

We need, Mr. President, to go beyond the regional boundary as some companies have successfully done but too few in numbers. To do this, we need to create this new breed of entrepreneurs, I mentioned earlier, who can compete globally and who are high-tech savvy.

Of the five hundred T&T exporters, 376 are not really competing with the world, figures given by Dr. Gonzales, a former academic at the University of the West Indies in the recent address to the American Chamber of

Commerce. So what he is saying is the bulk of people involved in exporting cannot compete globally. They just cannot compete globally.

It is with this in mind that we are pleased to announce that the International Science, Technology and Innovation Centre, a UNESCO centre that is based in Malaysia and that is funded by the Malaysian Government, will be hosting in, Trinidad and Tobago, a "technopreneurship" workshop in May 2014. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan:** From Malaysia?

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** They are based in Malaysia. It is a UNESCO centre.

**Sen. Ramlogan:** That is China, America and now Malaysia. Everybody coming to Trinidad because of the Government. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** I must mention that to them. [*Desk thumping*] But Mr. President—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Karim:** "It getting near to 12 o'clock eh."

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:**—we have mounted seven such workshops already in developing countries. The eighth will take place later this year in Kuwait and the ninth next year in Trinidad and Tobago. We intend to train 30 potential entrepreneurs, 15 of which will come from Trinidad and Tobago. Among other things, these potential entrepreneurs will be thought how to build successful business, which are based on and driven by technology.

And now, Mr. President, I want to get to the Bill and make some general comments on the Bill. Again, I commend the Minister of Finance and the Economy for the presentation he made and these are some of my queries.

The hon. Minister indicated that there is lower than expected expenditure in the first half of fiscal 2012. Given the fact that Ministers wait until the last quarter to rush to ensure expenditure of their allocation, is this unusual? In other words, what I am saying is that action, re: spending usually does not take place in the first half, but rather in the last quarter.

**11.45p.m.**

My second query, was there under expenditure with respect to capital expenditure? And if so does it mean that some of the capital projects are not implemented or are not going as per plan? With the increase in the budget of 2billion of which most, I think, would be going to salaries, nonproductive areas, the projected increased deficit will now increase from 7.7 billion to 9.2 billion. As a percentage of GDP, it is going to go from 4.6 per cent to 5.5 per cent. My question, is there a threshold figure of 5 five per cent beyond which we could find ourselves in a situation of being downgraded? So I would be thankful if the Minister could comment on some of these minor queries that I have.

Mr. President, in winding up, let me state that, in my view, compared to what is happening in a number of countries around the world, our economy is not in a bad shape. [*Desk thumping*] What worries me and what troubles me is the associated accountability and transparency, that is a deep concern to me and I guess a number of people. The 2012 Auditor General report described a situation which is both depressing and alarming. There must be state control of state expenditure. There must be transparency with respect to state expenditure. There must be accountability with respect to state expenditure. With finite resources and competing priorities, prudence

in deploying our patrimony must be the overriding factor.

Permit me, Mr. President, to end with a quote from Benjamin Franklin. and I quote:

> "Waste neither time nor money, but make the best use of both. Without industry and frugality, nothing will do, and with them everything."

I thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** "Yuh partner gone."

**Hon. Senator:** Hinds gone boy.

**The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George):** [*Desk thumping*] Thank you very much, Mr. President, for allowing me to speak on this Bill, the Finance (Supplementary Appropriation) (Financial Year 2013) Bill, 2013. And first of all let me congratulate all of the speakers who preceded me, I think there were some very fine contributions. There were others that were not so fine, but we still congratulate all of the speakers.

In particular I want to compliment the speakers on the tenor of the debate and, again, there are one or two exceptions to those congratulations that I am offering. [*Laughter*] In particular to Sen. Henry who tossed out without any evidence at all, that this Government was involved in corruption, and he did it in a—we had some students from Tobago here, and they heard him repeating corruption, corruption, corruption. I think it was not proper in the context of the visit and the fact that we had those children from that school as our guests today. I think that they would have expected a higher level of comment and debate from us parliamentarians, but I will

come to that a little later.

I want to also congratulate the Minister of Finance and the Economy for his presentation here today, which was quite lucid and also the quality of his performance in having the economy in the place where it is, and that is underscored by the fact that all of the macroeconomic fundamentals are right, and there is nothing that Sen. Henry, or any of the Opposition Senators could say that will gainsay that.

I had intended, Mr. President, to go into the meat of my contribution after saying those introductory words, but there have been so many misleading statements made today by the PNM Opposition, that I feel I want to underpin what I am going to say, in response to a lot of what has been put out by that group, by repeating something that I have been wont to repeat over the last few weeks, and essentially it is, and I think Sen. Al-Rawi stole it a bit from today—and I use the word "stole" there not in a derogatory sense—by saying: that the untruth gets half way around the world before the truth could get his pants on to go after him. And very often, of course, that means that the truth is fighting a losing battle against the untruth.

I want to start with this issue raised by Sen. Hinds and earlier in another place by his leader, and that was regarding the flooding in Diego Martin and the quantum paid. His leader in the other House suggested that all of these moneys, I think he quoted the figure of $49 million was wasted. And I want to say categorically, that that is absolutely not true, and that the Leader of the Opposition does not know what he is talking about. And Sen. Hinds today waving another paper, and selecting from it to quote about payments to certain contractors, is also quite uninformed and actually they

both peddling misinformation. Let me say why I say that, Mr. President.

On the morning of August 11th last year, I awoke at 3.30 which is my normal time for getting up, and the rain was pounding outside. I would normally go for my little jog around that time in the morning. The rain was pounding outside, so I went back to bed. I awoke again at 4.30 and the rain was pounding incessantly but, at 4.30 unfortunately, I looked out of my window as I had done at 3.30 actually, but when I looked out at 4.30, I could not see the road in front of my home, and I knew that we would have a serious problem in Diego Martin that morning.

I got on the phone. I called the Minister of Local Government. I called the Director of Highways. I called the Director of drainage and the Head of PURE, to tell them we have to get our equipment and men into Diego Martin immediately this morning—and I am calling people now between half four and five o'clock. Now, I am marooned, I cannot come out of the house because of what is going on. Eventually, I got in touch with Mr. Warner and told him that listen, you should get the army out because I cannot leave my home, the road has been damaged by the flood waters and I am marooned. They eventually came with a helicopter to get me out and I, having got out, we landed at the heliport on the Audrey Jeffers Highway.

It was from there that we were able to get down to places like La Horquette and so on. We went first to La Horquette. When we got to La Horquette, the head of PURE was there already with the equipment. I am talking now about a little after seven o'clock in the morning, and the road was completely washed away, so the people who live up in La Horquette could not come out. It was terrible.

Now, notice what I am saying. I do not know the contractors. I did not call them out. I called the Director of Highways, the Director of drainage, the Head of PURE and the Minister of Local Government. Those are the people I called and said get the equipment and so on, and people outside here immediately. So that when the people got up in Diego Martin that morning—that is why they were so impressed with the response by the authorities. Because when they woke up—and remember the rain was pounding, so they were all really taking a good sleep, because the rain was pounding outside there. You "cyar" get up to go anywhere; you might as well sleep on a Saturday morning. When they got up all of this equipment was outside there already and work was already going on apace to clean and to repair.

**Sen. Singh:** Where was the Leader of the Opposition?

**Hon. Sen. Hinds:** Where is Sen. Hinds?

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** Well, the Leader of the Opposition was eventually booed when he went to visit a certain location, because they told him: where were you? But anyway, so he was nowhere in sight, but he comes to the other place and talks about the wastage. I mean, you should have seen the entire Diego Martin area, Petit Valley, Leo Bass Avenue, Mon Coco Road—I mean, Chuma Munka, all over, the whole of St. Lucien Road, debris all over the place. Peoples' homes, the water just went through their homes, "ah foot, two foot, three foot" high, all along the Diego Martin River pushed down the walls and just went into peoples' homes; total devastation. Up in La Estancia, same thing.

It is the highways people, the drainage people that called those

equipment out, it was they that called the contractors out, okay. The contractors now submit bills and the people in the Ministry are the people who were working there, and understood and were monitoring what was happening and were able, therefore, to scrutinize the bills when they were sent in. And I could call, I mean Hinds, there is a gentleman in the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, Mr. Hinds, who worked assiduously on this thing.

So you get Members of Parliament, you know, coming here uninformed and saying these things, what they are doing is ridiculing the hard work of the people in the Ministry, you know. [*Desk thumping*] This last one that we have here with the claim by the Ministry of Local Government for the $17-odd million in this particular supplemental appropriation, I recall the thing, and I remember giving it to Hinds and saying, you go through this with "ah" fine tooth comb, with your people in accounts and so on, and in communication with the contractor, and make sure that he is not claiming anything here that he is not entitled to, and these guys sat and worked hard in dealing with this thing.

So when the Leader of the Opposition and Sen. Hinds come here to this Parliament, and say that the Government pay out all this money, wasting to their contractor, to people and so on, and to their colleagues and to their friends and so on, it is all complete and total fabrication. [*Desk thumping*] Shameful, that people could be doing this kind of thing. You know what is significant about that, and Sen. Al-Rawi and I speak about these things from time to time, you protect your own integrity and character.

Somebody says something about Sen. Al-Rawi not being qualified, he

runs he pulls something off the wall, takes a picture of it or whatever it is, finds his documents and thing, and he runs down to say, look, look, because he is protecting his integrity and so on, but what about the other person's integrity that you are ridiculing? How could you all do those things? You cannot be ridiculing the integrity of the people in the Ministry who do their work so conscientiously. Why? What is the reason for this? To get at the People's Partnership Government? There are several other things you could look to identify to get at the People's Partnership Government, if you could find any, but not this. I remember the day and all the things that went on, and I did not call any contractor out.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "That's right."

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** So do not say it is the Government that did it, right, and "don't" ridicule the people from the Ministry. You could go and talk to Mr. Hinds and ask him, you know and you could go and talk to the Director of Highways. You could talk to the Director of PURE and so on, because that, is exactly what happened on the morning. So I feel very hurt about this that you could attack people's character so flippantly, and yet run and protect yours, you know, with all the power that you can muster.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** You are so correct. "Dey does do de same thing wid"—[*Inaudible*]

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** Come on. You put that out there, like I say, you put it out there as an untruth, and the truth has to run behind it now to try to get at it.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "That's right."

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** I mean, let us stop that.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "That's a good point." Excellent point. "If yuh—[*Inaudible*]

**12 midnight**

The other thing is this thing about discrimination—we only doing things in the People's Partnership communities and nothing in Diego Martin. I mean, come on! I am listening to this talk about nothing was done to pave a single road in Diamond Vale.

**Hon. Senator:** We have the highway going up. We have the highway.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** Friend, Mr. President, there are a number of projects taking place in Diego Martin.

**Hon. Senator:** That is correct.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** And the Leader of the Opposition in his presentation in the other place is talking about discrimination and nothing going on in Diego Martin, but I want to remind him that he is Diego Martin's worst representative.

Recall that when I came in as Minister of Public Utilities, I wrote asking, give me all the areas in your community that you want supplied with water. Based on his submission, Covigne was supplied with water after 43 years. Go and ask Cora. I have spoken about this many, many times here. You could go and ask Miss Cora who lives up in Covigne—and the surrounding areas because in giving Covigne water a lot of the areas surrounding Covigne got water—Blue Basin, River Estate, all of their water improved. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Yuh" talking too fast. Slow down! Slow down! Start over that—[*Inaudible*] [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** Scorpion.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** Scorpion in Carenage. People "ain't" seeing water for days.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Under PNM, 50 years they "ain't" get water. Praise God for—

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** Scorpion. "There is a—up the hill—wha dey call it? Big Yard. Big Yard. Big Yard in Carenage, never get water; pipeline for the first time going up there."

**Hon. Senator:** You know Diego boy.

**Hon. Senator:** I know about truck-borne water when I was—

**Hon Senator:** Shame on them!

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** So that to say there is discrimination, again, is peddling misinformation. The issue of paving of roads in Diego Martin, "yuh" saying that there are no roads paved in Diamond Vale, but recall Morne Coco Road, in the flood, was destroyed virtually. That was repaired. The foot bridge that was also destroyed, that was also repaired. La Puerta Avenue, the entire La Puerta Avenue was never paved for about thirty-something years, it is completely paved now. Go and drive on it! It is as smooth as my face. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Well done, man! Well done! Well done! Well done!

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** So, I am saying the PNM peddles this misinformation, putting the untruth out there and then the truth has to run behind it to "out" it. We have to stop doing this. It is not true and you are casting aspersions on people's character, too. [*Desk thumping*] Go and drive up La Puerta!

So when you say that there is discrimination, the facts do not bear it out. Then, of course, there is the work that is going on for the expansion of the Diego Martin Highway—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** A major project.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:**—a major project and the widening of the Diego Martin Main Road in front of Starlight Shopping Plaza.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Which they never did.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** "So every night yuh going down there, yuh seeing the work going on, minimum disruption."

I become passionate about these things because I am seeing this thing everyday unfolding and yet I come to this Parliament and Opposition Senators are saying that nothing is going on and there is discrimination. It is simply not true.

**Hon. Senator:** Water flowing in Bagatelle—[*Inaudible*]

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** So let us debunk those two bits of misinformation peddled in these Houses over the last two to three days, between Wednesday and today.

**Sen. Dr. Tewarie:** Mischief beyond—[*Inaudible*]

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** All, Hinds saying—and I quote him today—all development taking place elsewhere—and he has this very flashy way of saying "elsewhere".

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Diego Martin has had more money spent in the constituency with the flooding and everything.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** The money paid to those contractors for cleaning up Diego Martin over that period is from Carenage all up through

La Horquette into Diego Martin, Petit Valley and going over into Maraval. You see La Seiva, the bridge going up into La Seiva broke down.

When that bridge was repaired, I got such a wonderful and touching letter from the residents of La Seiva: thank you very much Minister for getting this job done and getting this job done so quickly. They were also marooned and could not come out of their homes. All of this work, all of this cleaning up and so on that was done by these contractors, we have a statement being made in the Parliament to the effect that the Government, we sold this money, paying their friends and so on. It is disgraceful actions. Sorry for the unparliamentary language, Mr. President.

**Sen. Singh:** No, that is not unparliamentary.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Yuh going good, man; yuh going good."

**Sen. Singh:** Disgraceful is not unparliamentary. Disgraceful is not.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** When it comes to describing Hinds, that cannot be unparliamentary. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Dr. Tewarie:** It is disgraceful because it is intentional.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** Yes, they know exactly what they are doing.

**Sen. Singh:** Where did he go to?

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "He run away. He probably driving on dem Diego Martin roads we pave right now."

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** I want to deal also with this issue of the funding of the Point Fortin highway and the suggestion by Sen. Al-Rawi that the funding should have been provided via a loan. I argued already in this place, Mr. President, and brought—I am sorry, but—"yeah", Mr. President, I argued in this place maybe about two, three months ago for the most, that

the PNM Government, in putting forward this argument is being very disingenuous and I brought to this Parliament documentation, first of all the parsons Brinkerhoff transportation study and the estimates of expenditure for 1971, which showed that this highway from Chaguanas to Point Fortin was already designed and

marked and determined as far back as 1971. The then PNM Government in undertaking the portion, I think it was from Chaguanas to Chase Village and then from Chase Village down to St. Joseph Village near Tarouba; that the PNM Government never went for any loan from any IDB or any other multilateral agency or any other lending agency. They took the money out of the Treasury, the recurrent budget. So to come now and argue that this Government should be looking to borrow that money from the IDB to do the San Fernando to Point Fortin segment, really, they should be the last people to be talking about that.

To say that the quantum does not compare, I am saying that is not so at all because in 1971 the value of that work that they did to get the highway from Chaguanas down to Tarouba could very well, by comparison, be equivalent, in terms of value. So it is a non-argument. I thought I had dispensed with that then and here we return today to hear the same thing being peddled here in this Parliament.

More than that, the current interchange that is being done near Grand Bazaar, which the PNM Government started in 2005/2006, is estimated to cost about $1.2 billion and it is not finished yet, so it may cost more, and that project is also being funded out of revenues. Why did they not go and borrow it from the IDB?

So to come here making these suggestions, I do not know where this is coming from. There are other things that you can find to say. Why are you beating on these doors? I do not understand it all. There is no argument that they can present because in their time—and the thing about two wrongs "doh" make a right does not apply here at all.

You did not do it. Just like you did at that time, this Government feels that they can fund it from recurrent revenue. Let us fund it from recurrent revenue and you just let us do what we have to do. When you were in government, you did what you did. We are in government; you let us do what we do with this particular project.

Now, there is a segment in my contribution that has to do with the work that has been going on and the achievements in respect of the fire service. Well, I want to just go into the issue of the fire tender a little bit. Again, I have been refraining from entering this "gayelle" because, again, it is my view that you put the untruth out there and it is extremely difficult to get rid of it because it is already planted in people's minds.

The information that I have on this is got from the Ministry's file and, in going through the Ministry's file, what a reading of this file says to me is that there was this accident where the fire engine went down, slid off the road. There were six occupants in the vehicle, all of whom came out alive, thankfully, and only one of whom had what one would call a serious injury. The then Chief Fire Officer took a decision—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Repeat that!

**Sen. The Hon. E. George** —to have a company that is associated with the Junior Sammy Group of Companies take the vehicle out. It took two days. I

think it was from between the 17th, the 18th and 19th and the 20th, the company submitted a bill to the Chief Fire Officer. The Chief Fire Officer must have looked at the bill, seeing that it was beyond his limit in terms of the amount he could approve and sent it up to the Ministry. It also exceeded the PS's limit and, therefore, it had a come to come to Cabinet. Eventually the Cabinet approved a sum of six point eight, I think it is.

But I am going through the file and I am trying to put myself in place of the Chief Fire Officer and by putting myself in the place of the Chief Fire Officer, as an ordinary person how would we think in a situation like that. Anyone of us, if our vehicle goes down in a ditch or gets into an accident and cannot be moved, you want to get a tow truck to get your vehicle out. That is what you do. So I think that the Chief Fire Officer is behaving as any normal person would behave. He would want to get it out. So he calls whom he thinks is a good wrecking crew and he gets them to take it out and then they send a bill for him.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** One who has the capacity to do that.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** That is what I am saying—who he thinks is a good wrecking crew to take it out. So all of this hullabaloo comes now because everybody feels that $6.8 million is too much to pay and so on and so on, but the whole thing just shows that the Chief Fire Officer took a decision. We are always wiser after the event, but at the time the gentleman is taking a decision, or the officer is taking a decision based on his reaction to what he considers an emergency and he needs to get the vehicle out.

Now we are saying, if the cost to wreck it is $6.8 million, but it is valued at two or whatever, best you leave it there, but I am saying to you, if

he had left it there, there would have been another set of criticism of him. He "doh" care about the Government's equipment and so on and so on and they want to haul him through some form of disciplinary tribunal or something for leaving it there.

More than that, the environmentalist might have got down on him for it. So you dammed if you do and you are dammed if you do not. What I am saying, Mr. President, is that in my looking at the file there was nothing untoward or questionable in what was done in terms of how the thing flowed. Yes, the original bill was $10 million and it eventually came down to 6.8, but those are things we do all the time. When the sink hole appeared on the Beetham, the first Bill that was presented afterwards, we had to negotiate him down. So these things go on in the normal course of things and when it comes to Cabinet, Cabinet is asked to give covering approval because it is something that happens after the fact. There was no approval for it but you have to do what you have to do as a person in a responsible position.

**12.15 a.m.**

Let me say this about people in a responsible position. There is a penchant of people at the lower levels—

**Hon. Member:** What!

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:**—to defer all decisions—a penchant or a tendency of people at the lower levels to give to the person above all the responsibility—you take the decision; you take the decision. But I have always said to my people when I was a Permanent Secretary and even now—to my AO II, to my directors, do not bring every decision up to me—

when I was Transport Commissioner the same thing. You take the decisions at your level and I will back you 100 per cent. You have a good reason for taking the decision, I have no problem, even if you are wrong because you have to give people the power to make decisions otherwise every single thing would come up to you. And if every single decision comes up to you, you will have your head under water and you will not be able to survive.

You have to give people, at the other levels in the organization, the power to make decisions and back them even when they are wrong, once they could show you, "Well, listen, I took it for so and so reason" and it looks logical, you have to give them your support. Even when they are wrong because human beings will make mistakes but you have to support your staff. You have to support your people otherwise the organization will not be able to run because the person at the top does not have the physical ability to make all of the decisions that are required to be made in an organization.

I am in this Ministry of National Security now and, I mean, the flood of things that come to me, I have said to them, "Listen, you have to make these decisions at your level. I will back you and support you even if you are wrong, but make the decision, because I cannot make all the decisions. I remember my former permanent secretary, Mr. President, saying to me many years ago—when I did a piece of work that was not satisfactory in her view—she said to me, "Young George, if this is the quality of work that you so-called professional people are bringing up to me is better I send all of you all home and surround myself with the clerks and I make all the decisions." And those were her exact words. It hurt, but I listened, I was young at the

time—Young George. She was a very endearing persons, Miss Alcantara. [*Desk thumping*] Very, very endearing. The best PS you could ever have in your life. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan:** "But yuh still young!".

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** And she took her time to train us and then she said, "You make the decisions." Until there came a time when there was a gentleman—an officer, Mr. Michael Mendez, who having gone up to speak with her about a particular matter that was giving him trouble, he came downstairs and he said to me, " Um George, Miss Alcantara just paid yuh the highest tribute yuh could get you know." I say, ""Wha is that?" She said to me, that is Michael Mendez, "If yuh gehing trouble with that, go by George he go solve it for yuh." So "yuh" understand. I was working, at that time, with an excellent Minister by the name of John Erskine, wonderful person and a very capable man. It was a joy working with a Minister like John Erskine and a permanent secretary like Joyce Alcantara. It was a wonderful period of my life and I learned a lot.

What I am trying to tell the people in my Ministry—I am saying all of this in the context of the chief fire officer making a decision. I am saying that in those days the Minister would hardly have to meet with the Transport Commissioner because it was then the Ministry of Public Utilities and National Transportation, so we had the transport division, we had the port, we had the harbour master; we had the PTSC and the airport authority. And all the meetings that we held with these agencies were held under the chairmanship of the permanent Secretary, not the Minister. All the meetings having to do with the accommodation—whether the harbor master wanted to

buy a boat; whether PTSC wanted to buy some extra busses—all of those meetings were held with the permanent secretary sharing with "we", the lower level intermediate staff—I was then a planning officer II—sitting there as the persons who will run and do the work.

In this modern situation now, the chairman, the person who chairs the meeting, is the Minister. That should not be. What we are doing, therefore, is putting the decision-making right up top. So I am saying this to argue that I could understand and will support the chief fire officer making the decision.

**Sen. Ramlogan:** Yeah. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** And I will support whether it turns out that he is wrong or whether it turns out that he is right. I want to say these things to clarify certain issues that are out there in the public domain and which I feel have been underpinned by the intent to misinform.

So, Mr. President, I want to return now to my contribution, and I would like to underscore that criminal activity continues to be one of our country's most formidable challenges. I mean, when this Government came into power, it knew that this was the challenge that was going to present for it, a task that would not have been easy to solve at all. It is a problem that affects us as individuals psychologically. It affects communities which are devastated and debilitated by it. As a national problem, it undermines the ability of the State to provide adequately for citizens' security.

The approach adopted to crime containment and reduction is multi-pronged and involves more effective law enforcement and policing, social interventions aimed at discouraging a lifestyle of crime and violence, reform

of the justice system and the legal framework and rehabilitation of offenders. These strategies are supported by other national strategies for economic recovery, growth and expansion which can create jobs, foster greater economic inclusion and move us in the direction of achieving prosperity for all.

Mr. President, as crime and criminal activity become more complex, priority is being given to increasing the sophistication of the resources and systems utilized and to the effective management of law enforcement agencies. As such, the Ministry is placing emphasis on expanding the use of modern technology for tracking criminal activity and ensuring connectivity and cooperation between law enforcement agencies; addressing the issue of capacity building and training of law enforcement officers as well as the modernization of physical infrastructure and information management systems.

In that regard, I want to refer to Sen. Hinds taking issue with the modus operandi for training of officers that are recruited. I want to say that we are partnering with the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training in order to be able to train the numbers of officers that we require to add to the police service. I want to pay tribute to my colleague, the Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training [*Desk thumping*] for the cooperation and the initiative that he has shown in helping the Ministry through that particular exercise.

**Sen. Karim:** Sen. Hinds has it wrong.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** Sen. Hinds simply stands there and misinforms the public. In respect of the allocation to the Ministry of National Security

in this supplementation of appropriation for fiscal year 2013, the Ministry has been allocated an additional sum of $203,751,000 and it is also responsible for 661,290,200 that is allocated as additional funding to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Some discussion had already gone on in respect of the reason for this additional funded.

