



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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THE HONOURABLE C. ARNOLD THOMASOS  
SPEAKER

Thursday, April 22, 1965

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GOVERNMENT PRINTERY, TRINIDAD, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO—1966

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*Duke, Mr. E. M.*

*Thursday, 22nd April, 1965*

*Death of*

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, 22nd April, 1965*

The House met at 10.35 a.m.

### PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

### DUKE, Mr. EDGAR MORTIMER— DEATH OF

**Mr. Speaker:** It is with deep sorrow that I announce the death of Mr. Edgar Mortimer Duke which occurred on Sunday, 18th of this month in British Guiana. Hon. Members will please stand in silence for one minute as a mark of respect.

*House stood in silence.*

**The Minister of Home Affairs and Local Government (Hon. A. G. Montano):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to place on record the regret and sorrow of this House at the sad and sudden passing of Mr. Edgar Mortimer Duke, who was the Speaker of this House from 1956 to 1961. Mr. Duke had come to this House after a distinguished legal and scholastic career and was the first local man to become Speaker of the Legislative Council as it was then called. He served during the first five years of this Government's accession to office—1956 to 1961—during the transitional period when Trinidad and Tobago moved from the status of a Crown Colony to that of independence.

He was, perhaps, the right man at the right time to serve in this capacity, for by his gentle manner he was able to throw oil on troubled waters and to hold the balance of fairplay between Government and Opposition during those first five crucial years—our period of transition—when tempers

used to flare up on both sides of the House. As a Speaker he sometimes, deliberately, I believe, did not hear some of the remarks made by hon. Members on both sides of this House. His faulty hearing was sometimes necessary or he might have been called upon to exercise a discipline which might have been very distasteful indeed. But by his calm, gentle and persuasive manner, he was able on divers occasions to bring peace and order to our deliberations. This House regrets his passing and I am sure that my Colleagues on both sides would wish that we send an expression of sympathy and regret to his bereaved widow and relatives. I so move, Sir.

**Mr. S. C. Maharaj:** Mr. Speaker, I join with my hon. Friend, the Leader of the House, in sending to Mrs. Duke and relatives of the late Mr. Duke our deepest sympathy on his passing. I had the honour to be in this House whilst he was Speaker, and I must say that outside of his job as Speaker I think I developed a very personal friendship with him chiefly because during debates he would sometimes conveniently not hear and we had very great latitude; not that we do not have latitude with you, Sir. That was, I think, a particular strength of his.

He was a very genial personality. If a person disagreed with him in the House and five minutes after that person had to go to him in his office he was always willing, gentle and glad to receive and hear that person. I join with my hon. Friend, the Leader of the House, in expressing the sympathy of this side of the House.

**Mr. A. S. Sinanan:** Mr. Speaker, I was hoping to be in time to join in the condolence to the former Speaker of this House. I think the late Mr. Duke will be remembered for a number of things, but one for which I know

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[MR. A. S. SINANAN]

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Land Acquisition

he will always be remembered is the dissenting judgment he gave in the celebrated Musson Case. It was a great tribute to us all when the Privy Council actually adopted his exact words, his exact language, in that dissenting judgment.

As we know, he not only functioned as a judge; he functioned as a Registrar in British Guiana, and as our Speaker. I had the honour and privilege of serving under him, I think for a year and a half. I wish to join with the Leader of the House and with other hon. Members of this House who have paid tribute to the late Mr. Duke, and I hope and trust that these remarks will be forwarded in due course to his bereaved widow and family.

#### PAPER LAID

- I. Report of the Auditor General on the Accounts of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund for the year ended 31st December, 1961.—[*The Minister of Finance*]

#### LAND ACQUISITION

**The Minister of Health and Housing (Hon. Mrs. I. U. Teshea):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move,

That this House approve the decision of the Governor-General to acquire the land described in the Appendix for the public purpose specified.

This parcel of land containing 1 acre, 2 roods and 11 perches, situate on the southern bank of the Caroni River approximately 1,800 feet West of the Princess Margaret Highway at Glandon Road in the Ward of Cunupia in the County of Caroni is being acquired for the purpose of straightening the Caroni River.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Resolved:*

That this House approve the decision of the Governor-General to acquire the land described in the Appendix for the public purpose specified.

#### APPENDIX

Description of Land	Public purpose for which to be acquired
<p>The following parcel of land containing one acre, two roods, and eleven perches, more or less situate at Caroni in the Ward of Cunupia in the County of Caroni described in the Schedule hereto and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated 15th January, 1963, executed under Survey Order No. 156/62 and filed in his office.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>A parcel of land containing one acre, two roods and eleven perches situate on the southern bank of the Caroni River approximately 1,800 feet West of the Princess Margaret Highway, at Glandon Road in the Ward of Cunupia in the County of Caroni, part of the property belonging now or formerly to Bachan Jogie, and more particularly shown and delineated and coloured raw sienna on a plan filed as R. E. 6 in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Department, Red House.</p>	<p>Diversion of the Caroni River</p>

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICE BILL**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The hon. the Minister of Public Utilities (Mr. K. Mohammed):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move,

That a Bill to provide for the establishment of a Public Transport Service to operate road and rail transport facilities with a view to promoting the development of road transport and to facilitating the phased substitution of road transport for the existing railway system, be now read a Second time.

Hon. Members will no doubt recall that in December of last year, when I presented the Motor Omnibus Concessions (Acquisition of Undertakings) Bill, I indicated that Government would give urgent consideration to devising a structure for the permanent administration of the bus service. The Bill before the House today, which I have the honour to present, honours that promise made in December last. As hon. Members are aware, the transport question is probably one of the most vexed issues today but, as I said in December last, Government are resolute in their decision to make the public transport of this country something about which we can all be proud.

In order to achieve this ambitious design however, it is of vital importance that the proper administrative machinery be conceived and initiated, and Government have decided to create by means of this statute a public corporation which will be charged with the direction of the bus service. Several hon. Members opposite have suggested the co-operative method of operating the bus service, and other hon. Members have made various other suggestions, but since Government acquired the bus industry on January 1 of this year the service has been virtually

managed as a department of the Civil Service under a temporary Board of Management consisting of senior civil servants. This temporary method of operation was necessary to facilitate a smooth takeover, to provide an opportunity for continuity, and to seek an immediate solution to some of the more pressing problems of the service.

A considerable amount of work has been done in the last three months to make the fleet operational in the first place, to prepare the groundwork for the expansion of the service in the second place, and, in the third place, to seek the necessary managerial and technical experience upon which the whole future of the service will rest. In order that hon. Members may have some indication of the magnitude of some of the tasks involved, I should like briefly to present some aspects of the