I want to point out that the $203.7 million allocated to the Ministry is made up as follows: for the CCTV cameras, an additional 8.0 million have been allocated bringing the total to some $62.8 million, and this is to cater for the installation of some 873 cameras throughout the entire country. Sen. Cudjoe had spoken a little earlier on about whether these cameras will be installed and how many in Tobago and I am to inform her—she is not here right now, but I hope that she is listening—that cameras have already been installed—I think about 125-odd of them—in Tobago. I think that they are way ahead in Trinidad in terms of the coverage of Tobago by these cameras. But, in total, it is the intention, as I said, to install some 673 cameras to assist the police by allowing them to have access to this modern technology that will allow them to see, virtually, a lot of areas that they could hardly cover physically. So of the 203 million, 8 million goes to the CCTV camera as additional funding.

The ODPM gets 10 million of these funds. The ODPM has to be beefed up for the coming hurricane season but, more than that, because of the flooding and a lot of the devastation that took place over the last year 2012, a lot of the supplies that the ODPM normally has have been depleted, and this money is also to beef up those supplies.

In order to strengthen our disaster preparedness and mitigation

capacities for the upcoming hurricane season where the increased risk of flooding and landslides have been exacerbated due to the number of bush fires which occurred over the dry season, this additional funding of 10 million is recommended. And, as I said, additionally, this funding is required in order to launch an aggressive campaign to raise awareness in previously affected communities and step-up mitigation plans.

Mr. President, only last Saturday the OPDM carried out an exercise in Diego Martin that is part of this very campaign. And, thankfully, the *Newsday* of Monday did carry an article that speaks to the outreach exercise in Diego Martin done by the ODPM on that Sunday. So $10 million is deservedly for the ODPM to bring it up to speed for the new hurricane season that is about to hit us.

Part of the funding totalling about $176 million is for the financing of the four medium twin-turbine helicopters. Of course, these are AgustaWestland helicopters. They were procured for the sum of about US $347.82 million or 2.1 billion. Pending the finalization of financing arrangements with BNP Paribas and the US Exim Bank, Cabinet agreed to continue interim payments to AgustaWestland Incorporated for the training and maintenance support programmes related to the supply and delivery of the helicopters. The sum of $100 million was allocated in 2013 to meet the interim payments. However, given the delay in finalizing the financing arrangements, an additional sum of $176.5 million was now required and hence the reason for the 176.5 million as part of the $203 million allocated to the Ministry in this appropriation Bill.

**12.30 a.m.**

The Hoop of Life has an allocation of that $203 million, totalling some $9.2million, and it is to meet first of all—1.203 million to meet the cost of the rental office accommodation. And for Sen. Hinds' information, the accommodation, the building is located 165 Tragarete Road, Port of Spain and it is owned by JOSOL Investments Limited, and was formerly occupied by the EMA.

**Hon. Senator:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** Because Sen. Hinds was questioning who owned the building and whatever, so I am saying it is owned by JOSOL Investments Limited and was formerly occupied by the EMA. There is also a sum of $8,000 awarded for prizes for the Cycle 1 and the commencement of Cycle 2, and Sen. Hinds was very deprecating of this particular initiative, but I am saying to him that he might suggest and indicate that the persons who took part in this basketball competition were all soldiers and police, and they were all working elsewhere and so on, but the fact is—

**Hon. Senator:** That is not true.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:**—that we got all of these people to participate. I know it is not true. We go all of these people to participate. There was 720 players aged between 16 and 21 years of age, and I am certain that if we have 720 players aged between the ages of 16 and 21—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:**—they could not all—[*Interruption*] [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** All of them—[*Inaudible*] Good point! Good point!

Real good! Real good! They could not all be soldiers and police.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** They could not all be soldiers and policemen.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes! Yes!

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** So again it is this—I do not want to use the word penchant again you know because I am losing—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Proclivity, man.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:**—proclivity—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Proclivity. Yes.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:**—of the PNM to put the untruth out there and let it get into people's heads before you could come to clear the people's heads of the untruth, which is a very difficult task as you will know.

So they put it out there—again, putting it out there—720 players taking part plus 240 technical staff members;240 technical staff members and this series was played over 47 nights. The final phase—and I want to refer to this—involved the final 4 teams that participated in the semi-finals and the final. The final featured Laventille and Marabella teams.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Take your time! Take your time! Which part—the first one?

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** The final featured the Laventille—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Right! [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:**—and the Marabella teams.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Marabella from the train line.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** From the train line—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** From the train line, "da" is "de" important part.

**Sen. Sen. The Hon. E. George:**—from the train line. The team from

Laventille—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Now it have no more at risk place in Marabella in the train line.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:**—and the team from Marabella—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Ah go carry all yuh fellas."

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:**—in the best of three series which was won by the Laventille team, and I want to take the opportunity once again to congratulate the Laventille team—[*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! Well done!

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:**—for a job well done. I also want to compliment and congratulate the team from Marabella on the train line. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Ah! Well said, man. Well said!

**Mr. President:** The speaking time of the hon. Minister of National Security has expired.

*Motion made*: That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. The Hon. F. Karim*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. President:** Sen. George.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. [*Desk thumping*] Thank you very much, Mr. President, and thanks to my colleagues, both on this side and on the other side for resoundingly giving me the extra 15 minutes to continue my contribution.

Yes, so that the attendance—this is important—at each of the final games was estimated over 700 supporters per night. So that the people of the particular districts came out in full support of their teams, and those of us

who are old enough will understand the importance of the village and the community coming out in support of their teams. So, Mr. President, this is how the $203million allocated to the Ministry in this Supplemental Appropriation Bill was made up: for the CCTVs, for the ODPM, for the financing of the twin turbine helicopters—four of them—and for the Hoop of Life.

As indicated there is also a sum for the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and totalling some $661.3 million. And, Mr. President, this is something that I could not understand why the Members opposite would not be in support of this, because of this sum $542 million—of the sum of $661.3 million, $542.1 million was for personal expenditure having to do with a wage agreement that was arrived at between the CPO and Trinidad and Tobago Police Service Social and Welfare Association. It appears that the Opposition, the PNM, does not ever want the ordinary people, the ordinary hard-working policemen and women—

**Hon. Senator:** Or workers in the country.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:**—to get paid.

**Hon. Senator:** What is due to them.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** Of the 542.1 million, salaries and COLA comprises 290.6 million, overtime for the monthly paid officers, 132.8 million, allowances for monthly paid officers again, 113.1 million, and of course the Government's contribution to NIS of 5.6 million.

Also part of 661.3 million is the payment of arrears of travelling and subsistence of some 10.4 million, a sum for the maintenance of vehicles, which is a sum of which $7 million is owed to VMCOTT, and I mean

VMCOTT is certainly in the discussion in need of these funds—$7.0 million is not a small sum to have owed to an organization like VMCOTT—and also, and most importantly, there is the intention to purchase for the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service an additional 300 vehicles to give the police increased mobility in the fight against crime, and this total here, $77.5 million, is allocated for this.

It will involve the purchase of 300 vehicles for the police service, that is to do their normal duties, and then there is an intention to purchase 17 vehicles for what is to be called a rapid response unit, and this rapid response unit is to be set-up in 15 districts, and it is intended that these vehicles will be able to make very, very quick response to any request for assistance by members of the public. So being placed in the 15 various locations around the country they will be able to respond in a short time to any problems that—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Dr. Bernard:** A question. Can I ask—will this rapid response unit replace the E999?

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** No, it would not. It would not. It would complement it.

**Sen. Dr. Bernard:** Okay.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** Yeah. And then there is also the intention to—these vehicles will be used to perform a wide range of roles and functions, and of course it will consist of SUV patrols, semi-long wheelbase vehicles, sedans, and it is the intention to purchase four 30-seater buses. [*Interruption*]

**Sen. Mc Knight:** Thanks, Mr.Minister, could you tell me whether these

vehicles are going to be delivered before the end of this fiscal year?

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** We expect that they will be delivered by December of this year.

**Sen. Mc Knight:** But then are they going to be paid for before December? Because if the money is not spent by the end of the year—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** [*Inaudible*] in front.

**Sen. Mc Knight:**—it goes back.

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** Thank you. That is a good question. The order for the vehicles is being put out there—will be put out there as soon as this Bill is approved, because all of the ground work—we had asked the Commissioner of Police to do all of the necessary ground work, so that as soon as this is approved he will put that out and we should be able to get those vehicles in a short time.

There is also a sum of $2.4 million for other contracted services and for short-term employment 12.6 million, and for other contract employment $5 million. Mr. President, I want just take some time to identify some of the achievements of the police over the last—in fiscal 2013, which is between October and the present time—some of the initiatives that have been undertaken. First of all there is the Laventille Community Renewal initiative, where the police identified vulnerable areas such as east Port of Spain where there is a higher level of crime than is tolerable, and engaged those communities with a view to assisting them in improving the infrastructure, reducing the unemployment and providing other social immunities which those communities would have been lacking.

There was the Laventille Fun Fair, which was again spoken about in

such derogatory terms, but which certainly had its positive effect. There is a programme called the Hearts and Minds programme where the Inter-Agency Task Force of the police continue to service the citizens of east Port of Spain with a number of community-based initiatives, and there was also the police caravan.

I want to speak too to the issue of the side by side training of SRPs who would be recruited into the police service of which it is the intention to recruit some 5,000. There is an effort to advance the investigative capabilities of the police and to improve the crime solving rate, particularly in respect of homicides and other forms of serious crimes because there is obviously a problem in terms of the rate at which the police are able to solve crime; it is very, very low. And we are training what we call "crime scene investigators" to supplement the Homicide Investigations Bureau of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, and 18 persons are scheduled to graduate as crime scene investigators next week, and we hope that with their deployment that we will see over time a gradual improvement in the crime detection rate.

There is also an effort to put GPS in all of the police vehicles, so that there can be information about the location of all of these vehicles so that it lends to improve management of the fleet. There are lots of other areas which I could touch on, but I would like to go directly to the issue of the police stations because Sen. Cudjoe did raise the issue of the Old Grange and other police station in Tobago that she had asked to be constructed. I simply want to say that that is something I would have to check on for Sen. Cudjoe, and I may give her perhaps a written response or a telephone call

regarding what my findings are, because the documentation that I have here speaks to the start of construction of eight police stations, but the eight that are identified here are in Trinidad, and they are the Arima, Piarco, Maloney—well, let me go back. The Arima Police Station is 47 per cent complete as at the end of May, the Piarco 54 per cent, the Maloney station is 52 per cent complete, the Cumuto station is 55 per cent complete, the Brasso station is—the design is 75 per cent complete, and the La Brea—and again I heard mention made by the representative for La Brea about the total neglect of his constituency in terms of infrastructure, and I am saying, again, to refute that statement that the La Brea Police Station is now some 50 per cent complete. So I want to debunk also this indication that came in the Lower House of the neglect of La Brea.

**12.45 a.m.**

The Oropouche station is 47 per cent complete, the Moruga station is 75 per cent complete in terms of design and 2 per cent in terms of construction. So I am just—and again I will let Sen. Cudjoe know separately about what is happening with the Blue Grange and the other police station in Tobago.

We should also mention a lot of the successes that the police have been having over the last year from October last year to May of this year—and I want to say this for the record, I want to put this on the record of the *Hansard*—that over the period these are the numbers of revolvers that were seized: 68 pistols 115, shotguns 19, submachine guns three rifles nine, home made shotguns 37, trapguns six, making a total of 257 firearms seized. I think we have to give the policemen and women [*Desk thumping*]

congratulations for work well done. I mean, I am always saying we have a long way to go, but at least we are making some headway. I continue. I think, this was a subtotal, so let me continue.

Ammunition, sorry, ammunition ceased: 12 gauge ammunition 172 rounds, 16 gauge 20 rounds, 38,100,678 rounds of ammunition of .38, .45 ammunition 144, nine millimeter ammunition 2,459 rounds. 7.62 ammunition 139 rounds, .2224 rounds, 5.56 ammunition 415 rounds, .357 ammunition 135 and so on, making a total of 5,311 rounds over the same period. And or marijuana there was 1,847.6 kilograms seized and 78. 98 of cocaine seized.

So I am saying that the police—and remember over the last couple of days there have been seizures of marijuana and cocaine, in Tobago there were two seizures. In Matura, I think, there was in Matura going on the way to Toco, there was a Nestlé truck that was stopped and inside of it was compressed marijuana and there was also a seizure on the port. So, that the police are doing their work, and we want to say thank you very much to them for [*Desk thumping*] the hard work that they are putting in.

I want to conclude, Mr. President, by repeating that the scourge of crime is our biggest challenge that the people of Trinidad and Tobago face today. I am saying, using the people and not Government because, I think, all of us have a stake in addressing crime and criminal activity. So that my reference to the people having—that crime being the biggest challenge for the people of Trinidad and Tobago is a deliberate statement. It is simply to say that in every little coroner in which we live, we can play a part in reducing crime. In the case of the ordinary citizen all we are asking is

simply to obey the laws. If all of us as citizens obey the laws, we would be well on the way to solving the issue of crime and criminal activity.

Earlier on Sen. Balgobin spoke to the issue of the amount of noise and shouting and confusion that is taking place in the society. I myself have been wont to point out in various interviews with the press, that a significant problem that we have in the country is that nobody is listening. We are not listening to one another, we are rather shouting at one another, and that is carrying on into the schools and that is why you could have, in my view, a 16-year boy resorting to violence against another boy. That is why you would have heard me [*Crosstalk*] ever since, yeah, I became a Minister say to the population, let us stop the protesting via burning of tyres and blocking of roads because we are sending a signal to the population and to the younger ones, that it is not a good signal. Let us rather talk to one another.

So with that urging, Mr. President, let me say once again thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to contribute to this appropriation Bill, and I thank you very much.

**Mr. President:** Before we start with the next speaker I thought perhaps we might bring birthday greetings to our Vice-President. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senators:** Ohhhh! [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Karim:** Ice cream and cake.

**Mr. President:** Sen. Beckles.

**Sen. Pennelope Beckles:** Mr.President, you stole my greetings. [*Laughter*] Yes. Well, let me join with you and all the other Members of Senate in wishing the Vice-President—is it, did you tell me you were sweet 16? [*Laughter*] [*Crosstalk*] Yes, I really hope that you—one would have hoped

that you would spend your birthday differently, but—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** True.

**Sen. P. Beckles:**—I am sure many of us who are here have had, at some point in time, to spend a birthday in the Parliament.

Mr.President, at nine minutes to one I am joining this debate on the Finance (Supplementary Appropriation) (Financial Year, 2013) Bill. There are four areas that I wish to address and I just need to comment a bit on the Minister of National Security's—some of the concerns that he raised about us being more responsible in terms of—I think, he is really referring to personal and irresponsible attacks on each other that seems to have become the order of the day. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. George:**—address to public servants who do their work—

**Sen. P. Beckles:** Well, you talked about Members of the Opposition and other persons attacking others and public servants as well, but the point I want to make is that it really is a question of personal responsibility for persons, whether it be in the Senate or the House, to ensure that the statements that we make that we have our facts. Some of us really do not care whether we have our facts.

**Hon. Senators:** Indeed.

**Sen. P. Beckles:** And yes, that is what we do not want. So I was very happy that you said, that, but then you seemed to have still fallen into the same trap of still going into a personal thing in terms of the Leader of the Opposition and what transpired in Diego Martin. I am aware that both of you lived in the area and, I think, both of you would have had personal experiences which most of us did not have, just like Sen. Lambert.

So I do not know that those of us who are not from the area could genuinely criticize a lot of the things that you all would have said, but at the end of the day, I think, we all recalled that there are a number of residents, some of whom were not happy with how things worked out. And, I mean, we all know when you have a natural disaster there are some people, depending on where you live, would be the beneficiaries of what you call quick responses and the others for which they might take days. Therefore some of the criticisms sometimes are quite valid. Of course, we are in a society where people have grown accustomed to expecting the Government to deliver virtually everything. So that we also have that challenge to face as we examine the issue of disaster preparedness.

But I want to—as a matter of fact that is going to be the majority of my contribution and I am going to move away from it being anything personal and I really want to deal with whether or not we are satisfied as a country that we are ready for a disaster if it takes place.

Now, I know the Minister of National Security and I think that I am aware that actually, subject to your correction, that disaster preparedness falls under your Ministry and the increase is $10 million, and I am actually looking for the substantial amount. Could you just check that for "meh"? What is the initial amount? [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** For which one?

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Security.

**Sen. P. Beckles:** No. For ODPM.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** ODPM.

**Sen. P. Beckles:** Okay. Yes. I found it. Okay. Right. The Office of

Disaster Preparedness $45,888,500 and the increase 10 million. Mr. President, my concern here, moving away from issues of personalities, is dealing in a very serious way about whether as a country we are ready for a natural disaster.

Now I am looking at the *Guardian* and I am referring to Dr. Stephen Ramroop who is the CEO saying that—and this is an article written by Radhica Sookraj.

> "As T&T braces for what is expected to be one of the worst hurricane seasons since 1990, the Office of Disaster Preparedness… is operating with a demotivated skeleton staff because of government delays in restructuring the organization."

He went on to say that some of them cannot even buy a TV because of their poor salaries, and this is the CEO speaking "eh", this is not the PNM speaking.

> "They cannot build a house. They have no job stability and I have had to use my techniques to motivate them to stay on."

I think they should use the services of Sen. Lambert and get this matter resolved.

**Hon Senator**: Yeah.

**Sen. P. Beckles:** He went onto say that:

> "The position of operations manager was advertised in 2011 and six months later, after interviews, one person who was qualified for the post was selected." He turned it down because the salary was not enough.
>
> "We have applied to the Government to transform the ODPM

which is under the Ministry of National Security. In the transformation process we acquired a consultant for a job-evaluation exercise. We have presented a draft organizational structure for the new authority. We are awaiting approval from Cabinet."

Now this is June 07 so this is not last year. This is very, very recent. And there is another article in the *Express* and in this article the CEO Dr. Stephen Ramroop says that:

"Trinidad and Tobago is 60 per cent ready for hurricanes…" [*Crosstalk*] Oh, sorry, yeah. He said we are 60 per cent ready for hurricanes. He said, "there is a high agency readiness but a low population readiness. He added that the lacking 40 per cent in readiness is no fault of the ODPM but that of citizens, who proved they are not ready, as determined by a survey."

And I know that the Minister of National Security gave us some information about—was it a trial? What is the word he used that was held recently in the Diego Martin area? [*Crosstalk*] Sorry.

**Sen. George:** An outreach programme.

**Sen. P. Beckles:** An outreach programme that was held recently in the Diego Martin area, and I think that is very, very, important. I think the ODPM needs to be congratulated for that kind of exercise, but it is not just in that area that they need to do those kinds of outreach programmes.

Now, Mr. President, the reason why I have a great concern about this is because, you know, more and more if we are following what is happening around the world, you know, Trinidad needs to realize that at any point in time we can have some form of a disaster. What took place in Diego Martin

as was described by the Minister' where he even had difficulty in getting out of his home, if we multiply that five times, three times, in many areas we understand how serious this matter is. But one does not really get the impression that over the last couple of years, and I am not just speaking about this Government but I am talking about the last couple years' we really have not addressed the matter sufficiently.

**1.00 a.m.**

Therefore, when I look at the allocation given to the ODPM under the Ministry, I am really quite concerned about what would take place. Now, yes, they talk about the ODPM as being a coordinator, but clearly it is a very under-resourced institution. Then I look at local government and the allocation to local government, and that allocation has increased by some 200-plus million dollars. As a matter of fact, well, we see regional corporations getting an increase of some $240 million. A lot of it, goods and services, general administration, current transfers and subsidies—so that it appears as though what we are not clear about is that maybe a lot of Ministries have individual allocations for disaster preparedness, but I am not so convinced. I am not so convinced because of exactly when happened in Diego Martin last year.

Now, you know, Mr. President, at the end of the day, it is very simple if you were to ask any one of us sitting here today, the 31 of us, if there was some form of a disaster where we live—be it an earthquake, hurricane—do we know the shelter in the area in which we live?

**Hon. Senator:** No.

**Sen. P. Beckles:** Okay. When you talk about preparedness as a country,

those are basic questions that you ask. So, for us to say we are ready but the people are not ready, I do not understand that. We have seen the scientific approach in a number of countries now to disaster preparedness.

Last year you would remember that there was a disaster that took place—I do not remember exactly where—in the United States, but every half hour, 10 minutes, you actually saw on the television where they were giving people updates where to go, where not to go, so we have to be serious. I know that if there was a serious disaster where I live, I do not know of a place that has been designed as a shelter. I mean, I could assume that they could put certain things in place.

If I look at Arima as an area that I have previously represented, I remember that when Ivan took place in 2004 and I had actually visited the office of the ODPM in Tacarigua and I asked them for the list of the shelters for Arima, the top of that list was the Calvary Community Centre that was actually broken down about five years before that time. You know, I had to ask them, do you know that that community centre does not exists? They were telling me yes, our people went out on the field, and I said, I am telling you that I am the MP for that area and I pass there all the time and that centre has been broken down for years. You know, those are the kinds of things—and they had a number of other centres; the Pinto Community Centre and a couple schools and when you called the principal and other people they said, but nobody ever discussed it with us and told us that we were a shelter.

I mean, I am talking about those simple things, and as a society this has nothing to do with political parties, you know, this has to do with us

understanding that this is a very, very serious matter. Now, those of us who remember what happened with Ivan in 2004—Mr. President, you might remember that when the decision was taken to send everyone home, and I think, if I recall correctly, that decision was taken somewhere around lunchtime, and Port of Spain was gridlocked. Of course, everybody was in a panic.

As usual, some people believe that God is a Trini and every time the hurricane is heading for us somehow it is going to go in some other direction, it is not going to hit Trinidad. Well it was coming straight for Trinidad and Tobago. I remember distinctly because I was the Minister of Public Utilities at the time, and the eye was heading in the direction of Trinidad and Tobago, and yes it did turn and go elsewhere and it went to Grenada with a damage of $1.1 billion and 14,000 homes destroyed. That is some 30 per cent of houses in the country. I think almost about 30-something people had died.

I am sure Sen. Lambert, who has roots in Grenada, would tell you that even the Grenadians did not believe that hurricane was coming, so they did not really prepare. A lot of them told you that were still on the beach playing football and playing cricket, and they say, "nah, nah, it not coming", and yes it came. Grenada is just a "stone throw" away from us.

**Sen. Singh:** Not a blade of grass.

**Sen. P. Beckles:** Yes, not a blade of grass. All right, and I raise this because I really do not feel that it is a matter that we discuss enough, because so often we prefer to take the position that we are ready rather than look and see what are the challenges, what have we learnt from the Diego

Martin situation? What have we learnt from some of the instances in central? What have we learnt from some of the southern constituencies—Oropouche, Point Fortin, and some of the areas in Barrackpore—and what have we learnt from the northern areas of Toco and Grande Riviere and Matelot? I do not think that we have really recognized how serious this matter is.

Then we remember what happened in St. Vincent. Mr. President, I had the opportunity to go to Grenada afterwards—probably two days—and you are talking about 60 per cent of their hotel rooms damaged. As a matter

**Sen. Singh:** T&TEC.

**Sen. P. Beckles:**—T&TEC stayed in Grenada for an entire year.

**Hon. Senator:** Soldiers too.

**Sen. P. Beckles:** Okay, soldiers, and we just do not think that that will happen to us, which I find really amazing.

We think that so often Trinidad is the one, and we have gone to Haiti and we have helped and we have gone to St. Vincent, we have gone to Grenada, but let us not believe the way we operate that something is not going to happen and that the importance of us preparing.

Mr. President, I was really loath to talk about this because, you know, I remember something just recently, even the incident—look the *Express* here, something like yesterday with the shoot-out at the Port of Spain hospital. Now, we could look at it as a criminal activity but we also need to look at it similar to what happened in Boston in April. Okay? In Boston in April, if we follow what transpired, I mean you are talking about three people dying, 300-something people being hurt, but you had a question

where 27 hospitals had to be operational to deal with the hundreds of people that were injured. I mean, we have our marathons that take place here every year and those things are disasters of some form.

What happened yesterday in the hospital, we are talking about a situation where somebody uses a nurse as a human shield. You know, you read those things, you see those things in movies and on television and so, and you do not believe it is coming right home. Yes, now security is beefed up and that is precisely my point. We always wait until something happens and then we say everything is in order now, we have security. I mean, we all know what happened in 1990 as it relates to this said Parliament and it was then, afterwards, we beefed up security. That nurse, her name is Alexis Bhagan, I am sure we all certainly want to express our concerns for her and her family, because when we think of what happened with Ryan Rampersad—

**Hon. Senator:** Oh Lord.

**Sen. P. Beckles:**—and I am going back again to issues of disaster because I was listening to Dr. Balgobin talk about a society where we seem not to be caring.

You know, we are debating budgets of 50 billion and 60 billion and we seem to be heartless. People are going into a hospital where you are going for care, you are going there with a hope that people will do better for you, that is where the experts are, that is where the nurses and doctors are, and somebody just get up and say, "well, hear what, we cyar do nothing for you again, you know". I mean, just in the hospital where you have gone to get better care you seem to have gotten worse care. You seem to have

gotten sick. I mean, a man that was walking, going about his business, it is not as though he was with some gun fighting, shooting somebody. He was going about his normal business and he gets knocked down, 98 per cent—he cannot do anything for himself, and you tell the family, well, take him, that is the end of it.

It makes me think about this nurse, because one wonders—and it is a matter that Sen. Lambert can probably address better than I can. What compensation do we really have for these people? The soldier that got killed down in the army in circumstances which we are yet really to determine; he was a young soldier and the offer that the State has made for him is really unbelievable. I would not even want to discuss and say exactly what the price has been put on his life where nobody is clear as to what has happened.

So, therefore, I understand the point that was made by the Minister of National Security, Sen. George, but I also recognized that I know for a fact that Dr. Rowley—and the pictures were there and the people, and Dr. Amery Browne went out of their way to try and do all that they could to see that their constituents were well looked after. But it is not a simple matter. All those situations that have occurred in New Orleans and Ivan are things we could learn from.

Mr. President, you know, sometimes the suggestion is always that the Opposition only criticizes, but I just want to ask—the Minister of Finance and the Economy is not here; I know we are going to be debating the budget soon and whilst we are doing this variation, I really would have hoped that some kind of allocation, of a substantial amount would be there for emergency funding for situations similar to Diego Martin that we do not

have to then decide that later on we have to look for money here and look for money here.

Dr. Tewarie spent a lot of time talking about planning, preparations, and this Government is doing a better job in terms of planning to avoid some of the mistakes of the past, but I maintain that as it relates to this area of disaster preparedness, I think Trinidad is seriously, seriously wanting.

Now, in the United States—and I am just making a suggestion—they have set up something called a Grant Guidance for fiscal year 2013 preparedness grants, and it is under their national security ministry as well. Secretary for Homeland Security indicated that the US Department of Homeland Security Preparedness Grant Program totaling 1.5 billion to assist states, urban areas, tribal and territorial Governments, non-profit agencies and the private sector in strengthening our nation's ability to prevent, protect, mitigate, respond to and recover from terrorist acts, major disasters and other emergencies in support of the national preparedness goal and national preparedness system.

Mr. President, they are saying the effective response to the tragic events in Boston underscores the importance of these investments in preparedness activities. This year's grant funding focuses limited resources or achieving the core capabilities outlined in national preparedness goal related to prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery.

**1.15 a.m.**

And what they have said is that, persons who can apply for these grants and you would notice that it means that they have recognized that the Government can not do it alone, the private sector, the churches, the non-

governmental organization, they have a critical role to play because they are already out in the field and they understand whatever is going on. And what they are doing is that they are encouraging persons who applied for these grants

> "…to maintain and sustain current critical core capabilities through investments in training and exercises, updates to current planning and procedures, life cycle replacement of equipment. New capabilities that are built using homeland security grant funding must be deployable if needed to support regional and national efforts. All capabilities being built or sustained must have a clear linkage to the core capabilities in the National Preparedness Goal."

So I am just saying that we do not need to reinvent the wheel. There are a number of countries who have already put in place some specific kind of fund, and they do not just wait until the incident happens.

Mr. President, the other reason why I am raising this matter again has to do with the Good Friday black out that took place. You know we were really very lucky that as far as I recalled there was only one incident of looting in Barataria. And sometimes as a society we are so critical about each other and you know, some of us have reached to the stage where you have people commenting that Trinidad is the worst and whatever. But you know for people not to have capitalized on a black out that lasted for quite a number of hours and that took place at that point in time, I think that is a credit to the police officers, the soldiers, but even a lot of people in communities who clearly took decisions to be vigilant and at least it speaks volumes for Trinidad and Tobago.

But my point is still, that here it is you have a disaster, you have a black out, both in Trinidad and Tobago, and again we come back to the extent to which our hospitals are ready, you know all the other critical institutions that are necessary to make sure that things move smoothly and we have a certain level of comfort and peace. Do we feel that way in such a position, and clearly that is not the case. We have not yet, in my humble view, received some sort of clear and precise reason as to exactly what caused the black out and certainly what could probably be done to avoid it, and how we might educate the population again, so if something similar happens how do we treat with it.

Mr. President, I have two other areas that I would like to address and one has to do with the issue of CEPEP that has been raised by a number of persons. When I was the Minister of Public Utilities CEPEP fell under me and I—for the time that I was a Minister I heard very little good things about CEPEP. As a matter of fact, CEPEP was maligned as one of the worse institutions that PNM created. And you know I am amazed now to see the extent to which this Government has adopted CEPEP as one of the best initiatives that this country has ever started.

Now, I have filed a question that lapsed last year and it is coming very close to lapsing again, because the answer was initially due on October 03, 2010 and we are now in June, of 2012; less than a month away from Parliament proroguing and I do not see any chance of it probably being answered. It seems to be such a difficult question that I have filed that the Government does not—either they do not have the answer or they have decided that they are not going to answer the question. It is about CEPEP.

And it really has to do with the amount of contractors, how much moneys have been paid—some fairly simple questions. But the point about it is that it is going to lapse again, but if it is not answered I will filed it again because it is very important. Another $140 something plus million is going to be allocated to CEPEP, and like everything else the country deserves to know—one of the explanations is that they are going to have some new contractors.

Now if you are going to spend that kind of money on CEPEP why is it so difficult to tell people who are the contractors that you have employed and the amount of moneys that have been paid, and some other simple questions that have not been answered? I really hope that as much as I am not optimistic that some answer would be given about this, because this is where the issue of transparency that this Government has been boasting about—and they boast about the extent to which they answer questions promptly, and they boast about the extent to which they are transparent and willing to share information, and this is one of the instances to which they have failed miserably.

Mr. President, my last area has to do with the issue of agriculture. Under the Ministry of Food Production I think there is an increase of some $74million, again the majority of it being for the payments of wages and salaries. My concern is—or an animal production, let me just get exactly—

Now, Mr. President, I was looking at the Government programme, I think about two days ago, a very interesting programme on some cows that came in from the United States that are producing a lot more milk than our locally bred cows. It was quite an interesting story because they were

interviewing some of the workers from the Ministry of Agriculture who had actually gone abroad to the United States and stayed there for some time in order to be able to understand, and you know, I guess do whatever is the best possible job to make sure that the when the cows are here that they are properly acclimatize to our weather and so. But I have two concerns on this issue.

Okay, yes, animal production and health is increased by some $6.4 million. And there are other areas: horticulture and some other areas, but that is the main area to which I am referring. Now, Mr. President, you would realize that from time to time we have had some of the farmers in this area protesting and the reason why they are protesting is because some time ago there was a cost of production survey that was done—as a matter of fact that was in 2006. And following that cost of production survey there should have been an increase in the price of milk for the farmers and that has not happened. And the concern for the farmers is that they are not being adequately compensated at this point in time, but at the same time the Government has gone and brought cows from the United States and that may cause some sort of competitiveness with some of the local farmers.

Now, my information is that those cows that have come in from the United States are extremely expensive and that have landed here at some $30,000 per cow. Now it may very well be that the expectations in terms of the milk production is substantial and they may be some special type of cows on the market which I imagine that that is the case. But my concern is this, how we are treating our local dairy producers and to ensure that there is not this feeling that the Government is discriminating against them in

anyway.

Mr. President, my other issue as it relates to agriculture has to do with the construction of the Judicial Complex just west of the rice mill. Now, this has been a bone of contention for persons in the agricultural sector in that, the Government in their Manifesto had made it very clear that they would not be using agricultural land to put infrastructural projects. And we have seen that this Government has gone contrary to that policy both in terms of not just this Judicial Complex but also in the area of housing. And I think the Government needs to make some kind of clear policy decision on that matter, and since the Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development is normally the person who has been talking about Government deciding how land is to be allocated and distributed, I am hoping that at some point in time he would clear up that particular issue.

I am also aware that there is a fish processing plant that is to be constructed some where in the Carlsen Field area, and I do not know if it is a question of land availability, but at least one would think that if you are going to get in fish processing that the area that they would select would be an area much closer to where you have fishing taking place. I hope that my information on that is not correct and that some statement would be made about that at some point in time.

And my final point as it relates to agriculture has to do with the issue of establishing a land department in the Ministry of Food Production. Now I see that there is a—in terms ofpersonal expenditure, general administration, salaries and cola that there is a considerable increase there, and I have been advised that almost all the persons working in this area are on contract.

Now, Mr. President, I do not know if my information is correct, but I am advised that Cabinet at some point in time took a decision to move the Commissioner of State Lands from under the Ministry of Agriculture or Food Production and to place the Commissioner of State Lands under the Ministry of Housing, Land and Marine Affairs. And of course that—when you look at the legislation, the Commissioner of State Lands is placed under the Ministry of Agriculture or Food Production, if such a move is to be made it ought to be made by coming to the Parliament and have the relevant piece of legislation amended. So that I am hoping that the Minister, Minister Tewarie as well, who I think can clarify some matter on this because it is an issue that impacts directly on the Town and Country Act and the decision by the Government in terms of how land is distributed.

So Mr. President, thank you kindly. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight:** I thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to intervene in this debate and I want to assure all involved that I shall be mercifully very brief.

**Hon. Senators:** Take your time—full hour.

**Sen. C. Baptiste-Mc Knight:** I have to start by doing something that I object to, normally, and that is repeating what has been said by my colleagues who have preceded me. And it is because I feel intensely provoked at having to intervene in yet another supplemental budget debate in which the information provided is far from adequate. [*Desk thumping*] I think that it is really bordering on disrespectful to provide this type of information on a budget—a request for funds that puts our budget in the vicinity of $60 billion plus, dollars that as have been said before represent

the peoples money.

**1.30a.m.**

Now, I wonder whether it is because the Senate's role in the budget is perfunctory. Whether we agree with it or not, we just talk and the Government can take us on if they feel so inclined. But, in fact, I think I need to make the point that it is a mark of good governance for proper information on a budget to be available, both to the Parliament and to the citizenry.

In this respect, I feel quite sure that this is the last time that I will have to make this comment, given the fact that the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy participated for a while at the recent workshop on Parliamentary Scrutiny that happened at the Hyatt last week and I am sure that he would have taken away from that event, the need to really share the information on the budget, in as detailed a fashion as possible, with all concerned.

That being said, I have to thank the hon. Minister of National Security—and tertiary education—who seems to have lost us for a while, for allaying some of my feeling of being treated like a mushroom. They have been able to explain some of the areas of problems that I have had with this presentation. But there remain two areas that I would really like to have some more explanation on. One of them is at page 13, Head 63, dealing with the Ministry of Arts and Multiculturalism.

Now, in my other capacity as Chair of a committee—Group 1—our committee examined the NCC, which is the entity that would be involved in this particular paragraph, where it says that Cabinet, having agreed to

increase in prize money of $6.8 million, these moneys were transferred from nonprofit institutions. Now, when nonprofit institutions are led to expect subsidies and nine months into the fiscal year the subsidies are not forthcoming, this really does not do very much to inculcate faith in a Government in these institutions, worse, when this money is given to beef up Carnival prize moneys. And I do not think it is any secret that the carnival community this year has been very, very upset, irate, disappointed, at the treatment they received with respect to these prize moneys.

Now, our committee—granted our report was tabled perhaps just about a month ago, give or take a couple days, but that report reiterated a call that had been made, at least for the past two years, for a proper audit into the Carnival Bandleaders Association. This is the group that is supposed to be in charge of disbursing these prize moneys.

Now, in light of that experience, I have a little difficulty in understanding that additional money is being taken from the Treasury to subsidize this particular organization that is obviously not performing its function as it ought to, and I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to the Minister of Arts and Multiculturalism to ensure that an audit is done, not only on the NCC, but all of the entities that money goes through the NCC to, particularly the Carnival Bandleaders Association.

That said, I would quickly move on to my next area of concern, and that is Head 74, Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration. Now, having read what is the information here, I have been asking around to find out who knows about the Year of Patriotism. What year has been designated as the Year of Patriotism. I do not think it has already passed because I note

that the final sentence here deals with the observance of a Year of Patriotism. Can I have some information on this, whether it is to come, which year is it, and what exactly would be the level of participation of the citizenry in this? I would hate to think that I am the only person who is totally in the dark about this particular event.

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

**The Minister of Communications (Sen. The Hon. Jamal Mohammed):** [*Desk thumping*] Thank you very much, Mr. President. Good morning to you, Sir, and Members of this honourable Senate—a good Saturday morning. It is, indeed, a pleasure and an honour for me to stand in this honourable Senate and to make a short contribution on this very important matter that has been raised [*Desk thumping*] by the Minister of Finance and the Economy, the Finance (Supplementary Appropriation) (Financial Year 2013) Bill, 2013.

First of all, Mr. President, I want the take this opportunity to congratulate our hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy. We have to congratulate Mr.Larry Howai for the excellent job he is doing in his capacity as Minister of Finance and the Economy, [*Desk thumping*] having taken over the reins of responsibility from the previous Minister of Finance, Mr.Winston Dookeran.

When the history of the economy of Trinidad and Tobago is written, we must make a space and we will have to find a space for Winston Dookeran and Larry Howai, for the tremendous job they have done in managing the economy of Trinidad and Tobago, [*Desk thumping*] especially what they have had to endure, what we inherited as a Government, this

People's Partnership Government. And you know, some of my friends opposite do not like us to remind you of the past, but we have to continuously remind you and the people of Trinidad and Tobago so that they will not forget what we inherited when this Government came into office on the 24th of May, 2010.

Again, I want to congratulate Sen. Larry Howai for the excellent job he is doing as Minister of Finance and the Economy. No one can say anything about Larry Howai. He is a decent, distinguished gentleman [*Desk thumping*] who has served this country well, in all of his capacities: in the banking sector; in the National Gas Company, I think. Wherever he has been, Larry Howai has stood out as a man of integrity and a man who gets the job done, and we have every confidence that in his capacity as Minister of Finance and the Economy he will do what is necessary to ensure that our economy remains strong and healthy. I thank Sen. Larry Howai. [*Desk thumping*] And he did not have to pay me to say that. That is a genuine feeling coming from a young member of his party. [*Interruption*] Yes, Sen. Hinds.

This evening I also want to pay tribute to another of my colleagues who spoke on this Bill, Sen. James Lambert. People say all sorts of things about Sen. James Lambert. [*Desk thumping*] People say all sorts of things, and sarcastically say all sorts of things about Sen. James Lambert, but I want to put on record for you, all Members of this House and the national community, that Sen. James Lambert is one of the most distinguished citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, [*Desk thumping*] who has contributed, and continues to contribute, in the labour field here in Trinidad and Tobago.

And as we approach Labour Day for 2013, I want to salute men like Sen. James Lambert [*Desk thumping*] and the Member of Parliament for Pointe-a-Pierre, Mr. Errol Mc Leod, for the excellent work they have done on behalf of the labour community of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. President, I also want to pay a special tribute tonight—or this morning, sorry—to Independent Sen. Prof. Harold Ramkissoon, another very distinguished gentleman,—

**Hon. Senators:** Hear! Hear! [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. J. Mohammed:**—a scientist of repute, intellectual of the highest capacity and order and a man who has done so much for Trinidad and Tobago. I listened to him this evening and the appeals he has made on behalf of the scientific community, and the amount of work we have to do in terms of research and development of new ideas and innovation, and I am sure my colleague, Sen. Fazal Karim, heard everything that he said and they will work together to make sure that the scientific community of Trinidad and Tobago will get their just due on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] But I want to salute Sen. Prof. Harold Ramkissoon.

I also want to pay tribute to my colleague, the Minister of National Security—and speak of him—Sen. Emmanuel George. [*Desk thumping*] Sen. Emmanuel George holds a very distinctive position in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. He is a Minster; he is a Senator and a distinguished Senator and Minister. He also has the distinction of being someone who has come through the ranks of the public service, who has served as a Permanent Secretary, who has served in several capacities in the public service, so

when things come to us in the Cabinet and we have meetings, and you pass through that with Sen. George, you know you have passed through something through the system here in Trinidad and Tobago, and I want to congratulate him.

He is doing an excellent job as Minister of National Security and this evening [*Desk thumping*] we heard his sincerity and his patriotism and his desire to make sure that the people of Trinidad and Tobago remain safe and secure under his watch as Minister of National Security. And I want to assure him, he has our support and we will do what we have to do to make sure that he succeeds in his capacity as Minister of National Security. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** Young George, "man".

**Sen. J. Mohammed:** I can go on and on, Mr. President, to speak about all of the other people who have spoken on the debate here tonight—my colleagues—but I just want to say how happy I am that they have contributed to this debate, this very important debate, which is like a mini budget debate. In the other place, in the House of Representatives they went right through the night and it was only after eight o'clock the next morning when they completed the debate on this Bill in the House of Representatives. Hopefully, we are not going to go to that stage, and pretty soon we shall be coming to an end.

**Sen. George:** Talk on, man. Talk on.

**Sen. J. Mohammed:** But I am going on and on because there are some things that have to be said. There are some things that have to be said and some misconceptions that have to be corrected that we heard here tonight

and we cannot allow the opportunity to go by.

**Sen. George:** That is right. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. J. Mohammed:** Mr. President, Members of this honourable House, the people of Trinidad and Tobago have a right to know what their Government is doing.

**Sen. George:** That is right.

**Sen. J. Mohammed:** That is their intrinsic right. We are presenting budgets of billions of dollars and our citizens of this country have a right to know what their Government is doing with these resources. That is why in the Ministry of Communications we are doing what we can do to ensure that every single citizen of our country knows what their Government is doing. It is part of our policy of being accountable to the people, of being transparent and letting the people know the actual truth,—

**Sen. George:** "Tell dem."

**Sen. J. Mohammed:**—that we have information to share with the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Now, every other Ministry in the Government has been touched by this Bill that is before us, except the Ministry of Communications. Every other Ministry got a little increase in their amounts, except the Ministry of Communications, and I am not going to formally complain to Mr. Larry Howai who is the Minister of Finance and the Economy, [*Laughter*] but I am just saying that if from time to time he can look mercifully upon us at the Ministry of Communications, we would be very happy.

**Hon. Senator:** "After yuh praise de man?"

**Sen. J. Mohammed:** Absolutely. No, he is a cool "fella"; he would not

mind." I am just saying, Mr.President, that every single Ministry has been touched by this Bill that is before us and, God willing, we shall be able to get some resources from the Ministry of Finance and the Economy somewhere along the line. I want to remind Members of the Senate, and through you, Mr. President, the people of Trinidad and Tobago, that there are a number of things that are happening within the Government, within the People's Partnership Government that has been benefitting all of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

aThat is one of the things that we have to understand about this Government.

**1.45 a.m.**

We have been serving all of the people of Trinidad and Tobago without fear or favour, affection or ill will, and if it is one thing you can point out about our Government, is that it has touched the lives of people from all over Trinidad and Tobago. That is something we have to be very, very careful about because we are leaving the impression sometimes when we speak and we hear others speak, that this Government is a Government for certain sections of the community and certain classes of people. But I want to assure you, when you read the record and the achievement of the various Ministries in this Government, every single community, every single aspect of our society has been touched by the various services on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Sometimes I ask myself the question: do you know why the PNM is in Opposition? And I see it reflected when they speak and some of the words when they speak, and this evening we got a classic example from Sen. Hinds, my very good friend—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes. Oh, his very good friend.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Mohammed:**—and a friend in this honourable Senate. When they speak sometimes and you listen to his words, it is as if he is saying, you, who are in this People's Partnership Government, you do not deserve to be there. You do not belong to be in the Government and only PNM people must be in Government. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Hon. Senator:** That is divine right.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Mohammed:** That is something we have to get over in this country. Breathe easy people in Trinidad and Tobago, there is room for all of us, and all of us will have a right and an opportunity to serve as we see fit on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. So that is something we have to clear up, and sometimes I hear some of my friends opposite speak, they look at us as if we do not belong here and it is only PNM must be running this country. That is very, very unfair.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** That is why it is still PNM country, man.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Mohammed:** The other issue I wanted to raise this morning, Mr. President, and I thank you for the opportunity, is that there are a couple things that we have to pay particular attention to according to the manifesto of the People's Partnership Government. This was the pledge that this Government made to the people of Trinidad and Tobago in May of 2010. It is now an official policy document on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, and I want to advise every single Member of this Senate, and every single citizen of Trinidad and Tobago, to get a copy of this document.

The Ministry of Communications has recently analyzed this document, taking out the promises that were made on behalf of the people, seeing those promises that were fulfilled and then making a list of those promises that are yet to be fulfilled, and this Government is doing an excellent job according to this manifesto here. [*Desk thumping*] We cannot do everything in this first term, but I want to assure members of the national community, and you, Mr. President, that in the second term and subsequent terms, we shall continue to fulfil the promises in our manifesto. [*Desk thumping*]

Two things stand out in this manifesto, Mr. President, that I want to share and talk a bit about this morning. It is very serious. [*Crosstalk*] The issue of constitutional reform is a very, very important part of our development here in Trinidad and Tobago, and I have heard Members opposite criticize the funding that is being asked for to conduct these constitutional reform activities. For the first time in our country, I believe that the people of Trinidad and Tobago believe that there is going to be constitutional reform in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] That is a promise we made in this manifesto.

**Sen. George:** And Tobago.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Mohammed:** Our Prime Minister promised it, our Government promised it, the process is on the way and it is going to happen, Mr. President, on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Make no mistake about that.

I want to congratulate the Minister of Legal Affairs and his team from the Ministry of Legal Affairs for the excellent job he is doing in conducting

this process of constitutional reform here in Trinidad and Tobago. We have listened to 17 of these programmes throughout Trinidad, and Tobago. The people have turned out, they have given their views, and now the process continues where some other stakeholders and other interest groups are being invited to participate in the process, [*Crosstalk*] and pretty soon something will come out because the people of Trinidad and Tobago believe that something is going to be done in terms of constitutional reform here in Trinidad and Tobago. So whatever this expense is required in this Bill, it is well justified on behalf of the Minister of Legal Affairs and the Ministry of Legal Affairs.

The other thing in this manifesto that was promised and which is well on the way is the issue of local government reform. Very, very significant to the development of the communities in our country—

**Hon. Senator:** "Gey dem."

**Sen. The Hon. J. Mohammed:**—and Minister of Local Government has been conducting his own consultations throughout Trinidad and Tobago. Each of the 14 regional corporations and all those connected with local government, they are being consulted at this time. And, once again, when a document is out, you will see for yourself the effect of local government consultation and reform that will be implemented on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and we congratulate our colleague, the Minister of Local Government, who is doing an excellent job in this regard.

**Sen. Hinds:** You have to go right to the recorder.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Mohammed:** All of those things are part of constitutional reform, Sir. All of these things are part of constitutional reform.

**Hon. Senator:** When are we getting it?

**Sen. The Hon. J. Mohammed:** Now, Sen. Beckles spoke a moment ago about disaster preparedness, and this is something very, very important. [*Crosstalk*] She raised the issue about what happened the other day when we had the blackout in Trinidad and Tobago, when for several hours nowhere in Trinidad and Tobago there was any electricity.

Now the ODPM, which is responsible for these types of activities, they have been doing a wonderful job over the past years. It is a process. It is a very important process that has to take place, and we only recently found out that there is a special protocol, one person reporting to a next, reporting to a next, reporting to a next, to filter down information, and it is necessary for a process of education to take place where all aspects of that protocol are informed and involved. I want to inform this honourable Senate and the national community, that the efforts of the ODPM have been bearing fruit because all those who are involved in this aspect of disaster preparedness and preparation for a disaster, the majority of them are getting informed and they know their positions.

Within the Ministry of Communications, under the GISL, the Government Information Services Limited we hold a very important aspect of that disaster preparedness and what will happen in terms of a disaster. There is something called the information task group which is part of the communications link for this entire preparations in case of a disaster, and I want to inform you, Mr. President, and through you, the national community, that the Ministry of Communication has accepted its responsibility and is doing its best at this time to make sure that all aspects

of this protocol for information will be fulfilled, and we will be in a state of readiness in case of a disaster. [*Desk thumping*]

One of the messages that we always get at this time from the ODPM, is to advise families throughout the country to get ready for a disaster, [*Crosstalk*] and amongst that message, is the need for all of us to have certain things put away safely in case of an emergency; put away your private documents and so on. [*Crosstalk*] But I want to emphasize to you, Mr. President, and through you to the national community, that the one thing all of us must have or two things rather—because in times of a disaster the biggest problem is one of communication, what do we do, where do we go, and you always want to get official word.

In time of a disaster, one of the few items that we can have working throughout the country is a portable radio. [*Laughter*] So I want to advise you, Mr. President, and through you, the national community, everybody must have a portable radio and your batteries put away safely. [*Desk thumping*] Seriously, a transistor radio. Seriously! There will be no electricity in a disaster, there will be no television, there will be no electrical equipment to help you, but you must have your portable radio and your batteries. [*Sen. Hinds laughs*] You can laugh at it, Sen. Hinds, but that is a very important thing. Your radio and your batteries is something very important to put aside in terms of a disaster, if it occurs here in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Crosstalk*]

So, Mr. President, these are some of the important aspects I wanted to discuss this morning, but to remind members of the national community that this Bill before us is something very significant. It has to be done. It is part

of the accounting process on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and it is something that we must all take note as we continue to develop and grow as a people here, in Trinidad and Tobago.

There is, however, one other aspect I wish to remind Members of this honourable Senate. No matter what else you say, no matter what you want to say, no matter how much you criticize, it is your right to criticize and find objection, this Government will not be sidetracked from its job. This Government will not be deterred from its responsibilities to govern on behalf of all of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and I want to advise all of you here in this Senate, to be aware of your duties and responsibilities whether you are a Member of the Opposition, whether you are a Member of the Independent Bench and especially if you are a Member of the Government. Let us do what we have to do as citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. Let us stand up for our country and show love and appreciation for our country. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Baptiste-Mc Knight talked about the year of patriotism. This is a special programme that was started by the Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration. It is a very significant programme started by Minster De Coteau. It started on Independence Day in 2012, and will continue all through this year until Independence Day 2013. [*Crosstalk*] There are a number of events that have been organized by this Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration to develop that sense of patriotism and love for your country, because we believe, in this Government, that you must stand up for your country at all time. We must always believe in the future of this country. We must always defend this country. If this country goes to

war and somebody tries to take over Trinidad and Tobago, will you fight for your country?

**Hon. Senators:** Yes!

**Sen. The Hon. J. Mohammed:** Will you defend your country?

**Hon. Senators:** Yes!

**Sen. The Hon. J. Mohammed:** We have to be very, very careful, and we congratulate Minister De Coteau for his year of patriotism. [*Desk thumping*] Only recently, he did something for Indian Arrival day which has never been done in this country, and we congratulate Minister De Coteau for having that reenactment of Indian Arrival Day on Nelson Island, which was a tremendous patriotic thing that he did on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] You heard him in the House when he spoke the other day, the amount of things he is doing to restore our heritage sites and to do things to develop that sense of pride. All of this is part of the year of patriotism and part of the ongoing programme of the Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration.

In the Ministry of Communications, Mr. President, I want to assure the national community, and Members of this honourable Senate, that press freedom remains one of the great bastions of our democracy in Trinidad and Tobago. In Trinidad and Tobago, we have a media and a press that is free to do as they want. They are free to print whatever they wish. No member of the media can stand up and say anything about their rights and their privileges being trampled upon at all.

This Government, this Trinidad and Tobago, it is one of the few countries in the world, where freedom of the press is enshrined in our

Constitution, and this Government of Trinidad and Tobago, under the Prime Ministership of Kamla Persad-Bissessar, has firmly identified herself with the International Press Institute and the leading organizations dealing with the media in Trinidad and Tobago and around the world, to let the world know that we are committed to a free press here in Trinidad and Tobago. We may not ever agree with you all of the time, as members of the media, but we will give our lives to ensure that you have the right to express yourself as members of the media. [*Desk thumping*]

You know, Mr. President, the theory of the free press is not that the truth will come out in every instance when you report, but that the truth will come out after free discussion, and that is something we must try to encourage in our country. We must not be afraid—like when I hear Sen. Hinds talk and he criticizes the Government or any of the Senators criticize, I am not afraid of what he says.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Yeh man!"

**Sen. The Hon. J. Mohammed:** You are entitled to your own opinion. [*Desk thumping*] You are always wrong, but you are entitled to your opinion. We live in a country where you have the right and the freedom to express yourselves accordingly, and especially in a Senate like in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, you enjoy more rights than many other people who are ordinary citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] So you are entitled to your views. You can say what you want because you have the right so to do to express yourself according to the laws of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Crosstalk*] I may never agree with you, but you have the right to say what you want to say, and this is the nature—

**Hon. Senator:** Even when he wrong.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Mohammed:**—of the democracy that we have in Trinidad and Tobago and the press freedom that we enjoy.

In the Ministry of Communications, we have an excellent relationship with all arms of the media. In radio, in television, in print, wherever it is, we are supportive of all arms of the media and we allow them to print what they wish to print, to say what they want to say, to cuss the Government if they wish to. That is their right. If you listen to some of the television and radio stations and radio shows that are on now, every single day, 24 hours of the day, they are criticizing the Government constantly and nobody does anything because that is their right.

Even in our state-owned television and radio, there are programmes that criticize the Government and nobody does anything to them, because that is freedom of the press. Our own state-owned radio, there are programmes and announcers who go on the air every day and criticize the Government, but that is their right.

**Sen. Hinds:** Which one?

**Sen. The Hon. J. Mohammed:** And we must encourage that kind of discussion and open discussion.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Dat doh bother us."

**Sen. The Hon. J. Mohammed:** It does not bother us. It is a freedom that we have and we enjoy in this country, and this Government is committed to a free media and, hopefully, everyone will take note of this as we continue to develop this beautiful country of Trinidad and Tobago.

So I support this Bill, Mr. President, and I commend it to all Members

of this honourable Senate. This is an excellent effort in accounting and making sure that we are straight in our records in terms of the finances of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

**2.00 a.m.**

I warmly congratulate my senior colleague, Sen. Larry Howai, for the excellent job that he did in presenting this Bill. [*Desk thumping*] Thank you very much, Mr.President. [*Continuous crosstalk and desk thumping*]

**Sen. Dr. James Armstrong:** Thank you very much, Mr.President. [*Continuous crosstalk and laughter*]

**Hon. Senator:** "Yuh ha tuh come good, yuh know!"

**Sen. George:** "That hard to follow, yuh know!"

**Sen. Hinds:** "Yeah, boy, he unleash ah secret weapon today, boy!"

**Sen. Dr. J. Armstrong:** Thank you very much, Mr. President, to contribute to the—

**Hon. Senators:** Oh goooood. [*Continuous laughter and desk thumping*]

**Sen. Dr. J. Armstrong**: Thank you very much, Mr.President, to contribute to the Finance (Supplementary Appropriation) (Financial Year 2013) Bill, 2013.

Mr.President, it is now 2.00 o'clock in the morning and if anyone was sort of feeling drowsy, falling asleep, [*Continuous interruption and laughter*] I think that Minister Mohammed certainly revived us.

**Hon. Senators:** Yes!

**Sen. Dr. J. Armstrong:** It is unfortunate that I have to come after him but—[*Continuous crosstalk and laughter*] Well, I would try to be brief, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I would like to start by addressing something that I do not think was mentioned in the debate so far, and which I feel very strongly about, and this has to do, again, with the confusion between economic expansion and development. We kept talking about—and I mentioned this some time ago but I think I need to mention it again, that we keep confusing the two things. We had a lot of discussion today about the expansion of the economy and whether it is going to grow by 1.7 per cent, 2 per cent or whatever. I do not think that that is the issue or the only issue that we should be considering or we should be taking into consideration. I think one of the things that I want us to think about, Mr.President, is the fact that we are spending now about $60 billion per year, and my concern really is whether we are getting value for that money. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Some people might!

**Sen. Dr. J. Armstrong:** Sixty billion is a significant amount of money and I am not sure really that we are much better off than we would have been some decades ago.

I am also of the view, Mr.President, that the reason we are spending so much money is perhaps because of the size of the bureaucracy, the size of Government. I noted that a significant amount of this money is supposed to be going to recurrent expenditures—personal emoluments and so on. There is something that I would like the Minister of Finance and the Economy to think about, particularly since he came from the private sector—the banking sector. What is a good ratio of your expenses that should go to your institutional management administrative cost in comparison to what you are delivering? That is something that concerns me really, that we have about 28

Ministries I believe—27 or 28 Ministries—and to deliver what? What are the people really getting for that kind of expenditure? I am wondering whether with fewer Ministries, less overhead cost, we can move some of those resources to actual development. So that is something that I would like us to look at.

I know that, for instance, in the banking sector, one of the concerns would be "you borrowing money, you lending money" and what is the spread that you would really allow, all right, in order to really cover your cost to then report to your investors or your depositors and so on. Somehow I just get the feeling that things got out of hand in Trinidad and Tobago and we are just spending money and I am not talking about this particular regime, I am talking about going back for a number of years. I am not convinced that with the amount of money that has passed through this country, that we are achieving development.

We are doing very well. We hear people saying it all the time. We are doing well economically, we heard it here today; I keep hearing it. Economists talking about how well we are doing economically, but that is not a major concern. The point is, yes, if we are doing so well economically, how are we doing in terms of development? It seems to me as if we are in a situation in which we are spending money from a lotto that we won but for which we did not really buy the ticket.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Nice one doc. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Dr. J. Armstrong:** I have challenged a number of our economists because to mismanage an economy such as ours has to be difficult. It has to be very difficult because here it is we are sitting minding how own business

and manna just start to fall from heaven. Our economy—I am not convinced and I said so before—it is something that we have worked very hard to develop and to maintain, and for that reason, I think we have a disregard for how we spend money and what is the impact of the money that we are spending.

I often wonder, given the fact that we are talking so much about how well we have done in this economy, how well we have done with development, what is the model—what is a model that any economist, any development planner, can point to and document, all right, and share, either with our own people here or with any other island state? What is the model? What is the model? I mean, we know of a lot of models, "yuh know", people keep talking about Singapore model and this model—what is our model? What have we really dedicated ourselves to and worked out as an economic and development planning model? That really escapes me.

Therefore, I would like the Minister to really take into consideration, as I said, whether, in fact, our cost of Government is too high, the bureaucracy is too large. We have a lot of Ministries, we have a lot of special purpose companies that were actually created and still exist. So, in addition to the core ministries that we have, we also have a number of other institutions, and it is as if the Government has now become a major employment agency and welfare sort of state, without justification where the welfare part of it is concerned.

The other thing I want to talk about is the whole business of crime and the allocations given to crime in the budget. I am not quite satisfied with what is happening with crime and how we are approaching it. I have noticed

that the police service got 661 million; national security, 203.7 million. Now, these expenditures are actually going up with respect to our crime situation and I have no doubt that significant efforts are being made to reduce or to address crime, but I do not think that we have any meaningful crime plan. What do I mean by that?

Now, I have been looking at a number of the documents prepared by the Government, including the manifesto—starting with the manifesto as a matter of fact—and a significant amount of—well, the other documents also prepared by the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development. I would like to also commend the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development for—I know that they got some licks with respect to how much planning is being done, but, in fact, I am aware that there is a fair amount of work being done in that Ministry. I would like to commend Minister Tewarie for what has been happening because I think that I have found that work to be very, very useful and to be very helpful, even in what we are talking about today.

I would like to make reference to that document and how it dealt with crime and why I became a little concerned. In that document—in one of those documents, it does make reference to—it is the *National Performance Framework (2012-2015)*, if I can just put my hands on that. Yeah, here it is. One thing that I was pleased with, really, is the way in which it approached the strategies for addressing crime and the fact that targets were provided. What I did not quite agree with was the structure or the mechanism and in that document, I know that a number of core—I think it was called core Ministries—were identified. I think it started with national security, I think it included justice, Attorney General.

**Hon. Senator:** Legal affairs.

**Sen. Dr. J. Armstrong:** Legal affairs, social. All right, here it is: Ministry of National Security, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Attorney General, Ministry of the People and Social Development, Ministry of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Food Production, public administration, local government, works and infrastructure, finance and the economy. Planning is not included in this and this was prepared by planning. I could not fathom that!

The plan that I am talking about or the approach that I—or some people do not want to call it a plan—strategy, whatever it is you want to call it. I think we need to revisit this and in my view a crime plan cannot be prepared by or only by the Ministry of National Security—

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** True!

**Sen. Dr. J. Armstrong:**—given the nature of the problem that we are talking about, because it is not simply a police and thief, police and bandit situation, we gone way past that. The elements that have been identified in all of these documents, all right, are way beyond what we should expect of the Minister of National Security or the police.

Therefore, I want to suggest for the consideration of the Minister, as well as my colleague, the Minister of National Security and the Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development, that perhaps these institutional arrangements and the strategies should be reconsidered where a significant responsibility for addressing crime should be assigned to the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development in conjunction with, of course, the Ministry of National Security, in which the police service certainly would have a major implementation or operational role.

**2.15 a.m.**

May I be bold enough to suggest that the third agency in this tripartite arrangement should be the Office of the Prime Minister. I will tell you why I say that: This is a very complex problem that we are trying to solve. I think that if we have the Office of the Prime Minister involved—it is not necessarily the hon. Prime Minister herself—I think a number of the directives that are required could be immediate. So that the core group that I am suggesting would be Ministry of National Security, Ministry of Planning, Office of the Prime Minister and then we can list everything that we have under here and come up with a comprehensive and integrated approach to dealing with crime that is not simply police and bandits, but also looking at all the social requirements, economic requirements; all the other things that would go to solve crime which is not going to happen tomorrow. I know that; it is going to happen tomorrow. I do not know why it is I am hearing about 36 per cent decrease. The thing has got to the point where it is not going to be solved tomorrow and therefore, I think that we have to adopt a different approach and that would be my recommendation. Therefore, I am not sure that all this money that we are spending on cars, equipment and so on would necessarily go a long way.

The other thing I was also pleased about is that—another document that was prepared—is the annual report; this one is the national performance—[*Inaudible*] The other one that I was quite pleased about, not only with respect to crime, but it is the "Annual Report on Performance, 2012". Again, what I found is that both these documents, really, were able to, at least, give me some indication as to where the Government is going,

what targets you have set and how you are going to approach it. What I am not very clear on—I want to again now ask the Minister of Finance and the Economy, because I have been looking for that—is to make use of these documents in presenting the budget in a manner in which I would like the Ministry, or whoever is doing the monitoring, to then come to us and say, "Look, you see this target that we have—because there are targets all through this: reduction of crime by 10 per cent; doing this by 15 per cent. I mean, I do not want to go through those, but there are some targets in here. I believe that the budget that we are going to be looking at in the not too distant future, should take into consideration the extent to which some of these things here have been addressed.

The other thing I want to touch on, Mr. President, has to do with communities and the disparities within communities, and that is a concern that I have. There has been some mention here, this morning, and yesterday, about disparities in communities. There have even been some accusations of racism and so on. I want to say that—I am looking at it from a strictly scientific and professional point of view. Again, I went back to the atlas prepared by sustainable development, the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development; I looked at new expenditures. I want to agree that there are some disparities. [*Desk thumping*] There are disparities in how we are addressing our development priorities.

I will tell you why I arrived at that. If we go back to the atlas and before Minister Dr. Tewarie came to this Chamber, it would be recalled that one of the first things that I came in here hammering is the need for some spatial platform which would indicate to us where our problems are; how

they should be addressed and so on. I was very glad when we got the atlas. Now, when you look at that atlas, really, the atlas really indicates to us, in no uncertain terms, where we have certain kinds of problems. And, then we can also look at a number of the other indicators—coming out of whether it is out of the Ministry of National Security, the police service or whatever—on where we have crime; where we have people under—performing; where we have underemployment and so on. Based on that, I think what we need to be doing is really to be concentrating or, in fact, increasing expenditure, allocating resources to a number of areas where, in my view, I do not think it is sufficient.

We still have a number of rural communities, which have been neglected for years; urban communities. I am concerned about Port of Spain. Port of Spain is dying. [*Desk thumping*] It looks good; it looks good, but it does not work. The reason that it is not working is because, as I said before, the mix of functions that we have in the major city are inappropriate; they do not work. We went overboard in one direction and not sufficient in another.

Now, when you say this, the first thing that you hear is who was in charge; who was there then; and when you talk about east Port of Spain, well so many years. I am not concerned about that. I am concerned about all the technical information that I have in front of me which, as I said, I have commended the Ministry for that, but I am now wondering to what extent is it actually being used. Maybe we are expecting implementation in too short a period since, perhaps, these are hot off the press. However, I do not think that we had to wait for these documents to be able to set priorities in terms of how we address certain types of problems in a spatial context.

So that, I think we need to be looking at some of our rural communities, where there are deficiencies, as indicated, again, in all the information that I have in front of me. We need to be looking at east Port of Spain. I know that there is a plan; they have got some resources, but my understanding is that the resources that they got they still cannot use a significant amount of those funds for social kinds of programmes. So, it is still this business of a little culvert here and lighting a playground here and that sort of thing, which, I think is not going to really address the problem.

There was some discussion about CEPEP. I want to touch on that because there is some allocation here for that as well. I have always had some concerns about Cepep and I think it is necessary, but I think it has taken on a sort of permanence as an employment agency. Again, one of the things that, if I can get the data, is to really see how many people—I think we have an idea of how many people, but where this is concentrated. That, again, might explain the need, or direct us to where we need to address some of the spatial problems that I am talking about. Because, if I discover that 90 per cent of the people who are—not who own the—they call it gangs or whatever you want to call it—not the owners; not the people running it. I am talking about the employees. If I were to discover that those employees are concentrated in certain areas and that this is going on for a number of years, and they are not moving out of that, we have a serious problem; because that means, again, that the structure of those communities would be such that they are not evolving. Self actualization is not taking place; they are not being satisfied; there are problems; they may, very well be underemployed. That is no way any community can develop.

Compared to GATE—the Minister is not here, but I have mentioned on occasions as well, that I have a problem,. I do not know if it is a problem. It is something I think we need to look at; GATE—I am glad my colleague, Sen. Bernard is here because he alluded to something the other day that I kept saying and, perhaps, you can express better than I can. I do not believe that in terms of our investment in education, and in GATE, that sufficient people in particular locations or communities are able to access GATE. So that, again it would manifest itself in how you structure the economy or the development of a community. All right?

So that if we are having problems at the lower level—we admitted that tonight—that we are having problems at the elementary school level, concentrated in certain communities. Now, I have those statistics; I have those statistics. All right? What I do not have, are the statistics for GATE in terms of—we know the institutions they are going to or where those are located, but that is not what these people are coming from. So that you may very well find—I do not know how long we are going to be able to continue GATE; but what is going to happen is that in 10 years' time; maybe 15 years' time; maybe before that—that the people who were able to access GATE would have done so and moved ahead and be able to populate communities where they could run the pharmacy. You come out, you go to the pharmacy, you go to the lawyer, you go to the doctor; you go to whether it is your mechanic shop or whatever. But, if you look at some communities in this country, it is structured in such a way that you have a range—maybe 50, 60 different types—of businesses that are run from within that community; populated and managed by people from that community.

So that you may very well find that in 10 years' time if we do not address the problems in the educational system at the lower level, where I am seeing that people are failing—I think Sen. Balgobin talked about 70 per cent of the people not passing maths. Give me those statistics and let us see where they are located. It is not Presentation. Right?

**Hon. Senators:** No.

**Sen. Dr. J. Armstrong:** Good. So, if I can get that, I can feed it into that layer in the computer; compare that to CEPEP and give you a scenario that would scare you. We need to look at that. So that GATE is required, fine; we need to develop; we need to increase our enrolment in our universities and so on.

We may very well find that, as Sen. Dr. Bernard said some time ago, not everyone can access GATE, and we know why. Now, do not tell me it is this one responsible and it is you who were—I am not interested in that. I am interested in dealing with what we have in front of us; dealing with people where they are and moving on from there as a country. Otherwise, we are going to have some very serious problems.

The other thing that I want to talk about, briefly, is the whole business of culture as a business, and I know we have been talking about film and so on and a new company that had been established. I want, again, to suggest that as we talk about diversification of the economy, I know it is not the first time I am going to be saying this, but I really think that we need to look at the—I do not know if I like this term 'low hanging fruits'—but to look, really, at the capacity, the potential, in some of the communities that are not performing with respect to culture as a business. And, what do I mean by

that? What I mean by that is that I am talking about our carnival, I think it was the Senator who just talked about—I think it was Sen. McKnight who was just talking about the amount of money that we are really pouring into carnival and so on. I think that we really can develop that in such a way that, as I said, if we do it correctly, we can have carnival everyday, not Monday and Tuesday once a year. We can dance everyday; we can see plays everyday; we can hear our writers doing readings; we can hear our tassa; we can hear our soca; we can look at Balkaransingh dance, or his group, everyday.

If, again, we put the infrastructure in place, I do not want to belabor that point but I think we are moving into some areas and fine, let us go into film and what not and what not; we can go into fashion; well, let us pull all those things together. We can eat different foods everyday and create that in a location where I think it will make sense as a tourism product. I have always suggested that that is one of the things I would like to see happen with Invaders Bay. Link it to Laventille and, in fact, somebody was mentioning that the Minister said that some time ago; he was not sure, but, in fact, that is exactly what he said. I think he said it because I had mentioned it some time ago.

The other thing has to do with—I cannot conclude without mentioning this—procurement legislation. There is a sense in the community that there is a lack of transparency. There is a lack of transparency. There is a Joint Select Committee that worked on procurement legislation. We were promised this and nothing has happened and now we come, we are spending $60 billion this year and questions are being raised about how we are

spending this money. I need to make a further call to emphasize that we should look at procurement.

One other thing that I want to touch on, Mr. President, has to do with land, housing and settlements. Again, there is another document that I got from the ministry which has to do with spatial planning; and it is a compatibility matrix. Yes.

There are three documents which I got from the "Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development; one here is the National Spatial Development Strategy for Trinidad and Tobago, Method Statement and Integrated Sustainability Appraisal." In that document—a very good professional piece of work was done where there is actually something done called a compatibility and sustainability objective matrix. In that matrix what they did; they were looking, really, at elements that might be compatible or incompatible, or inconsistent, is what they call it.

I want to just give you a quick example of that, Mr. President. With respect to—Let us take land and housing; and again, this was mentioned tonight. We have a situation in which we are preparing spatial development plans and so on, and looking at what should happen in terms of economic activities in a spatial context, but at the same time we also have a Ministry of Housing, Land and Marine Affairs that is doing development, or approaching housing in such a way that it is actually incompatible with what is emerging in the strategy here. If you look at the matrix, there are some comparisons in here. So, if you look at what you are talking about with respect to how you deal with land, and then you go over to housing, you see some inconsistencies. If you look at what you are talking about and when

you go to agriculture, you see even greater inconsistencies. All right? That is something, again, I would want the Minister or the Ministry of Finance and the Economy to look at.

So that if you are doing nonsense in agriculture or wherever, that is inconsistent with something like this, that is calling into question: Why am I going to go and give you two million more or $6 million or whatever it is. So, that I am really relying on all the technical information that we have in front of us to really try and address a number of these issues. Sen. Beckles raised tonight for instance—Where is the commissioner of lands really reside? And, once you put that under housing, "you gone through"; forget this; forget this. Unless, there is some control mechanism that would allow this to have some sort of influence on what is happening. So that, again, I want to commend the Minister for this work because it is helping me, really, to see far more clearly.

To conclude, Mr. President, the only other thing that I want to ask is that again, we—Government expenditure: I find that there should be an increased role for the private sector. I find that we are not giving or creating sufficient opportunities for the private sector in this country and may very well be bypassing our local private sector and investors for external investments. Someone spoke about China, again, I want to caution on that. I really would not like to see China coming back in here in such a way that labour is provided. If they are going to be coming in, I certainly would like to see them come in in the context of what are the priorities that we have set ourselves. Once we are clear on that, anybody could come. As long as it is within our priorities and we assure ourselves that we are giving our local

entrepreneurs, our local professionals, our labour force, the opportunities that should be afforded in terms of our development programme.

I thank you very much, Mr. President.

**The Minister of Justice (Sen. The Hon. Christlyn Moore):** Good morning, Mr. President.

**Hon. Senator:** Good morning.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Moore:** I see most of the House is awake, Mr. President, so that must be a good sign.

**Hon. Senator:** For you, I would wake up.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Moore:** I am very happy to wake you up, Senator. I am also happy this morning to be privilegee enough to say a few words on the Finance (Supplementary Appropriation) (Financial Year 2013) Bill, 2013.

Mr. President, in the Heads of Expenditure that are before us for consideration and for adjustment upwards, there is a subscription to the Ministry of Justice albeit small, not as small, perhaps, as the one that was allocated to the Ministry of Communication, but it is not ample. I say that not by way of complaint, but to point out that in previous dispensations, Ministries have rather operated in silos. I am pleased to say, though that the Ministry of Justice will not only benefit from its own allocation, but it will find support in the allocation to the Judiciary, the allocation to the Ministry of Education and the allocation to the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training. So that in that way a lot of our initiatives are going to be supported by partner ministries and I would like to take the opportunity to go through some of those initiatives and to demonstrate how they are going to be supported by our partners.

Now, Mr. President, when we look at the vote to the Judiciary, it brings to mind, immediately, in the Ministry of Justice, the undertaking developed in partnership with the Judiciary, to create eight new video-conferencing courts. Those courts will be created this year. This, of course, is to alleviate the known distress in the criminal justice system where prisoner transport—no fault of inmates or prison officers—is unavailable. In most casesbecause of the unavailability of a police escort. So the consequential distress that that leads to is that we have prisoners who are remanded for the mandatory 28 days having, through no fault of their own, to miss that date and they are consequently further remanded for another 28 days.

This is, on the face of it, an oppressive situation, but made more so where the offences are of a minor or trivial nature and in some instances you would have the dilemma where the inmate may have wanted to plead guilty and start serving his sentence, or benefit, perhaps, from time served on remand, if it were a short matter, a small matter; a minor matter. So that one immediately sees that partnering with the Judiciary in the provision or the creation of these eight new video-conference courts will immediately bring relief to an oppressed system.

Now, Mr. President, it is well known—it is a matter of notoriety—the stresses on the criminal justice system and it is also a matter of notoriety the stresses on the prison. But, because these matters are matters of notoriety, and they have been in the public and private domain for so long, it also ought to be obvious that in order to bring about a holistic solution to the various challenges time is needed. But it cannot, of course, be a situation that while the grass is growing, the cow is starving. So that the Ministry of

Justice, together with its partners, have really attempted to bring some relief at the margins, while, of course, the grass is growing. The initiative to provide the eight additional video-conferencing courts is one such mechanism that we know will bring relief in the short and medium term.

Now, while we are talking about relief at the margins, we must also take the opportunity to commend other synergies being brought about with the Judiciary or in conjunction with the Judiciary and one such being the setting aside of two weeks in September; setting aside of court space, court time, professional time for the hearing of guilty pleas. Now, this may seem like an insignificant effort, but when examined in context, the partnering in providing this relief is really quite a monumental feat; and one that is so simple, one wonders why initiatives of this sort had not taken place before.

Mr. President, I had the fortune or misfortune to have been touring one of the prison facilities when I was beset upon by a small group of inmates who protested to me, not so much the conditions under which they were held, but the fact that they were remanded and they were desirous of pleading guilty; they had committed—one of them in particular—a quite, according to him, heinous crime and he had really reconciled to it and wished to plead guilty so that he could be sentenced and he could begin serving his time.

**2.45a.m.**

Of course a sentence attracted by a criminal offence puts one in a different place physically than where one would be if one is on remand awaiting trial. Again, the atrocities of the remand system are well known and need no restating. So, it was as a consequence of these entreaties that

were levelled at me on an early visit to the prison that collaboration began with the Judiciary to assist these persons who certainly, if no one else, could be granted a hearing, space could be found on the court calendar for these persons to be heard, to be sentenced and to commence serving their sentence.

Such a time has been carved out. It is now a matter of public knowledge that the Judiciary has carved out two weeks in September, for the hearing of such pleas and consequential notices have been sent out to the relevant professional bodies, that is to say the Criminal Bar Association, the Law Association and the Legal Aid and Advisory Authority, so that they could advise their clients of the facility and take adequate instructions so as to represent their clients if such representation is desired or desirable.

Now, when we speak about prison conditions and alleviating the stresses of prison conditions, we really have to start thinking outside the box, again, until we create a permanent solution. The Ministry of Justice again, in collaboration with its partners, is committed to such an exercise. We have embarked on, in tandem with our commitments in the manifesto, to reforming the criminal justice system as well as to providing inmates and clients of the criminal justice system, with every available avenue by which to reduce recidivism, by which to make these persons productive members of society upon their eventual reentry to society.

We have begun, and in partnership with the Ministry of Education, to scrutinize or to re-evaluate all programmes offered at the prisons. It is not enough, in this day and age, to offer the very basic of programmes to inmates simply because they are incarcerated, in the hope that: well

something is better than nothing. It is similar, in my view, to moving away from the Blind Welfare Organization only weaving baskets. We are no longer in that age. We are no longer in the age where it is sufficient for a prisoner or an inmate to make a flower pot and this is considered a prison industry. Prisons are now self-sustaining institutions around the world and this is the model we need to move to. So, no longer will our prison be a, what shall I say, practice ground for this programme and that. It is time that we take a proper audit of the programmes offered if our prisons. It is time that we determine the outcomes and craft the programmes around the outcomes we want to see. It is time we audit this programme to determine whether the outcomes are possible, are being achieved, why are they not being achieved and tweak at the margins to try to move towards the place where we want to be.

So, I am pleased to announce, in collaboration with our partners at the Ministry of Education, who have received additional funding under this supplemental appropriation Bill, we are moving towards auditing each and every programme in our prison, from the most innocuous to the most ambitious. All will be audited to really bring about a holistic approach as we march towards penal reform.

Now, a lot has been made with regard to, again, prison conditions and one of the matters that is bedeviling us, of course, again a matter of public knowledge, is the matter of the proliferation of illegal items in the prison and in particular cellphones. I want to point at this juncture to all the allocations that speak to security and relate that to the fact that the prisons are going to be beneficiaries of some of the security measures, including an increase in

amplified CCTV camera presence.

On our own, though, I would want to signal or recognize our movement towards ending the proliferation or ending the incidence of cellphones in our prisons when we introduce, eventually, grabbing and jamming technology which will not only detect cellphones in our prisons but it will render them useless. But we also have to recognize that, whether we like it or not, some of these phones are being used by inmates for an innocuous purpose. That is to say, they are being used to communicate with family members. So what do we do?

We have evaluated the problem. We have considered what is best practices around the world. We have spoken to our partners most recently in Canada and we are persuaded that an inmate phone system is what is required. That way, we move the illegitimate into the legitimate. So while we stop, eradicate, stamp out the incidence of illegal cellphones, we then supplement that or replace that with a legitimate phone system which would be duly monitored, properly staffed, where the calls can be paid for by inmates relative through a card system, where designated numbers, pre-approved numbers can be called by the inmates, where the length of the call is pre-arranged and we are currently awaiting proposals from local service providers in this regard, as well as sourcing international experts in this area with regard to developing the appropriate RFP, so we capture all our needs in a way that is purpose-driven and outcome-driven.

We have to accept that we are dealing with a prison system, both plant and legislatively, that is 100 years out of step. So that we have to accept that we need help in properly determining what we want. We may understand in

broad terms what we would like to see, but we may not appreciate all of the nuances of the package we would like to see and as such, help from our international partners is important. So, that is one matter that you ought to see in the very near future, Mr. President, again, in conjunction with our partners.

Now, the other matter that has been bedeviling the prison system and my friend, Sen. Hinds would know this, he having been a junior Minister in the Ministry of National Security when the prisons was part of the remit of that Ministry, that there is absolutely no relevant or usable data housed in one place in the prison. What is the relevance of that? Policy makers, like my friend, Sen. Hinds, and like myself, are going to be on constrained, the Ministries are going to be constrained in developing policy without accurate data, relevant data, time-sensitive data. So that the putting in or the inputting of a relevant data matrix is important.

Mr. President I would give you this example. I was involved in a very minor fender bender recently, so I went to the police station to responsibly report the accident and the police very graciously took a statement from me. They had a pre-arranged form which they had to input the data. This was, as I said, a very, very minor accident. There was no damage on either side. The other party involved was with me in the police station and the police asked me what was my height. They wanted to what was my weight. They wanted to know what was the colour of my hair and could I verify the colour of my eyes. Now, how on earth was the reception or the gathering of that particular bit of information going to help the police or to help the policymakers to plan so as to reduce fender benders? It was completely

irrelevant data but it was dutifully taken and because I did not want to be accused of being rude, I dutifully provided it. But it occurred to me that it was completely useless for the task at hand. Now, of course, if someone were complaining that I had broken into their house and was asked to give a description I could have understood.

Coming back to the prisons, the collection of relevant data is critical and we have difficulties in that regard. Somewhere along the line policymakers, in particular departments, got the idea that to computerize a department meant to buy 20 computers for the department. All you had then was 20 well-meaning officers doing their own thing on their individual computer, nobody could access it when they were not at work without their password, nobody understood their filing system. Certainly they were collecting data that they viewed as relevant but nobody else could use.

**3.00a.m.**

So, that again, in conjunction with our partners from Canada, coming out of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Justice and the royal mounted service in Canada, and in conjunction with the correctional institutions in Canada, we are moving for the first time in the 100-plus history of our prison, to start developing a data matrix that would be relevant. So that at a glance we can know not only how many people are in our prison, but how many are on remand. How many are in remand for jay walking, murder, house breaking, rape and larceny? How long have they been on remand? What are the compositions of these people? Where do they come from? Do they come from Barrackpore? Do they come from Tobago? Do they come from Canaan in Tobago? How many times have

they been in our system?

Only when we have adequate data, can we really for the first time see the complexity and the layering of the problem, and then start to have a lasting impact when we try to develop policy to seek to bring about change. And again, that is going to be supported as I said before, not only by our Canadian partners, but by our partners in the Ministry of Education, who have benefited in no small part from this variation.

Mr. President, I also want point out that allocations to the Judiciary will support in no small part, the implementation of the administration of Justice Preliminary Enquiry Act, which is set to come on stream on August 02 of this year. The allocation to the Judiciary will support the Act in this way: it will permit the Judiciary to extend its staff; its complement of judges; its complement of Masters, both of which are critical for the implementation of the Act; the staffing requirements associated with this new dispensation; it will allow the Judiciary to increase its court plant not necessarily in the first instance through the provision of a new building, but in the reconfiguration in the short term of existing plant, so as to put in additional courts; it will also assist in providing computerized support for the Administration of Justice Preliminary Enquiry Act. So that again, justice will benefit far more than our allocation by these variations.

Now, additionally, I want to remind the honourable Senate, that the closure of Carrera is imminent. What does that mean really? What does that mean? We all know that our prison plant in general is crumbling and there is a general complaint about overcrowding which is true, but it is only a part of the story. We have the odd situation where we have three prisons, one

generally speaking excluding Carrera, of course, one horribly overcrowded, one marginally overcrowded and one significantly under populated. What are we to do? When we look at moving the justice system forward, we have to start somewhere. As I said we are 100 years behind the curve in terms of the legislation that governs this animal called the prisons, and we are similarly behind with regard to our plant.

Some of our plant simply cannot be fixed. I do not know, Mr. President, if you have ever had the fortune of living in an old house, but I have. When you live in an old house you know you "cyar" repair it. If the floor is falling apart, you fix one board because you "cyar" fix the whole floor. If you try to fix the whole floor, the whole house will come down. So, you fix the worse board. That is basically what we have been engaged in, in Carrera and in the Port of Spain jail. We have been fixing one floor board at a time, because if we try to fix the floor, the entire structure will come in around us. So what are to do? Should we wait until a new prison is built? No. The first step on this journey must be taken. Carrera is our first step. Why is it our first step? It is our first step because it has the lowest population to relocate, whereas the Port of Spain population numbers in excess of 1,500; Carrera numbers under 300.

It is our first step because it an island prison. The days of the penal colony I would have thought ended Senator, with Nelson Mandela. We should not still be here. This should now be treated—this penal colony, as I term it, should be treated in much the same way that Robben Island is treated; it should be a heritage site of sorts, it should be a curiosity of sorts, but it certainly should not be a place where we incarcerate people. When we

incarcerate on a prison island, we are committing ourselves to quite a number of phenomena that have detentions of which have increased over time. We are committing ourselves to a $20,000 weekly bill for water, and nobody is complaining about that because it is only $20,000, people wish to complain about other things. But really, do we want to buy $20,000 a week of water that we do not have to buy? Fifty-two weeks in the year, my math is not as good as yours, Senator.

In addition to which when we commit to a prison island, we commit to a small island being ravaged by wave and wind. Erosion is a real issue on that island. We cannot expand the island. We cannot create more island; that would be pointless. When we commit to a prison island, we commit to limited training and a commitment to limited training runs afoul of our commitment to the reduction of recidivism, and to the movement of persons back into the society as positive contributors.

Why do I say that a commitment to a prison island has a negative impact on the provision of training? Because, Mr. President, if you want to conduct a one hour course on Carrera Island, you must commit to being there for eight hours, because it is one boat in and one boat out. So that you get there whenever the coastguard gets you there, and you stay there until the coastguard comes back for you. What that means is that trainers are not incentivized to provide training whether paid on free on Carrera Island; so inmates suffer.

Remember, Mr. President, the sentence of a convicted person is incarceration, the sentence is nothing else. So, you are not sentenced to not receiving training, you are not sentenced to not seeing your family, which is

not possible on Carrera Island. The sentence is not to have, you know, fluctuations in water supply and raw sewerage; those things are not your sentence. The sentence is merely incarceration, anything else needs to be dealt with in a clear fashion and rooted out.

So that Carrera Island is our first step towards beginning to streamline the entire penal system, the way persons are held, where they are held, and the conditions under which they are held. Is Port of Spain worse than Carrera? Of course, but Carrera is a problem for which there is an on-the-ground real-time solution. The solutions with regard to Port of Spain are a bit more complex. So what do we do? We do what we can now and we work assiduously towards making the next step.

I want to segue a bit if you would permit me, to other matters that will find their way in the votes of partner Ministries that will also support the Ministry of Justice's allocation. I want to stick, if you would permit me, to security matters and raise the matters of CCTV and body scanners. It is a matter that is known, Mr. President, that contraband in prisons are carried in by relatives of inmates, by some unscrupulous prison officers who number in the minority and by service providers. One way of stemming this tide is to provide more scanners and to provide body scanners.

Mr. President, body scanners is something that will be able to detect contraband that is ingested, contraband that is vaulted, contraband that has residual trace amounts on the body, and certainly it will go a long way in restoring confidence of inmates in the prison establishment, it will go a long way in restoring the confidence of the public in the prison environment, it will go a long way in ensuring the safety of prisoners between and among

each other, and this is one measure that we look forward to having implemented in short shrift.

The matter of prison conditions is also receiving the attention of NGO partners, and NGO partners are supported in large part by partner Ministries. Mr. President, I must note that the prison service and in particular, the prerelease centre, is supported in no small part by NGO partners, not only in the provision of services, programmes at that facility, but also in after-care, in post-release programmes, in post-release housing, in post-release training. So while that is not necessarily the remit of the Ministry of Justice, we are interested in those programmes, and insofar as partner Ministries have increased allowances to provide for those programmes, to support the underpinnings of those programmes, we are not only interested, but we are very supportive of their allocation.

Because, Mr. President, an inmate who is released into nothingness, an inmate who is released with no family, no family support, no job, is really somebody who is looking for a way to come back in. Is that really what we want? We are moving away for the revolving door of criminality, where 80 per cent of the persons housed in our institutions have been there once before, twice before, three times before. It is certainly an opportunity for us to move away from that system, and to stop thinking about Ministries as if existing in silos, but really as partners creating synergies for the greater good of the entire country.

Now, Mr. President, I want to touch a little on the Tobago situation with regard to prisons, and I regret that my sister Sen. Cudjoe is absent and perhaps like my friend, I will send her a note. There is a tiny prison facility

on the island of Tobago. It certainly was not purpose—built, and I have had some preliminary discussions with the Chief Secretary with regard to the adequacy or inadequacy of this facility and perhaps what ought to replace it. I am happy to announce that again, in partnership with Canadian corrections, we are making significant strides in the direction of developing a user brief that is sensitive to Tobago in this regard. You might ask, Mr. President, well, it is a prison, so why does it need to be population sensitive or in particular, Tobago-sensitive?

The reality regrettably is this. The facility in Tobago is not large enough or equipped well enough to house persons who are sentenced for more than two years, in fact, the policy is that it generally does not. What that means is that there is a larger percentage of Tobagonians incarcerated in Trinidad than they are incarcerated in Tobago.

**3.15 a.m.**

This is distressing for families because of the distance to travel; perhaps the unfamiliarity, the stresses of waiting outside the jail and all the attendant horrors with having to travel long distances to see your family member whether or not he is on remand or whether he is serving a term.

The matter is exacerbated, of course, if the inmate has to come back and forth between Trinidad and Tobago in order to have the matter heard. That is another source of stress. It requires the coordination of several agencies, does not always happen, so that there is a great desire for this anomaly to be corrected. In addition to which, the research has shown and in some communities you really ought to build facilities that reflect the morés and the values of communities.

So some communities, perhaps if they are denser populated, if they are in the inner city, the population will expect and the community will demand that the facility look a certain way—it be imposing, it be frightening looking, it send a message of austerity and foreboding; but in smaller communities or indigenous communities or sparsely populated communities, you may not want this message. You may really want a message that is a bit softer. You may really want a plant that reflects the different morés of your country society as opposed to your inner city society.

So I am happy to say that we have started on this journey to create something that is more in line with the nature of Tobago, with the culture of Tobago; that we are happy to say that we have sought and received some comments from the Chief Secretary and even happier to report that our Canadian partners will be visiting the sister island in about two weeks with regard to the development of such a plant.

So we are quite excited, Mr. President, to see the strides that justice is making, not only through its own budget, but by partnering with its local partners, as it were, in our sister Ministries as well as our international partners via the various MOUs.

This might be a good point, Mr. President, to mention the matter of electronic monitoring parole and amendments to the Prison Act, as well as a juvenile justice policy. Perhaps I will start with the juvenile justice policy, Mr. President.

We have a curiosity that exists in the penal system and it relates to minors. It appears that when the juvenile detention Act and—Sen. Al-Rawi would have been able to correct me because I am pretty certain that I have

the name of that Act wrong—but when that Act was developed, it was not contemplated, for some reason, that girls would be the subject of its remit. So that the Act dedicatedly speaks about lads, speaks about providing training for lads, speaks about housing of lads. It totally ignores girls.

Now what that situation has wrought is this: that you have a YTC, a Youth Training Centre, that houses only boys. It provides training for the boys that it houses. The girls, there is no facility for them because they are not regulated by this legislation, so arrangements have had to have been made at a wing at the women's prison for these girls. The result of that is that they do not benefit from training because there is no statutory requirement as there is for the lads to provide training, so their exposure is ad hoc. Their exposure to any kind of training and schooling is ad hoc.

I say all that to say that the time has come for a juvenile justice policy. We cannot have our young people put through the justice system in the same way that our adults are put through the justice system. We can no longer afford the fallout from the intersect between truants and criminals. We cannot no longer afford the fallout from the intersect between the first time 16-year-old offender, regardless of the nature of the crime, and the seasoned repeat offender. We can no longer afford it.

It is time for us to stream our children out into a parallel system which takes care of their needs. It is time for our children to not be housed or held by corrections officers or prison officers who have no training at all in the holding of children. It is a recipe for disaster. It has gone on for as long as we have had that Act. It is certainly time for it to stop. And so the juvenile justice policy is well on the way in terms of being developed in conjunction

with our partners at the Ministry of Gender and with our other partners at the Ministry of Education as well as other interested groups.

That is a policy that will redound to the benefit of all our youth who come through the justice system. We are looking at a totally new model, Mr. President, and when I say a new model, along the Family Court lines where there is a paradigm shift in how these children are dealt with as well as who we consider a child. Is it not time for us to expand our definition of child when it concerns juvenile justice? These are matters that we will explore as we continue to communicate in the development of this policy.

We spoke earlier, Mr. President, about the pressures currently brought to bear on the prison system and how we are making attempts to make sure that the cow does not starve when the grass grows. Two of those attempts, which will provide some relief at the margins are our electronic monitoring programme and the system of parole.

Electronic monitoring, Mr. President, will provide another option for a sentencing judge. It will provide another option for a judge granting bail, giving persons an opportunity not to have custodial sentences, or not to have closed or confined custodial sentences, but to really be in open confinement as it were.

So that you will have—we are fast moving towards the day when, for certain offences, somebody can be sentenced to open confinement. So you are confined, meaning I know where you are, I can track you; you can be in Port of Spain, but you cannot be in Barataria. I can track you, so you are confined, but you can, during that confinement, be a participative, productive member of society. So you can take care of your children; you

can hold down a job; you can go to school; you can go to church; you can benefit from the society around you that is supportive; that is alien, perhaps, to your foray into criminality. You have a chance rather than the only option that is really open now, which is to either fine you or sentence you in lieu of a fine, which again exposes you to another element and that exposure some people are never really able swim away from.

So electronic monitoring is going to, again, provide some relief at the margins as with parole. The parole system is subject to the building out of the parole board and all the necessary fixtures and fittings associated thereto. Parole will also give persons an opportunity to come out of jail before the prescribed time based, of course, on certain fairly rigid, very well set out parameters.

So, again, we, in changing the landscape of the prison system, we have to always remember, as legislators and as citizens and as persons who influence public thought, we have to remember that the sentence is incarceration. The sentence is not to be mistreated; it is not to be beaten; it not to be abused or misused or ridiculed. The sentence is simply incarceration and not all your other rights.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** You are deprived of your right to liberty, not all your other constitutional rights.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Moore:** So that the system must strive to not only promote that on the ground but to re-educate the public because there is a wave of thought—and I trust that it is a receding wave—there is a wave of thought that whatever happens to you in prison, well you deserve because you are a prisoner so you are less than; after all, it is not the Hilton Hotel, is

one of the popular throwaway phrases. Again, the sentence is imprisonment; nothing more, nothing less.

So that I leave you with that thought and commend, Mr. President, it to you in the hope that at very available opportunity when comments are made suggesting that prisoners deserve, any horrible fate that may befall them, I commend to you the reminder that the sentence is only imprisonment and nothing more. With that, Mr. President, I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Dr. Lennox Bernard:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. I am grateful for the opportunity to speak on this Bill, the Finance (Supplementary Appropriation) (Financial Year 2013) Bill. We have spent 16 hours; we are going on 16½ hours. We would have broken all the rules of good debating, I am sure.

**Hon. Senator:** Let us make it 16 hours and 15 minutes.

**Sen. Dr. L. Bernard:** I would not do too much harm to it. It is to our credit that we have shown this resilience as a team of people who are dedicated to the service of our country. I really admire, in the face of all that we have had to bear and the fact that we are bone weary at this time, that we have stayed the course and it is a fitting example.

I wish, Sen. Mohammed, that you will develop at some point a way whereby some of these key concepts and points that we would have raised, just as we are seeing now with Bill essentials, which come along with the Bills that give us a form of triangulation across various Acts, something I asked on the first occasion and I see it is happening. We are still begging for more on regulations, but if we can get something that simply says "key notes", "key points", "key concepts", that we can either spread among all of

us or even give some of those Ministers who cannot hear us tonight or this morning, Minister of Education, but Mr. Karim, whom I believe can fill both shoes, can, in fact, straddle both spheres can do justice to this because we have raised a number of important issues and the Independent Bench is known for doing that thoroughly over time.

I had planned a full contribution of my 45 minutes with an extra 15. I had done my research. I had got the librarian to do some research for me. I got all the data on trends in CAPE, CSEC, SEA, and I really wanted to capture, but I will not do that. [*Laughter*] I will simply—I got some people scared—I will not do that. [*Crosstalk*] I will give you a synopsis of it, if only to bring clear to you the fact that what we have been saying in the realm of education.

The area on education was a simple one; not much is required in terms of funding and they are all going for one cause. But we seldom get opportunities to speak on education in a way that we have to make, Sen. Karim, some drastic changes in education, early childhood, primary and secondary. It will require strong political will of the Government to make some of these changes. Some of them we mentioned in this document that we did and that we hope you all have not thrown out as yet because there are some essential points related to that.

**3.30 a.m.**

My colleague, Sen. Dr. Armstrong, was going the course in terms of where I would want to lead briefly. I was extremely pleased with our Minister of Finance and the Economy, his excellent presentation and, not only that, but he vindicated what I said at the budget debate, that we were

not getting value for education. It was fortuitous that I walked in exactly at the time when he said, we are not getting value for education, and then Sen. Karim added his bit and said, we respect the views of the Minister of Finance and the Economy and, in fact, we will act accordingly. But I beg, I plead of him, not to act giving more of the same, but to act moving from equal as same to equal as fitting, equal as different.

I had an ongoing debate with Sen. Dr. Balgobin over the iPads, last night—night before rather—where we were discussing the whole area of what is equality versus equity, and that over time policymakers have confused equality and equality of opportunity with equity. It is easy, as I go back to the GATE example, given by my colleague, for us to say yes, in the spirit of equality of opportunity, everybody has the opportunity to access GATE.

But when we put it in the context of equity, are some really able to access based on some predicaments related to their lifestyles? Are they literate enough? Can they leave where they are setting to come? Are they still living in a setting where the learning culture—that is why in my little brief that came on the *Newsday* about the 1 billion being planned for this type of education in technical vocational—my argument was, let us build a learning culture first so that people will want to experience some of the things Sen. Karim wants to do. A lot of what Sen. Karim wants to do will suffer some deficiencies because the scaffolding, the grounding that he needs, they are not there and they are dwindling more and more.

I did the geographical mapping that my colleague spoke about. I did it for the SEA—students scoring 50 per cent and below; students scoring

below 30 per cent. I compared it with what we got in our census about people with no qualifications. When I put them all together and I went to the human development index and I compared sole income with loss in human development, even with adjusted fertility rate, Mr. President, north-eastern is a danger point; a serious danger point. [*Desk thumping*] St. Patrick is a serious danger point; south-eastern the same and Tobago, Tobago is at a serious point in terms of being able to manage these.

**Hon. Senator:** Toco.

**Sen. Dr. L. Bernard:** Yes. So that if we—and that kind of geographical mapping, plus an excellent study by Vena Jules, De L'ile and the late Carol Keller on a study called the Geography of Disadvantaged Children showed that these are neglected communities that have seemingly been made to normalize failure, and have what is a type of entrenched failure. So that even as these children will get their common entrance—sorry, their SEA results—the schools that invariably they will go to will be the schools that themselves have not had no more than 5 per cent pass full certificate.

I did some work on our de-shifted schools, 26 of them. They are not performing well. Of these 26 schools, they all averaged 7.5 per cent attaining five passes with English A and mathematics, and Sen. Karim will know the whole set up there. Some of them were low as 1 per cent; 1 per cent along the line and, in fact, the saving grace was one of the schools that had, in fact, been a single shift school, El Dorado, that got 29 per cent.

So you have a—what saddens me about all that is that in our education system we are paying scant courtesy to research. We should have taken the opportunity when we were de-shifting these schools to examine

thoroughly the nature of the school at that time. Do the diagnostic work. See if it was necessary to move around teachers. Even move people in the administrative from one to the other.

The main big issue is that we have an elitist system built around a 30 per cent academic elite that makes us comfortable every year, and it does not allow us to dig deeper and into the inside or the bowels of the problem or what Conrad speaks of as: "The horror! The horror!" Mr. President, The horror, the horror is that, in fact, there is a huge disconnect among all these children who are, in fact, not to be blamed.

When we expanded secondary education we neglected primary. The hon. Minister of Education in fact said something—that we have more than 100 schools that are 100 years old. We have schools that are resembling the Amish communities in Pennsylvania—single class, one big hall divided by blackboards where the noise level is high. There is massive wastage in the system along those lines.

Until we get into that and recognize—and then the elitism really comes from the fact that in a historical sense, we had our traditional seven-year schools and then we built our modern grammar schools, Sen. Karim, that are now not performing well either. Schools that in the past—remember they had what was called a soft-vocational option; so the St. James Secondary, the Woodbrook Secondary, the Tunapuna Secondary and all of those are not doing well, not doing well. Even as we get to the failure rates, our government schools could only muster 23.8 per cent attaining five passes with English A and maths. Our denominational schools, 71.6 per cent of them.

So, it is distressing to note that after 40 years or more of Common Entrance and SEA and 80 public schools built with billions of dollars, we still have parents whose faith resides solely in schools that were even there before Common Entrance and SEA.

So you have now—yes. We have been able to pull some more into the first choice bracket—we have been able to push some. There was a time in 1993 where 80 per cent our parents were choosing 12 schools. So it meant that more than 14,000 children were seeking to get, 12 x 120, 1440 spaces, total logjam, and it was not help by the Concordat which the Government too has to revisit and look at again.

It is going to be a serious thing to look at because—I was arguing with Sen. Balgobin about that. Can you give the system half of your 20 per cent of middle ability students? And what are the denominational schools saying to us? No, because I need some benefactors to help build the school because the Government is not doing as much as they should in a situation where 71.6 per cent of our schools are saving the day for you all. You all are only getting 23.8 and you all are building more elaborate looking ones with all the equipment and so on.

We are still caught doing some of the things where our ethos is as old as the school itself; Presentation and so on. So it is something that the Government has to look at because, in essence, when you normalize failure that way, the wastage is so great it puts a burden on your programme, Sen. Karim, for the amount of times they have to have repeaters coming at you getting money via GATE when, in essence, these schools should be doing so much better and giving the children their five passes one time and sending

them into the next realm. So the Concordat has to be looked at. When you talk to some of the people involved in the Concordat, some are even saying well, maybe we should become charter schools and let the Minister of Finance and the Economy give us some money and we will run our schools. So you will buy spaces at our school. All of these things are staring us in the face.

There are principal who, however, through the goodness of their heart, have taken 10 per cent of students within the percentile, 60 to 80, and they have recorded success with these children who, under a good mentorship programme, have been able to move forward. Of course, you have some principals who say to you, "I do not want those children, they are going to come and mash up meh school". And then you have Britain with its very elitist programme saying, what you all are doing by bringing these children into our schools is that our gifted children are suffering. Not true really.

Our gifted children can have an accelerated programme; our gifted children can learn through individualized instructions; our gifted children can have pedagogical changes that would allow them to survive. What we need to do, Sen. Karim, is we need to find some way to help our public secondary schools that are starved of mixed ability children and above. It may call for some creative form of zoning. It may call for some form of partial zoning, as is being done in St. Lucia.

**Sen. Karim:** Streaming.

**Sen. Dr. L. Bernard:** Watch the streaming though. But it will call for us to look at that, because when you talk to the principals of these schools, many of them are willing to bring those schools to higher levels of performance,

but they are not getting the students of the calibre and the quality to mix around the place. So, we have to look at the five choices as against something else, may be less. Constitutional rights may tell us that we still have to put that in there.

**3.45 a.m.**

There was a time in 1993 when we had suggested to the Government then that you do a rapid programme of creating greater excellence among many more schools, so you change the desire to go to these traditional seven-year schools, most of them denominational. That did not happen during that time. We lost a golden opportunity which by now would have meant more schools would have been within that plan. So I put this on the table. I wish we had more time to go really into the details regarding this.

I want to touch briefly on the need for us to build a better school supervision system. I still favour the word "inspectorate"; some people say it is too colonial. It makes a difference, if you say it is—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** We have that in the prison too, "eh.

**Sen. Dr. J. Bernard:** I know. I know some people even say "school superintendent".

**Sen. Ramlogan SC.** Yeah.

**Sen. Dr. J. Bernard:** The school supervisors need—at the moment, I think we need to do something to bring them out of this. They are grossly underpaid and they are poorly utilized. In fact, in many instances they are glorified messengers of the Ministry of Education. We need them in school. We need an inspection system.

In Jamaica, as bad as they have their economic woes and what have

you, they have moved into an electronic form of measuring each school. They are able beforehand, before going to a school to begin an inspection programme, to get a full range of data on the school and all the other details that go with it. It is a special programme that has been developed and it is taking root. But we surely have to do something in that regard. I do not think the school supervisory—I know they have a nice list of things that they are supposed to do. The second important one is the supervision and inspection of the programme of education required by the curriculum. I do not think much of that takes place in consultation with the curriculum supervisors.

I truly believe—I truly believe when you look at all the data, as my colleague Sen. Armstrong was saying, that our young black men are the greatest casualty in the failure of this education system. We saw it in the report here, and it is also ironic that even though our girls are outperforming our boys academically, they are still among the majority living in poverty and are still not represented in the way they ought to in the decision-making arena.

And I am glad our Minister of Finance and the Economy—

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Senator, would you kindly give way for a second, please? I just want to ask you—

**Sen. Dr. J. Bernard:** Yes.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:**—you just made a statement that the young black men did not benefit from the education system—good statement—could you expand and to say what were the reasons? What do you think attributed to that?

**Sen. Dr. J. Bernard:** Well, it may be simply a case of geography, because

when I read out the areas and location—

**Hon. Senator:** With the report.

**Sen. Dr. J. Bernard:**—it coincides. Northeastern Port of Spain; although Port of Spain has a transient population of people who come all the way from Sangre Grande to go to Newtown, which is something we suggest that if we build up our schools, have what is called "after school programmes" so that parents can leave the children, have their homework centres, they do those things, there are people to take care of them, shower them, get them in order, so that by the time the parent beats the traffic and comes up, can pick up the child and carry. So you have northeastern, St. Patrick—Tobago is a massive area where the problem is—

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Why would the system not have benefited the males as opposed to the females if it is geography?

**Sen. Dr. J. Bernard:** Well we teach boys as we teach girls, and boys learn differently, and we are now waking up to the fact that the disconnect we sometimes have in schools results from the fact that boys do not learn the same way as girls do. And that for years—in fact, we have had boys who have learned the way girls do simply because some of our religiosity allowed them to focus much better than many others.

**Hon. Senator:** Less male teachers too.

**Sen. Dr. J. Bernard:** And the lack of the male presence in the school.

So, just to—and of course as we said in the report, we have to even understand the way boys—boys need open spaces, boys need smaller classes, boys need a greater sense of the kinesthetic, the use of their hands as against the visual impact that we sometimes—the girls are wired better for

the use of the eyes and the ears, those came with their nurturing role all the way back to when we were hunter/gathering people, and that has come down the line and we have not taken that into—yes, that is why I am sorry. You can tell our Minister of Education that the experiment we were trying in our single-sex schools, we did not give it time to happen.

We closed off on it too early. I do not think we did the kind of robust research which would have shown whether we should have stayed with it or not. So we took some schools and started the process and we began to get scared early in the game, and we gave it up too early. It means that many of these things have to be re-examined but the serious, serious ones would be, Minister Karim, how do we ensure that we create greater equity in the system whereby we do not fall prey to the fact that that illusive term "equality of opportunity is what rules the roost", because in essence when we look deeper down and we get into Plato's cave, what we see is the fact that people are not all benefiting the way they ought to from an education system that is guaranteeing us, through our Minister of Finance and the Economy, more money than many countries in the world that are benefiting much better from that kind of expense.

So I think, incisively, we have some work to do in that regard. And at that point—and I want to beg you, plead with you, to look again at our document. It is a little sales pitch I am making at this time to suggest that you look—we have asked. Sen. Drayton has been with me on this. Our child care development centre, a diagnostic centre—United Way and the Government before this one had promised to do that, where every child, zero to five would be diagnosed to see if there is any impediment, social or

otherwise, that can affect that child before they enter primary school. It is a wonderful time for us to use our new Couva hospital to set up an essential wing to do just that.

I want to plead with you all to examine the licensing of our teachers which will give them greater professional work while demanding of them their professional capability. It is something we should not let die. Dr.Wheeler spoke of it in the context of medicine. We need, Sen. Mohammed, a media blitz and public education on parenting and parenting skills. If you can give every parent in a depressed area a backpack with all the essential information, DVD plus, on what is required of parenting from nutritional to all the other values, including things you should have in the home to create a learning culture, it would be money well spent, and it may be better done through your Ministry where you are avoid all the trapping of all the other things that can happen.

Child care loans, Mr.Minister of Finance and the Economy, for people who are disadvantaged, single parents what have you, who can benefit from a soft loan, zero to 15, that can help them to see those children through formative age and further. And, finally, "service learning", the other word for it is "national service" which will do all the things that we are asking to do by way of what Sen. Tewarie spoke about, building social capital. Thank you very much, Mr. President. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. President:** Sen. Prescott. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Elton Prescott SC:** Thank you very much—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "[*Inaudible*] go ahead nah, go ahead. I ha to get two hours for dat after you."

**Sen. Elton Prescott SC:** Thank you very much, Mr. President, for permitting me to join this debate on the Finance (Supplementary Appropriation) (Financial Year 2013) Bill 2013. I am not going to take up all of my time. I had made some notes and I would probably be better serving all of us, if I were to stick to them.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "I will give yuh meh email address, man."

**Sen. E. Prescott SC:** And since the hon. Attorney General has engaged me, I want to start—[*Laughter*]—at a point which I hope you will permit me to, Mr. President.

I do not usually want to impute improper motives to any Member of any House, and I am going to try to avoid it. But he being titular head of the bar in Trinidad and Tobago, I want to implore him to consider approaching his colleague to withdraw the statement which is alleged he has made about Sen. Faris Al-Rawi—[*Desk thumping*]—assuming it was he, in another place. It is a vicious attack on a man whose professional integrity is probably the only thing that he will walk away from this Parliament with, and I am not happy that it has happened. I will be happy to hear that it was a description of some other person, but the hon. Attorney General is best placed, even here, should he reply this evening to say it will not happen again and to offer a withdrawal. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, I noted the language of the Minister of Finance and the Economy when he made his presentation, and I noted in particular that there was a sort of celebration of growth that we have been experiencing over the past three quarters. And at the end of his presentation I thought it might be all well and good to celebrate growth in that sense, in the sense of what it

does for the economy, but there is much that is happening around us that manifests itself as growth but it is not good for the society. And I would hope that those who have the purse strings under there care would focus a bit more on that, and let us for once try to reverse growth in those areas.

In short, I prefer little growth in the economy or none at all in preference to what I am about to say, because we have been experiencing a spiralling curve of functional illiteracy in the society of rage, of political jousting, that is not good for the community, for the society as a whole. There is a growth among us of a sort of victimhood. You hear it every day on the radio and you see it in the newspapers. Nobody thinks that he or she is responsible for what has become of his or her life and we need to spend some more money on correcting those ills in the society.

The problem has been long in coming, but it is developing now at an even faster rate and we are not going to be the beneficiaries of a good society if we continue to ignore it.

**4.00 a.m.**

So to the Minister of Finance and the Economy I am urging that some kind of allocation should be made to develop the social capital at an even faster rate and even more meaningfully than has been done up to the present time. We are now yet lost because there are people in the society, there are segments of society who still exhibit some tenderness and some care. Some of our mores are still with us.

You may note, within recent times, that the passing of some young people in road accidents in San Fernando, for example, caused an upswell of grief and a display of tenderness towards those families, maybe it was

because they were pretty young ladies who had been doing well in school and of whom the parents had made very good reports, but there are people in the society who still feel tender towards those persons and could understand the grief and the outpourings of that sentiment in those areas.

Just recently I read in the newspaper that this young lady, Tecia Henry, a child who met her tragic death some four years ago; they were marking the anniversary of the death, and it brings back a memory of the trauma that we all felt when we heard of the circumstances leading to that death.

Then in February the group of persons down at Sea Lots who were—some passed away, of course, and some were seriously and irreversibly injured. In those kinds of activities still impact—those kinds of incidents, pardon me, still impact upon us, and so the society clearly is not lost yet, but we are at a point where we can make some changes. That is where the Minister of Finance and the Economy in my view could focus aspects of his budget.

So if I may—may I make some suggestions? The solutions were hinted at by Sen. Karim himself in his contribution when he spoke of education and entrepreneurship as keys to development, and I am supportive of that. I wanted to bring to our attention a recollection, a reflection that I have; in 1990 I chaired a committee on the death penalty—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes.

**Sen. E. Prescott SC:**—and we had cause to visit the prisons. It became clear from our analysis that those were serving the longest periods in prison, for maybe the more heinous crimes, were not necessarily coming from

broken homes or lacking in religion. What was really at the source of their problem was an aborted education or none at all. Our problems seem to have been in existence all the time in that we did not appreciate what the value of a good, functional education could be.

So we produce a lot of young people who go through the system either fooling themselves or their parents or their teachers, and when they come out into the real world none of the promised joys is available to them. So they turn to the easy way to make a living or to maintain their dignity. For some of them it is really just a question of being a citizen, one who has some dignity about him and would not give it away, would not squander it by begging on the city streets. So that although it is not an excuse for crime, people do have to find a way to make it the world and they do these—they commit these offences and then they fall into the spiral of the court the prison—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** True.

**Sen. E. Prescott SC:**—the prison, the court and we lose them completely. The Minister of Justice has given us a brilliant exposé on what is likely to happen in the years ahead and maybe the combination of the finance—the purse strings—and the professional expertise within the Ministry might bring about some solutions. The thing is we need it now or pretty soon. We need to see it happening. Maybe the society needs to be, as I think Sen. Bernard, Dr. Bernard was suggesting. The society needs to be bombarded with messages that say we have one common goal and that is to ensure that our budding adults are prepared to run the society in the way that we think it should be.

We probably need to accept that this generation and the one before it, has not quite succeeded in the way we would have like. That we have lost some of the mores of the past, we have got away from it, and we need to make a quantum leap into the kind of future that Trinidad and Tobago wants.

So, solutions for crime do not necessarily exists, Minister of Finance and the Economy, in some of the things that have been set out in the Schedule as available to us today and in the Senate document, and those are—if I may go through them quickly because I do not want to keep us here any longer. By the way, today the—let me not go there.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Go ahead, go ahead. "Let we hear nah."

**Sen. E. Prescott SC:** I was going to say we only needed one more ball today to win a cricket match. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Singh:** One less wicket.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** One less wicket.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes.

**Sen. E. Prescott SC:** So, okay. I am the last ball—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Or five minutes to delay the rain.

**Sen. E. Prescott SC:**—I am that last ball. The budget therefore, placed some focus on the following: the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service $11,300 for maintenance of vehicles, $77,000—pardon me, $11 million—"ah getting like you"—$11.3 million for maintenance of vehicles, $77.5 million for more vehicles and equipment. So the focus is on the crime initiative. The vehicles are meant to stop crime, I suppose, or to get in the way of the criminals, but we know it is not working in the way that I am sure you would have intended, Minister of Finance and the Economy.

Mr.President, the Hoop of Life Programme, which declared to be a crime fighting initiative in the document, $9.2million on it of which a large chunk is for prizes and another large chunk for office and equipment. Has it really produced any reductions in the crimes around us? If it has it has not reached the public eye at all. The newspapers are not presenting that message, that the Hoop of Life Programme has been a successful crime initiative.

Maybe that is not what we really want. Maybe we need to spend that kind of money on programmes that are intended to increase the social capital, improve the lives of young people who are coming into the world of work bereft of ideas of how to manage. There must be some kind of interjection that we can make at this point in time. That kind of money, that is what 88—one point something billion dollars that we could have probably could have benefitted a larger number of people rather than go trying to defeat the crime through these palliatives that do not always work.

Here is another example: we have spent or rather the budget provides for $435 million on OJT, MuST and YTEPP. And for those who have been exposed to those programmes there is value, but I get the impression that it is not widespread; that one has to qualify to be admitted to these programmes.

So maybe we need to spend some of this money on revisiting those programmes and redirecting them so that more people can benefit from them, in particular in the MuST and the YTEPP programmes.

Moving on quickly; there is a provision in the budget for moneys to be spent on the year of patriotism, I heard somebody mention it earlier on.

One cannot pooh-pooh the idea of trying to insert into people's thinking a feeling of patriotism. We probably need to be a little more clear on what are we trying to achieve and what steps will get us there. It cannot be the flag programme that I saw in the newspapers. There is a pull out in the newspapers now of hundreds of people who are—who won flags, but it needs something else, something more concrete to leave with people.

If we were all as patriotic, as I am sure the Minister of that Ministry hopes we will be, that would be a plus. It would be the kind of society that we hope for, but to spend $9.5 million on printing, promotions and policies in pursuit of this programme of patriotism, does not cut it with me, and I am sure that there are many people in society who either are not aware of it or look upon it cynically as being incapable of achieving any results, any beneficial results.

So, Minister, if it is available to you to do so, I am urging that we revisit how we spend what we have to spend if we hope to bring about some change within the society. I think I should know by contrast if you look at what has been provided [*Interruption*] [*Senator snores*] If he disturbs me again I am going to call upon the President to protect me. [*Laughter*] Sport, Head 68, $72 million. We know that sport can provide the outcomes we want. If you are putting $72 million towards it, then you are not sending the right message or we are doing the right things in sport, and we all know that I have had some connection with sport over the years; it is one of the ways to go. Even if all you do is allow young people the opportunity to compete, to become acquainted with defeat and victory in controlled circumstances where the benefit of camaraderie is made available to them then you might

change the lives of number of young people, and that can be achieved through sport; I recommend it.

I would say that the way to build, Mr. President, is to provide for continuous learning for all of us. Learning in work-related spheres, technical colleges, community colleges, apprenticeships, for example, those are programmes or rather programmes can be built in those areas that allow for people at any age to make that turn around, find something that is useful in their lives and commit to benefitting from it, commit to certification coming out of it. The way to do it is to provide the facility for young people to have access to these courses, provide short term loans, student loans as the case may be, remove the academic qualifications for entry; allow them into the system.

I cannot say that I have any scientific data as to how many are going to succeed, but I imagine that each person who has entered a technical college and come out at the other end would have learnt something valuable, would have changed some pattern of behaviour because of the opportunities that had been presented to him, and may well move away from the life that we do not want for them.

So that if the society could be so restructured to provide for this continuous world of education to young people, I would be happy in the circumstances that we are in now with a promise of achievement for all of us, world related achievement, world related preparation to take our place in society.

There are two other things that I wish to make a note of. There is a — mediation has come onto the table, there is legislation that gives it birth and

some schools are already practicing—well they have introduced in the curriculum. We need to consider whether that is not a way to go. That we introduce into the schools at an early age, mediation as a means of resolving issues among them. It may assist in reducing the aberrations that we have now, and I would urge that we seek to redirect some of the funding to encouraging a wider spread of the efforts at mediation within the school system. There may be ancillary bodies that we need to bring in, like the church, for example, even the police service as a matter of fact, but the outcomes can be beneficial to all of us, and I would recommend that we look again when we do budgeting to making some of the money available for some of that.

There are two other points that are raised within proposals for the supplementary appropriation that struck me. One of them is the consultations that are ongoing now in constitutional reform for which $13.8 million has been budgeted. The Minister of Communication said something very strangely about. He said very soon "something" will come out of it. I immediately thought that if he represents the views of the Government then the plan, the objective of the constitutional reform, is not yet known to the Ministry of Communication. It could not be that he is saying at this point, when this thing should have finished since in March, that something will come out of it. We are hoping that something is already determined to come out of it, and that we could all be brought into the picture.

So $13.8 million later, Sen. The Hon. Minister of Communication, please try to tell the society, in the clearest of terms, what is intended to be the product of the consultations on constitutional reform.

**4.15 a.m.**

Finally, Mr. President, our criminal justice system is failing through its inherent inefficiencies. I do not know the solution for it. Money is not the solution for it, but it certainly would go a long way to at least preparing us to deal with it in a professional manner. Something needs to be done. The abolition of preliminary enquiries—the Administration of Justice (Preliminary Enquiry) Act is a good first step in that direction. I am pleased to hear that it will come into effect in August. I am hoping that there are other initiatives in the pipeline, because if the criminal justice system remains inefficient, we are not going to be able to defeat the ogre of crime readily in this society.

With those few words, I thank you very much, Mr. President. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. President:** Minister Coudray.

**The Minister of Gender, Youth and Child Development (Sen. The Hon. Marlene Coudray):** Thank you very much, Mr. President and hon. colleagues for giving me the opportunity to participate in this Finance (Supplementary Appropriation) (Financial Year 2013) Bill, 2013.

Mr. President, I was to, sometime yesterday or earlier today, make a more detailed contribution to this Bill—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** You have two hours, take your time. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:**—but I think at this hour, 4.17 a.m., Saturday, I think I will just take the opportunity to address one or two issues, and they are more particularly one that deals with the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development.

But, Mr. President, I want to start by congratulating the Minister Finance and the Economy, Sen. Howai, for bringing this Bill and to really say that I am appalled at the kind of criticisms being levelled against our hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, who went to great pains to say from the outset that the original—people were asking about the original budgeted sum of, I think, $56 billion, and Minister Howai, when he presented this Bill indicated that there would be savings from the original Appropriation Act, but because of the system he has to request new money for additional items that were not contained in the original Appropriation Act that was passed sometime last year.

Mr. President, when I listened—from 10 this morning we were here. I came in a little late owing to traffic—to the Opposition, I think we need to continually remind them that the memory they have of the 2001—2010 period, is completely different from the memories of we, the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Because they talk as though everything was great, everything was, you know—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Rosy.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:**—utopia and now this Government is doing everything wrong. [*Interruption*] I want to put on record that what we have been doing is fixing and cleaning up mess and paying debts.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Quite so, Ma'am, quite so. Well said, Ma'am.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Some people say that we are talking about the Opposition, they are not in charge, but we need to remind this country of the mess they have created and we continue to fix and we will continue to fix it and deal with the people.

Sometimes I wonder and I refer to Sen. Hinds privately, but I think—Rip Van Winkle—because maybe they were asleep for the last 20 years or so when this country was going into ruins. [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Very nice, man. I like that. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** But the thing is, Sen. Hinds every time he opens his mouth he is talking about the EFCL, the EFCL. But we know in another place as chairman of that PAEC, he is trying to fast forward from all the sins and the misdeeds from 2008, we have reports before us from 2008 but he wants to fast forward to 2011/2012.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Aaah", is that so?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** So it does not work like that.

**Sen. Singh:** You cannot cover up like that.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** At all. We will continue to remind this country, a lot of the money—they are asking where the money gone?—this Government has been spending is to pay old debt created and left by the PNM.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Oooh, aaah." [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Is the Minister able to say how much?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Unquantifiable. Every day we are finding new ones. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes, man.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Mr. President, you know, Sen. Hinds has been singling out—he read the document from the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure—contractors from south and deep south as if to say they are not citizens too and they are not entitled to work in this country. [*Desk*

*thumping and crosstalk*]

He talked about the location of offices and institutions in central and south. What is wrong with central and south? It is time we spread out. It is time we spread out in this country. [*Desk thumping*] And you are talking about disparity.

**Sen. George:** Listen good, listen good.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Right, disparity, and some people are not convinced and I am saying the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago whose needs are being met. We went through an era in this country where it was tall buildings and everything else except the needs of the people.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Quite so, quite so. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Thank God we have a Ministry now called the Ministry of the People and Social Development and we are going community to community, household to household and addressing the needs of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, even in Tobago.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Yeah, yeah, quite clear." [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** But, Mr. President, I cannot leave here without mentioning that we talk about the money for constitutional reform. There was an original allocation of $10 million and in this supplementary another 10 million being requested.

But I ask: where were you or where was everybody else who is talking about the 20 million for constitutional reform when local government in 2005—2007 spent $33 million on local government reform and still counting. [*Desk thumping*] What do we have to show for it?

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Nothing, they postponed local government election

about 100 times.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** And that was about two-thirds into the local government reform process. So, what are we talking about?

So, Mr. President, I really meant to only get up and say this morning—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Nah, nah, nah; yuh going good, yuh going good."

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** No, I need to talk about the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development, because one minute you are hearing that nobody is giving money to the Children's Authority and nobody is doing this and that. We have this issue now before us with somebody in the Integrity Commission who is talking with the Leader of the Opposition.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Ooooh, papa."

**Sen. George:** "Mouth open and tory jump out."

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** I want to find out in terms of—I do not know who is talking to the Auditor General, because the Auditor General released a report talking about Government Ministries that had increased expenditure by 1,000 per cent to 300 per cent, and the way the report was worded or the way it came out on the newspaper as though there was something so wrong with that.

I want to put on record that Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development was created in July of 2011; the Ministry took responsibility for the finances in October of 2011, which is a new financial year. So, to put a report that the expenditure of the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development increased by some 250-something per cent, it is really malicious and I want to put that on record. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Singh:** Let the Auditor General respond.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** The Auditor General's report is wrong?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** I said the report—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "It wrong, it wrong, it wrong." It is erroneous.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:**—the contents of the report appear malicious to me.

**Sen. Hinds:** The report of the Auditor General is malicious.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** It appears malicious, whoever wrote that report in the newspaper, it appears malicious to me, and as Senator—[*Crosstalk*]

It is fair comment. I am free to make fair comment on a matter involving a Ministry for which I have the responsibility. [*Crosstalk and desk thumping*] You cannot compare three months—one quarter of expenditure, with 12 months, the ensuing 12 months and say this Ministry's expenditure went up by 250-something per cent.

As our colleague, Minister Ramnarine was saying, you cannot compare apples with oranges and this is what was attempted to show that this Government is spending so much money, it went up by 253 per cent, and yet on the other hand saying that we are suffering people and we are not giving people money to do this and that, and I am saying—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** It is a report.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** In the papers.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** In the papers or the Auditor General.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** The newspaper reported, I am quoting what was reported in the newspaper, and I am saying it is reckless—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** You cannot "back back in ah fox trot" you know.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** I am fee to stand in this Senate and say—[*Crosstalk*] Mr. President, please?

**Mr. President:** Senators, can we have some silence.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Come on Rip. Come on Rip, behave. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** So, Mr. President, I am saying that somehow, everything this Government does is spun in a particular way, it is either corruption, over spending, and it is unfair and it is incorrect and I need to set the record straight on that.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** And I want to say that to date the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development has not assumed its 100 per cent responsibility, so in the next financial year you would see that expenditure going up again.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes, yes, yes.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** So, Mr. President, I just want to give the country the assurance, and Sen. Bernard spoke about a lot of issues. We have been spending the money in collaboration with key stakeholders, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, in dealing with the needs of the vulnerable children, youth and women and men in this country and we will continue to do so to the benefit of all concerned, and we are working on those programmes, Sir, with the assistance of several other persons and we will do so in the best interest of Trinidad and Tobago.

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

**The Minister of Environment and Water Resources (Sen. The Hon. Ganga Singh):** Mr. President, at 4.27 a.m., I am the 23rd speaker in this session [*Interruption*] and I want to commend all Members who have contributed so wonderfully, well most of them—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Aaah."

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:**—to this debate and I want to really congratulate all Members for the camaraderie that has existed throughout the day and into the night and into the wee hours of this morning.

Mr. President, I rise in support of this Bill entitled an Act to provide for the Supplementary Appropriation for the service of Trinidad and Tobago for the financial year ending September 30, 2013. I wish to take this opportunity to proffer congratulations to two persons: the Vice-President, Sen. Lyndira Oudit, on celebrating her birthday today [*Desk thumping*] and also to Mr. Junior Halls who celebrated his birthday yesterday [*Desk thumping*] giving service to the Parliament and to the country.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Very nice, man. Very nice, very nice.

**Hon. Senator:** Well, he should be home wrap up.

**Hon. Senator:** From now on we will be seeing you.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Mr. President, but it would be remiss of me even in the wee hours of this morning if I do not respond to some of the misinformation and mischief perpetrated by Members of the Opposition. Mr. President, Sen. Lester Henry spoke of the VSEP Programme at the Water and Sewerage Authority and he indicated that it was the voluntary separation programme was taking place quietly at the Water and Sewerage Authority. He complained that, basically, there was no industrial relations

problem, that there was no friction, that there was no antagonism and that the voluntary separation programme was embraced by the employees of the Water and Sewerage Authority, and that he found wrong.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes, yes, yes. [*Desk thumping*]

**4.30 a.m.**

Mr. President, I want to really put into the record what is happening at the Water and Sewage Authority.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah man, tell we.

**Sen. G. Singh:** And I have, like my colleague, hon. Sen. Pennelope Beckles, institutional memory of that agency of the Government, that authority, because we were both Ministers of Public Utilities.

Mr. President, in the period '95 to 2000, there was a voluntary separation programme. Cabinet in 1999 put in a structure of 2,033 persons in the organizational structure of the Water and Sewage Authority. The organogram provides for that. So there was a voluntary separation programme from about 3,400 persons and it went down to about 2,300 with a process of attrition to reach 2,033. In the period 2001 to 2010 that 2,300 escalated to 4,442 persons and this is not adding the 300 persons who work in the NSDP programme.

**Hon. Senators:** "Oooh".

**Sen. G. Singh:** So that was the regime—

**Sen. Coudray:** Party group.

**Sen. G. Singh:**—so that therefore there was no additional water—

**Sen. George:** Party group.

**Sen. G. Singh:** But there was an additional expansion in employment.

**Hon. Senators:** Yes, yes, it is true.

**Sen. Coudray:** Party group, party group.

**Sen. G. Singh:** And therefore this is the reality. So when we went in and my colleague who was then the hon. Minister of Public Utilities, you had to take measures, because you had a revenue stream of $619 million, an expenditure of $1.9 billion, and a personnel expenditure of $800 million.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Oooh Papa"!

**Sen. G. Singh:** So this is the reality, this is what you have to deal with.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** It was a bloated political organization.

**Hon. Senator:** That's right. How they converted it.

**Sen. G. Singh:** And the hon. Sen. Dr. Lester Henry who is a lecturer at the University of the West Indies—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** A lecturer?

**Sen. G. Singh:** A lecturer in economics at the University of the West Indies.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Oh, lecturer, sorry, sorry. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. G. Singh:** And he ought to be very familiar, very familiar with statistics. And I want to read for him, although he is not here, read for him, in June2010, total staffing, 4,442 persons; in December 2010, 4,425 persons; December 2011, 4,006 persons; December 2012, 4,082; May 2013, 3,678.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Eh-heh".

**Sen. G. Singh:** So when he makes the allegation—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah.

**Sen. G. Singh:**—that we are VSEPPING persons but we are bringing our friends and our family, it is nothing but academic mischief on his part.

**Hon. Senators:** Yes, yes. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Malicious mischief. Yeah, yeah. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. G. Singh:** Mr. President, so that therefore we have embarked on that programme. And what is the latest statistic with respect to that. The idea is that you were offered VSEP. And the VSEP that is being offered is a voluntary—the "v" I want to tell lecturer, Dr. Lester Henry the "v" in VSEP is for "voluntary".

**Hon. Senators:** Voluntary.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Voluntary, that's it. [*Desk thumping*] Just like how it was in ISCOTT, Caroni and everywhere else.

**Sen. George:** Yes.

**Sen. G. Singh:** As at June 2013, there are monthly paid, 392 persons requesting VSEP; daily paid, 313. So the total number of applicants as of June, as we speak, as we speak—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** They applied for it.

**Sen. G. Singh:** They applied for it, 705 persons.

**Hon. Senator:** It is a good package.

**Sen. G. Singh:** So it is a good package. And I will tell you about the package.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah tell us.

**Sen. G. Singh:** The cost of 524 applicants who had received their VSEP payments to date, monthly paid, $107,178,640.70.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Oooh goood".

**Hon. Senator:** So we did it before.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Tha real money, boy".

**Sen. G. Singh:** Daily paid, Mr. President, $169,771,656.29, making a sum total of $276,950,296.47.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Oooh". [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. George:** If they put the PNM back—[*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. G. Singh:** So you see we have embarked on a programme and there is a programme that by 2015 we will reach the critical mass that is required to run the organization efficiently of 2,501 persons. And that is what it is. Hon. Sen. Dr. Lester Henry comes in and starts to make all kind of mischief in this Senate and then you—all kinds of mischief as who is driving motor car, and that kind of thing.

We are working this VSEP programme in collaboration with the Inter American Development Bank. It is part of the institutional change. The Inter American Development Bank as we move from providing the right to water or the water security at the potable level we are moving into the realm of the right to sanitation, because only 30 per cent of the country is currently serve with sanitation services.

So that is the area we are moving into, and we got the largest loan ever in the hemisphere by any institution of US $46.5 million to build two sewage plants: one in San Fernando and one in Malabar. [*Desk thumping*] I do not want to talk too much about that, because that is a whole area—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Um-hmm".

**Sen. G. Singh:**—but I just wanted to correct Sen. Dr. Lester Henry for the kind of mischief that he is making. [*Interruption*]

**Hon. Senator:** Where is he?

**Sen. G. Singh:** And how we are able to achieve this apart from the

attractiveness of the voluntary package, because we engaged in social dialogue with our partner, the Unions.

Sen. James Lambert, NUGFW; PSA, Watson Duke; Estate Police Association brought them around the table. These are the options, this is what you do, get your influence, you are part of the round table discussions at the social dialogue level. So if there is no friction it is because we do things differently in order to bring about that efficiency, in order to bring about value for money. We expect the pay back on this is to be over a four-year period in terms of retrieving the money from the expenditure in the personnel cost.

**Sen. George:** Well done, well done. [*Desk thumping*] Repeat that.

**Sen. G. Singh:** Mr. President, Sen. Deyalsingh, Sen. Hinds and Sen. Dr. Henry raised the issue of nepotism in relation to the appointment of Mr. Rabindra Moonan. I think the locus classicus in the area of nepotism was the appointment of Mrs. Hazel Manning as a Minister in the Government when her husband was Prime Minister. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Aye, aye", yes and they said nothing.

**Sen. G. Singh:** Husband appoints wife as a Minister in a Cabinet status and you talk about nepotism. Nepotism was the provision of a gas station to Rajendra Baboolal, the son of a sitting President of the Senate and Chairman of the party.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Oh good Lord", that happened?

**Sen. Coudray:** "Yeah".

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Oooh my God".

**Sen. G. Singh:** Nepotism is Francis Bertrand getting a gas station. It was

not nepotism then? When they get those things it is not nepotism, but they will appoint—if you appoint Robin Moonan and you called for it, Robin Moonan was a PNM Deputy Mayor in San Fernando.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** That is correct, that is correct. [*Desk thumping*] "Tha why it hutting"—

**Sen. G. Singh:** Robin Moonan was a member of the Central Executive of the PNM.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** That's right. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. G. Singh:** Robin Moonan was a member of the General Council of the PNM.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes.

**Sen. G. Singh:** Robin Moonan holds a BSc in economics, just maybe better than Dr. Lester Henry. [*Laughter*] But you see, Mr. President, when you leave the PNM they create a special venom for you.

**Sen. Lambert:** That's right.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Camille Robinson-Regis calls up on the head of security in opposite ways.

**Sen. G. Singh:** They create a special venom for you so they both—all three Senators had to talk about Robin Moonan and to think that Robin Moonan used to serve in this Senate, albeit, on a temporarily basis with them.

**Sen. Lambert:** Yes.

**Sen. G. Singh:** They had something in their crow for him.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes, clearly.

**Sen. G. Singh:** But that is their style. So he was campaign manager, and I want to say also, because you serve your leader, he was also campaign, he

campaigned for the hon. Dr. Keith Rowley when he was attempting to displace Mr. Manning and that is why he had to leave the PNM.

**Hon. Senators:** "Oooh."

**Sen. Hinds:** You had given us examples of the appointment of—[*Inaudible*]

**Sen. Lambert:** You have never heard of it, Mr. Hinds, listen "nah man".

**Sen. G. Singh:** Mr. President, you see, when the PNM employs their supporters it is acceptable—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah, no big deal, no big deal. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. G. Singh:** It is acceptable, it is not a problem, you know, it is not a problem. When Radica Saith, whose husband was the de facto, Deputy Prime Minister of the country, was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Tourism Development Company—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Doh make joke, nah, oooh good".

**Sen. G. Singh:** That was not nepotism. That was well deserved.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** That is political style.

**Sen. G. Singh:** No, no, it is nepotism when we appoint and when they appoint it is political patronage.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah.

**Sen. G. Singh:** Well, we will deal with that. So you see—

**Sen. George:** What is good for the goose, it is not good for the gander, now.

**Sen. G. Singh:** Now my friend, my good friend, Sen. Farris Al-Rawi—

**Sen. George:** Where is he?

**Sen. Lambert:** He gone, he going to Ramesh.

**Sen. G. Singh:**—made an issue about a statement I made in a debate in 2007. And he sought to take it out of context—

**Sen. Coudray:** Take it out of context, that's right.

**Sen. G. Singh:**—and sought to play it in a certain kind of way. And in fairness to him, he did not twist it as it was—he was afraid to get into that area. But I want to read, because he has opened a pandora's box, and I want to read from the *Guardian* of Saturday, March 3, 2007, "Ganga…" by Gail Alexander:

> "Ganga: PNM party hacks raking in Cepep million$
>
> Jacquie Lazarus, one-time campaign manager of PNM Diego Martin West MP Keith Rowley, was the first millionaire created by the Cepep programme…"

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Truue"

**Sen. G. Singh:** "as a result of work by her firm, Opposition backbencher Ganga Singh said yesterday.

Speaking in the Lower House, Singh named Lazarus as the first Cepep beneficiary in his motion on the management of Cepep funding.

Singh said the process for selection of Cepep contractors was politically-corrupted and involved an alleged insurance scam as well as other violations…"

**Sen. Lambert:** She was the boss in the constituency. [*Laughter*]

"It is clear there was corruption in the Cepep tendering process," Singh said.

Quoting the report of the Auditor General on Cepep, Singh said the record of information pertaining to the award of Cepep contracts at the start of field operations, was not produced.

Missing also were application forms, names of selection team chaired by a consultancy firm, minutes of the meeting of the selection team and evaluation of forms of contractors interviewed by the selection team.

He said the consultancy firm in the name of Market Space Ltd was paid $1.938 million for its involvement…"

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "hmmm, papa".

**Sen. G. Singh:** "Singh said the firm belonged to Lazarus—a PNM member and former campaign manager of Rowley. [*Crosstalk*]

She is Cepep's first millionaire and there was a potential an overall 110 millionaires (contractors), he said.

While Government was giving $1 billion to Cepep, the 5,640 Cepep workers were only collecting $1,500 per month as opposed to the contractors.

Jacquie Lazarus has a steal of a deal...She was paid $25 per worker per month as a service fee to her Market Space Ltd."

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** What!

**Sen. G. Singh:** And so on, and so on:

"'No wonder the Auditor General's report states that 'there appears to be a lack of transparency and accountability in the selection of contractors and service providers…'"

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** They searching in Dubai luxury apartment and all of

that.

**Sen. G. Singh:** So when the hon. Senator, Sen. Farris Al-Rawi, spoke of my expression of *Pigs of the Trough* [Sic] I meant the contractors and I am certain that he is aware of the book by Arianna Huffington that is entitled, *Pigs at the Trough*, how corporate greed and political corruption are undermining America—2003.

**4.45 a.m.**

The statement I made is in 2007. So if he is not aware in 2013 of the political lexicon and what it is meant in that context, I urge him to read Arianna Huffington.

In that same debate the—because the issue was raised with respect to Clico and Sen. Henry raised the issue about, what about—who sold the mall in Atlantic Plaza.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** That was me.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** You? Oh, sorry. So Sen. Deyalsingh said: "Who sold the mall in Atlantic Plaza"?

**Sen. George:** We want to know.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Who is the purchaser?

**Sen. George**: I want to know.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** I want to know.

**Sen. George:** We want to know. Tell the population.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** And Valpark—Valpark! And he was tentative as to whether or not Holiday Inn suite—Express—was sold.

**Sen. George:** Was sold, yes.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** But I want to make a reference so you could get

the drift of where you are heading.

**Sen. George:** I want to know. Tell the population.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Bear with me, Mr. President. Mr. President, in the same newspaper in the same debate, Gerald Yetming who was the Member of Parliament for St. Augustine at the time, claimed—and I quote from it—the newspaper report:

> "Yetming also claimed that PNM Treasurer Andre Monteil raised the $110million he needed to buy the 25 per cent of the shares of Home Mortgage Bank by getting the Housing Development Corporation to deposit $100 million with the Clico Investment Bank…
>
> Yetming said the CIB did not have the cash liquidity to loan Monteil the money to buy the HMB shares so the deposit device was used to make the funds available.
>
> The St. Joseph MP was talking in the context of Monteil at the time being chairman of both the HMB and the HDC, as well as a Clico executive so it was a 'himself to himself' transaction with public funds channelled to finance a private transaction...
>
> Monteil has since resigned from posts at the HDC and the HMB, but is still PNM Treasurer.
>
> Housing Minister Keith Rowley challenged Yetming to make the insinuation against Monteil outside the privileged Parliament chamber, while Prime Minister Manning reminded Yetming that he had initiated a wide-ranging investigation into the Monteil $110 million transaction. Manning said when he received the final report it would be laid in Parliament."

I put that frame of what was happening in 2007 in the context of the agreement entered with CL with the memorandum of understanding by the previous administration. So when you asked, hon. Senator, who sell it and why they sell it and to whom, you must first ask at the very beginning, the MOU did not provide for a legal charge. Hinds do not go "nuh", please stay.

**Sen. Hinds:** I am going to the bathroom.

**Hon. Senator:** Still wait. Wait. [*Laughter and crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** So when you understand with the MOU entered into with the previous administration in which Karen Tesheira and the Prime Minister, Patrick Manning, through the midwifery of Andre Monteil—

**Sen. Ramlogan:** "Ooh, papa. Lovely imagery, man."

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:**—entered into this memorandum of understanding, that memorandum of understanding exposed the taxpayers and citizens of this country, and the Government on behalf of the taxpayers and citizens, to the tune of over $25 billion exposure, and we had no legal charge on any of the properties, on any of the assets of CL, or Clico or any of their assets. So when the Government entered into this MOU, they can only use moral suasion.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** That is right.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Moral suasion! So when we put our members of the board on the board of directors, they have to act in the interest of the company; they have a fiduciary duty to act in the interest of the company. And if the interest of the company requires the sale of assets, if they do not act in the interest of the company, then they are personally liable.

So the fundamental problem was at the MOU level. At the MOU

level! No legal charge? And that is the exposure, the risk that we have been carrying, and it is to the—how can I? It is because of the role of Winston Dookeran and Larry Howai, today we have stability in the environment. [*Desk thumping*] There is no longer a systemic risk.

So when you asked that question, you should direct that question to the founding fathers and the midwife of the MOU.

**Hon. Senator:** Um-hm.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Mr. President, you see, Senators Hinds, Henry and Deyalsingh, raised the issue of trust—raised the issue of trust and credibility and they used the opportunity to talk about the undermining of trust and credibility in our institutions.

I want to make reference to this whole area of trust and credibility and I want to link it to what Sen. Subhas Ramkhelawan said about the question of thinking outside the box. That is one issue. And I will indicate to him that in order to grapple with a lot of the issues that this Government has had to face, we had to think outside the box and we will deal with that but, perhaps, today is not an—the timing, perhaps, might be inappropriate.

The second point the hon. Senator made was with respect to the fact that—amongst others—there are—the integrity in public life places a lot of onerous burdens upon persons who may desire to serve on the boards of various state enterprises because they become a person in public life. Well, recent events, Mr. President, point to the level, and increases the burden because in the debate in the lower House, my colleague, the hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal, raised the question as to whether or not there was a meeting between the hon. Leader of the Opposition and a high-ranking official of the

Integrity Commission. In yesterday's newspaper by Andre Bagoo, the *Newsday* of Friday, June 14—and I read the headlines, Mr. President: "Rowley, Ken Gordon meet at Gordon's Glencoe home."

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Mmmm.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** And this is important because it places a lot of burden on all of us who are, in fact, holders of public office and, therefore, subject to the Integrity Commission. And I quote from Mr. Bagoo:

> "The Integrity Commission yesterday afternoon confirmed that chairman Ken Gordon hosted a private meeting with Opposition Leader Dr. Keith Rowley at Gordon's Glencoe home on May 15, days before Rowley in Parliament called on the Commission to probe purported emails implicating Cabinet officials.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Ooou papa!

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** "In an aide memoir of the meeting kept by Gordon — released by the Commission's Registrar Martin Farrell to *Newsday* — the Integrity Commission chairman discloses that he:

- called Rowley's mobile phone twice in response to a message from Rowley requesting an 'urgent meeting';"

**Hon. Senator:** At what time?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:**

- "suggested to Rowley that both men meet at Gordon's home since both live in the same area."

**Hon. Senator:** At what time?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:**

- "offered Rowley a drink once both were at Gordon's Newbury Hill,

Glencoe home""

**Hon. Senator:** Newbury.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:**

- "Informed Rowley that a matter raised by Rowley with former President George Maxwell Richards was not before the Integrity Commission since the Commission was not properly constituted as at that date.

The Commission's release of the aide memoir came hours after Government Chief Whip Dr. Roodal Moonilal called on Rowley in Parliament to state whether Rowley held 'secret discussions' with an unnamed 'high official'…prior to making a call in Parliament for the Commission to probe a series of documents purporting to be emails implicating Government officials…

The aide memoir, dated May 15, gives Gordon's account of what happened after Rowley attempted to arrange an 'urgent meeting' with Gordon on May 15.

'At the end of a meeting at the offices of the Integrity Commission on Wednesday 15th May I received a telephone message from my Secretary that the Leader of the Opposition Dr. Keith Rowley had called me at approximately 2.23p.m.,' Gordon states.

'He requested an 'urgent meeting'. 'He asked that I return his call and left his cell number to facilitate my doing so.'"

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** What!

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** "The chairman of the Integrity Commission then took step to try to contact Rowley, the Diego Martin West MP,

Opposition Leader and former PNM Minister."

And I quote:

"'I attempted to reach him without success and left a message on his answering machine,' Gordon says. He made a second attempt, which was successful.

'Not having heard from him (by 6 pm) and mindful of the urgency expressed earlier I tried again to reach him and this time did so', Gordon states.

Rowley told Gordon he was on his way home, prompting Gordon to make a suggestion.

States Gordon, 'He, (Rowley) stated that he was on his way home and that the 'urgency' still existed. Since we live in the same general area I suggested that he could stop over to see me on his way home. He did so and arrived some ten minutes later. I offered him a drink which he declined and we moved straight to the business of the meeting'.

Gordon says Rowley informed Gordon that he had 'reason to believe' that Richards had referred a matter to the Commission and Rowley wanted to embark on a 'certain course of action' since two months had elapsed.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** What!

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** "'He advised that prior to former President Richards' departure, he (Dr. Rowley) brought to the President's attention a matter he considered to be very serious,' Gordon states. 'Dr.Rowley had reason to believe that the President may in turn have brought such matter to the attention of the Integrity Commission.

Now"—

"But there is a lot of questions coming out of this, eh."

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** "Lemme" read everything into the record first:

> "'Now with more than two months having elapsed Dr. Rowley proposes to embark upon a certain course of action. He is therefore, enquiring whether the matter he had referred to President Richards had been passed to the Commission."

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Ai, Ai! But why he did not write and find out? Umm!

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** "In response, according to the account of the chairman, Gordon informed Rowley that the matter could not possibly be before the Commission since the Commission did not have a fully-appointed board.

'I reminded Dr.Rowley that it is not the practice of the Commission to disclose the matters that are before the Commission,'—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** He should know dat.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** "Gordon states. 'Even more significantly it was pointed out that the four (4) new appointments to the Commission had not as yet been made by President Carmona. While non-policy day-to-day operations continue to be addressed by the Commission, until the new Commissioners are appointed and sworn in new matters cannot be addressed until at least a quorum exists. The matter which he had referred to former President Richards is not therefore before the Integrity Commission.' Rowley did not respond to several calls and messages yesterday from *Newsday*."

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Oui papa!:

**Hon. Senator:** Wait, wait. On your time ask that.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Rather curious!

**Hon. Senator:** When you get up to speak again, ask that.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Very strange!

**Sen. George:** Ask "dem" same questions.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Mr. President, you see, here it is, the Registrar of the Integrity Commission has certain duties. Amongst his duties: the duties of the Registrar shall be:

(a) to attend the meetings of the Commission—[*Interruption*]—yes, very much so.

(b) to record the proceedings of the Commission and keep the minutes of each meeting in a proper form.

It is linked to Sen. Subhas' response.

**Hon. Senator:** Is so?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Yeah.

"(c) generally to perform such duties connected with the work of Commission as the Commission may require."

**5.00 a.m.**

So, here you have a complaint before the commission—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Senator:** Yes.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** and the complainant goes to speak with the chairman of the commission

**Sen. Coudray:** At his home.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** The commission is not functus. You require four

others.

**Hon. Senator:** "Whe yuh goin?"

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** "Where you going?" How you reach home in an intimate setting?

**Hon. Senator:** Exactly,

**Hon. Senator:** With a beverage.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** How you reach? Have a beverage—which he refused. But the point I am making is that, you have—I will offer you a beverage. "Doh worry." But I am not the Chairman of the Integrity Commission—[*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** That is right.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:**—and, therefore, on a working day—here it is, May 15. Mr. President, let us look at the timeline, May 15. It is well known to the country, that May 20 is the no confidence Motion brought by the Leader of the Opposition, and in his one bullet attacked, he has only that, what we regard as fabricated emails to deal with. He went to the President—and you I know he is playing tic, tac, toe.

The Leader of the Opposition is playing tic, tac, toe. He went to the President of the country, tic; he then went to the Chairman of the Integrity Commission, tac; and then he went to the Parliament, toe. Tic, tac, toe. [*Desk thumping*] That is what he was doing. He was triangulating—

**Hon. Senator:** That is right. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** [*Desk thumping*]—in accordance with Dr. Lennox Bernard. He was triangulating. Because you see, Mr. President, there are series of questions. No one is denying, but certainly there are

certain approaches. This is an institution. It is an institution funded by the taxpayer arising out of the budgetary allocations. It is an institution. [*Desk thumping*] It is an institution that ought not, because of the nature of the society—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** And we are giving more money to service commissions.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:**—and the role it has to perform, given the tenor of the society, that there has to be a certain protocol observed.

If you are on a Wednesday requesting an urgent meeting, what it is that the Integrity Commission/.

**Hon. Senator:** Burning!

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:**—that is so burning, that cannot wait until Thursday morning where you can embrace the public official with the registrar present or an independent person present, so that the aide-memoire can really reflect what transpired at that meeting?

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** I could—[*Inaudible*]—of an independent.

**Sen. The Hon. G Singh:** No! I am just saying that the role of the registrar is to provide that aide-memoire to take the necessary notes, and in this case, his role and function was undermined.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "He was writing while he talking and drinking." [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** So, you see, Mr. President, several questions arise in this matter. One, that the meeting took place mere days before the Motion of no confidence, and that we are saying that proper protocol demanded that the chairman, if he were to ensure that he holds the office in

such a way for it not to be compromised or conflicted, ought to conduct the business of the Integrity Commission not in the intimacy of his home, but within the portals of where the offices of the Integrity Commission located, in Unit Trust Building. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, I want to fast forward to today, because the questions that I was about to raise have been raised by my good friend, the hon. Attorney General, in his usual fashion. In today's newspaper, June 15— [*Interruption*]

**Sen. George:** That is today?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Today! I am always ahead of my time. [*Crosstalk*] Mr. President, "Rowley:"—this is in the *Trinidad Express Newspapers*—

**Hon. Senator:** Of today.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:**—of today.

> "Nothing secretive about meeting
>
> Opposition Leader…Keith Rowley yesterday defended the meeting with Integrity Commission chairman Ken Gordon, saying that he did in fact tell Parliament that he had communicated with the Integrity Commission"—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Is that so?

> **Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:**—"during his contribution to the no-confidence motion on May 20.
>
> 'I told the Parliament that I communicated with the Integrity Commission before I brought the matter to Parliament'."

You are knocking too early because the lie will be exposed now.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** That is right.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** "'Had the Commission indicated to me that the Commission was investigating the matter then that would have guided my approach and my patience. I told that to the Parliament. My contact with the Commission was never a secret,' Rowley said in a text interview...

'I told the Parliament that I gave the document to the President expecting that it would be investigated by the IC.'"

You go to the Office of the President, you gave him a certain document, you go there with the expectation that the President is independent of you.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes!

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** You cannot expect a certain outcome, having placed a document in a hand of the President

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** He may read it and throw it in the bin.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** He cannot.

**Sen. Hinds:** You can expect anything.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** No, no, you cannot expect anything.

**Sen. Hinds:** You were not privy to those discussions, neither was I.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Well, that is the point I am making.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Aaah", thank you.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Because what you are telling me, that you were part of strategy planning of this, you know.

**Sen. Hinds:** I am telling you that?

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Well said! Like you sign the petition against Rowley and you want to get rid of the man.

**Sen. Hinds:** You and I were not privy to the discussions he had with the President.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Mr. President, I want to repeat that:

> "'I told the Parliament that I gave the document to the President expecting that it would be investigated by the IC. Having confirmed from the IC that it was not investigating the matter the way was now clear for me to tell the people of the existence of this unattended issue in the Parliament,'."

[*Interruption*] No, no. Just now! Let me complete what I am doing with this. When I to talk about WASA I will give you.

So he went on to indicate about the second phone call that he got from the chairman of the Integrity Commission.

> "'When he did through, I told him I was on my way home. Since I was then only two minutes away from his home he accommodated me by asking me to stop at his home since I confirmed to him that the matter was still urgent,'…"

So there is a bit of time lapse. He said two minutes away, he said ten minutes, but that is not the point. The point that I have to make here is that the hon. Leader of the Opposition said he communicated to the Parliament that he had this meeting with the Integrity Commission.

**Sen. Hinds:** He said so?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** He said so here and you knocked the desk on that.

**Sen. Hinds:** Read it again.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Mr. President, I read both copies of his

contribution, the opening and the ending, where he started and this is what he said at page 10 of his contribution and I quote:

> "Mr. Speaker, when I saw the emails, my first reaction that was to ensure that it was not frivolous…"—and so on.
>
> "I did not take it to the media, I did not publicize it;"
>
> "I did not take it to my colleagues."

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "He doh trust them. He feel he cyar trust dem fellas."

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** "I wanted to be satisfied that what this whistle-blower had presented…was information that should be taken seriously"—Mr. Speaker—"and when I was satisfied that was so, I took the information to the Office of the President.

Mr. Speaker, I waited for six months…"—this is what he is saying—"So, Mr. Speaker, after six months and the offices of State, to the best of my knowledge, not treating with the matter in the way I expected, I thought, and it is my position, that today the people of Trinidad and Tobago should be advised as to what the information is."

Nothing about the Integrity Commission there. So that is then.

**Hon. Senator:** What date?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** So this is the 20th, "eh".

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Winding up.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** That was the 20th. This is the 22n; this is what he said. So he said nothing about a meeting with the Chairman of the Integrity Commission then.

Nothing. This is what he said at page 113 of the *Hansard*:

> "And I pointed out to you the part I took with the audience I sought

with His Excellency President George Maxwell Richards on January 08, starting at 2.00 p.m., and the role that the Integrity Commission could and should play in a situation like this."

Read through everything, not a word—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Not one word.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:**—of a meeting, or of an audience, or a social encounter with the Chairman of the Integrity Commission—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramolgan SC:** "Oooh, papa!"

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:**—and which he professed to deal with an urgent matter. So suppression of that meeting, tic, tac toe. So the dice became loaded, because if you do not know what move you are going to make and you have a loaded dice, then nobody will know. Nobody knew in this Parliament that he met, and I am certain that you all did not know too, "because if he didn't tell yuh in the beginning, he ain't go tell yuh in the end." Tic, tac, toe.

So this is what this is, Mr. President, a subversion and a compromising of the Office of the Chairman of the Integrity Commission by the Leader of the Opposition, making him complicit in what the email, the "egate", or whatever you choose to call it, which we regard as a fabrication. This is what we fund with the public moneys and this is what the Leader of the Opposition, a pretender to become Prime Minister, is doing to one of the institution we hold in high regard.

**Sen. Hinds:** You calling the Leader of the Opposition pretender to become Prime Minister?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Pretender to become Prime Minister. A

pretender to the throne of Prime Minister. You do not understand language. Mr. President, so you see what is happening in this country. So, this is what they do and it is a way of demonizing everything. They demonize—

**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. F. Karim*]

*Question put and agreed to*.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Mr. President, part of the approach that is taken and I have been in this Parliament for quite a while—

**Sen. Karim:** That is the headline for tomorrow papers, tic, tac, toe.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:**—and I have looked at the operations of political parties, and when Sen. Armstrong and Sen. Drayton raised the issue, and I think, Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight and Sen. Subhas Ramkhelawan raised the issue of campaign finance, I would refer them to the fact that back in 2005, I raised as a Private Members' Motion the issue of campaign finance. It was debated for about two sessions in Private Members' Day. The Government at the time, its contributor was Colm Imbert as Leader of Government Business at the time, and in similar sentiments expressed. The raison d'etre of party politics is patronage. If you read Du Rojet on party politics, it will tell you that, patronage is a sine qua non of party politics. But in the PNM, the oldest party, perhaps the most successful party in the Caribbean, they never had a financier.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Nah! Nah, nah, nah!"

**Hon. Senator:** Never!

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Never! They never did. Financiers were a new concept when we came in power.

**Hon. Senator:** That is right.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** So, their political strategy [*Crosstalk*] is to demonize anybody they conceive or they perceive to be supporters of any political party against them—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Senator:** Opposed to them

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:**—they are opposed to them. So they have embarked on that same course again. It is a tried and tested method.

So, Mr. President, it is a tried and tested method. So what they have embarked upon and you hear my good friend, Sen. Hinds, making statements similar to that.

**5.15 a.m.**

So today—yesterday, the National Gas Company was forced to take out a whole page ad:

> "NGC's Response to the article in the Sunday Express of June 9, 2013 '$800M contract for top government financier'"

And I want to read into the records because I know your method of operation—"yuh plant in the *Mirror* and yuh reap it in the Parliament."

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Ahhh! Well said! [*Desk thumping*] Dai exactly wha going on."

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** You plant it upon your political assassinators in the media and you bring it into the Parliament and where it becomes part of rumour-mongering culture in this society. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. President, I want to read this into the record.

**Sen. George:** Read it into the record!

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** "The idea to construct new corporate headquarters for The National Gas Company of the Trinidad and Tobago Limited…was initially conceived in 2005."

**Hon. Senator:** What?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** "Since then, a number of sites were considered, but it was not until March 2013, that a 42-acre parcel of land of State land, located at Brechin Castle, was offered and accepted.

NGC's Board of Directors agreed that NIPDEC, a state-owned organisation that provides a diversified portfolio of services, including project/procurement/facilities management to other state agencies, would be able to meet the needs of NGC for this project. This decision was taken in light of the limited in-house resources available to NGC to undertake this project. NIPDEC was subsequently engaged to provide procurement, design, construction and project management services for NGC's new corporate headquarters. They were given a strict deadline to deliver the new headquarters by the end of 2014, or for the latest early 2015. NIPDEC was also charged with handling the tendering process, given its alignment with state tendering procedures.

It is to be noted that on May 10, 2013, NIPDEC issued tenders to bidders from its list of pre-qualified contractors. Bidders were advised that bids would close on June 7, 2013. However, following request from bidders for additional time, an extension to June 21, 2013 was given for the submission of tenders.

Contrary to the article in the Sunday Express of June 9, 2013, no contractor has been identified or tipped to undertake the project for construction of NGC's corporate headquarters.

We are confident in NIPDEC's tendering process for the delivery of the best value to NGC. At this time, the tender remains open and will close on June 21, 2013."

Because you see, I heard—

**Sen. Hinds:** Me?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Yes, I heard you talking.

**Sen. Hinds:** About what?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** "About ah $800 million contract—"

**Sen. Hinds:** Not me, Sir. That was the *Express*.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** "—And yuh adding up this contract and yuh going to ask ah question."

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah, yeah!

**Sen. Hinds:** Me?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Yes.

**Sen. Hinds:** On that matter?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** "No, you about ah 800 contract, you eh talk about this matter."

**Sen. Hinds:** "Buh yuh gehin dat wrong."

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** No, no, no, I heard you.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "I heard you ask all kinda thing!"

**Sen. Hinds:** "Buh I doh fraid dat buh yuh gehin it wrong. Da'is the *Express*."

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** All right.

So, you see, Mr. President—

**Sen. George:** Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle! [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Mr. President, what we are witnessing here really is that we are into the realm where truth is the first casualty. [*Crosstalk*] Truth becomes the first casualty in the arena, and therefore we are urging Members on the other side that if you embarked upon that course of adventure, then we deal with you in like fashion.

I want to deal also, Mr. President, in the few minutes I have left, to talk about out-of-the-box thinking that is required to solve some of the fundamental problems existing in our society. Sen. Lester Henry indicated that WASA has been a problem and that for many administrations. The formula for that administration under Sultan-Khan was to put it in the hands of a foreign entity.

**Hon. Senator:** That is right!

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** I do not want to get involved in that today, but we have the whole works on that—foreign entity. "We take ah different approach." WASA will celebrate 50 years in 2015, a mature organization, and that we have to invest in our own local people. It is currently run by locals; it is locals who have done all the work for the IDB loan; it is locals through collaboration, so we thought outside the box.

You have collaboration with Ugandan water to deal with institutional change. You have collaboration with Aqua Hess Agua Barcelona for transformation of engineering. You have collaboration with the Public Utilities Board of Singapore—the public utilities' Ministry in Singapore, so

to speak—for reclaimed water and reused water. We have collaboration with the IDB because that is not the only loan. We are going for Tobago to deal with the Tobago problem. We have CRU funding in which for 20 years, we had in Tobago a wastewater treatment plant. The wastewater treatment plant was underutilized. It had 430 customers, you had 1,100 customers out of it, and the wastewater was leaching into the coral and entering into the beaches in a tourism economy for US $460 million a year.

We took the CRU funding from the IDB of US $3 million—US $2.5 million—retrofitting every home and business in Scarborough to bring them into the system. [*Desk thumping*] Fresh thinking. [*Desk thumping*] Fresh thinking! Twenty years problems solved, "we have ah lot more problems to solve", but the collaboration, the infusion of new talent.

Most recently, Mr. President, WASA signed an MOU with Sinohydro—one of the largest countries in the world. They built the Three Gorges Dams. All these years for the years that I have known myself, we have been talking about the Mamoral Dam.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Dam—that is true!

**Hon. Senator:** Oh yes!

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** We never had enough money nor the designs for the building of the Mamoral Dam. But we are looking also at the Chaguanas Wastewater Treatment Plant. Chaguanas, low-lying, fastest expanding city and it cannot be funded from the PSIP programme. So that is that area.

In the area of forestry and protected areas, we are going through institutional change there too. The forestry department is 130 years old. The forestry department is as old as some of the trees in Trinidad but it is

dysfunctional. So, with the IDB and with the FAO—Food and Agriculture Organization—we are bringing institutional change in that area. It is far advanced. It will be the forestry, wildlife and protected areas authority, all parks—everything will be coordinating that together with the IDB.

We are not as far advanced in this one, we are going into water and flood management. Water Resources Agency will come under a new jurisdiction. All this we are doing in collaboration with the unions every step of the way. So what we are doing is institutional change to address the delivery issues, because we take our mandate from our Prime Minister: serve the people, implement and deliver, [*Desk thumping*] so we have to deliver services.

I want to say this, Mr.President, we are also dealing with this issue of the protection of the environment—whole area of climate change, whole area of how we are going to green different areas. We are also dealing with that and that is a whole area that we will have to now focus our minds on. We are also dealing with the protection of the animals; protection of the animals. We have a most predatory culture in this country. You have—in our discussions and consultations with the hunters' association, a wide spectrum of our society. Hunters are hunting with pump action shotguns, night vision goggles and packs of dogs. The animals are being depleted. We have to intervene to save those animals.

We have embarked on a programme, the forestry department now is pinpointing every hunter—how yuh call it?—camp and they told me it is hundreds of camps. We are moving on a policy where we move and we remove all the hunters' camps because off the hunting season, they go and

hunt and they eat the wild meat inside the camp, so the animals have no chance whatsoever, so we have to intervene. We have to intervene.

So, Mr. President, the whole area—Portof Spain. The PNM has been in control of Port of Spain from time immemorial, but PortofSpain floods from the time the rain "set up".

**Sen. George: "**The rain think about falling", yeah. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh: "**Set up!" So we have a detailed plan. Eight o'clock this morning, I will be joining two crews by HDC.

**Sen. Beckles:** What time?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Eight o'clock this morning; two crews at HDC. It is not far away. They are moving to go over the years of paving all the water inlets, what the technical people call cow's mouth. They are going to break that for the water that flowing on the road to enter into the stream. We are looking at the cove to create a marina barrage right next to the lighthouse. It is all detailed here. There are immediate plans.

**Hon. Senator:** When was that study done?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** It starts from Millette back in 1993. Okay? [*Crosstalk*] It starts from them, so we come forward, Government is a continuum. I am not saying this drop from the sky like manna from heaven, it is a building block we are playing, but we are bringing fresh thinking into it.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah, yeah. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Bringing fresh thinking into it! We cannot—Port of Spain is one of—we cannot make PortofSpain a city and complain it is dying if every time rain "set up", it floods. It is unacceptable! Three

hundred thousand people moving up and down the Priority Bus Route, major commute area, but it floods all the time. It is unacceptable and I give the undertaking to this honourable Senate, we are doing everything in the short- and medium-term to solve this problem of Port of Spain flooding. That is why I get angry—

**Mr. President:** One more minute you have, Senator.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** I get angry when they seek to say that we are discriminating against Port of Spain because it is not so.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Yeah, dai foolishness."

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Water is colourless, it is egalitarian!

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah, yeah. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** And we, in every area we are involved in, we take that approach.

Mr. President, I thank you and I support this Bill, and I commend it to this honourable Senate. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President: The Minister of Finance. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of Finance and the Economy (Sen. The Hon. Larry Howai):** Thank you, Mr. President. It is 5.27 and normally I am brief, Mr. President, but today, after 19 hours with the Lower House and a further 19 hours with the Upper House over the last couple of days, I think I will be very, very brief. Right. [*Laughter*]

I want to congratulate Members on the very strong contributions that were made and particularly my colleagues for having very proactively answered most of the questions which had been posed by Members on the other side. There were a few areas that remained outstanding and I have a

list here which I will try to go through in a brief way, and hopefully in a comprehensive way at the same time.

There was one question on Head 06 on the Service Commissions which suggested that the different Commissions should be given more autonomy. Basically, this is a policy decision and we will certainly keep it under review. What we did in the estimates for 2013, the allocations for each commission was separated under this Head of Expenditure in an effort to ensure that funding was clearly identified and directed to the operations of each commission. So we were able to identify them, and I think over time, we will try to move to a system that would facilitate what I thought was an excellent suggestion made about how we should treat with the Commissions. There was a question with respect to under Head 17, Personnel Department: why the increase for rental accommodation and why was the figure not appropriated in the 2013 estimates? I think this came from Sen. Drayton. But, an allocation was made in the 2013 estimates with the assumption that the rental payments would have been required only for a part of the year since it was not clear when the department would have officially taken possession of the premises. However, the keys were handed over earlier than had been anticipated, and therefore allowance had to be made for additional months of rental payment.

Sen. Cudjoe had raised a question with respect to the additional amount required for the Ministry of Legal Affairs as it related to the National Consultations on Constitutional Reform. The question was asked: well, is the period is correct—which is from November 2012 to March 2013—and if it is correct, why the additional amount was needed? The

answer is that the allocation is to cover costs associated with the consultations.

The reference to the period is correct, that is it was supposed to be November2012 to March 2013. However, the consultations actually only started in March of 2013, and, therefore, there was a difference in that regard.

**5.30 a.m.**

When the Parliament met in January of 2013, for the supplementation variation of the appropriation for fiscal 2012, to bring to account disbursement on loans to required advances made from treasury deposits and to realign the provisions in the 2012 estimates, in line with the reassignment of responsibilities to Ministers, that related to last year's accounts, not to the 2013 accounts. I do not know if that clarifies the position there.

Sen. Wheeler asked about the question of the—that the THA was provided 222 million in the supplementary appropriation but they really needed 300. The answer to it in short is that we had made a provision of 84.9million in the budget and, therefore, to make up the additional amount we only needed to make a provision of 222million in the accounts for this year.

There was a question as why no allocation was made for the Ministry of Health. This is simply because they had sufficient funding that they were able to via to cover the additional cost that were being incurred.

There was another question in relation to the year of patriotism, has it started and the details of the programme. I do not have the details of the programme for the year of patriotism at the moment but I would confirm that

the year of patriotism has not yet started.

Mr. President, I think those were some of the outstanding questions, as I recall, outstanding at the time. I want to confirm that the economy continues to improve. The financial buffers which support the ratings of the country remain strong. At the end of the day, I think we all have much to be proud of in our country in the progress which we have all made over the years on the improvements that we are seeing, on the continuing positioning of Trinidad and Tobago as the geopolitical centre of the Caribbean and I expect that these improvements will continue.

The key issue is going forward here, is that coming out of these, one of the important things coming out of this appropriation is the need for of us to ensure that payments are made to the workers, to settle all of these long outstanding issues. And in that regard, I call on all the Members to support the Motion for the additional supplementation, which is an appropriation which is required for the current fiscal year.

Mr. President, I beg to move. [*Desk thumping*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read second time.*

**The Minister of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Larry Howai):** Mr. President, in accordance with Standing Order 63, I beg to move that the Bill not be committed to a committee of the whole Senate.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question put and agreed to*: That the Bill be read a third time.

*Bill accordingly read the third time and passed.*

## ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of The Environment and Water Resources (Sen. The Hon. Ganga Singh):** Mr. President, I beg to move that this Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, June18, 2013, but before I do so, Mr. President, I want to extend, on behalf of all members gathered here, happy wedding greetings to the Minister of Food Production, Sen. The Hon. Devant Maharaj, who got married last Saturday—[*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senators:** Friday.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Friday, I attended the wedding, and also Sen. Embau Moheni, who is getting married on Sunday. [*Interruption*]

**Sen. Coudray:** Tomorrow.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Tomorrow. [*Desk thumping*] Shamfa, of course, was the most recently married one. So, it appears that there is an air of romance in the Senate.

On that note, I would like to adjourn the Senate to Tuesday, June18, 2013 at 1.30 p.m., in which we will deal with the Insurance Bill.

**Mr. President:** Before I put the question, I would like also to thank the members of staff of the Parliament who have been with us all night. [*Desk thumping*] And, of course, they too had to serve on another occasion and all the members, the police as well, and all those who have served us over the last many hours.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Senate adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 5.38 a.m.*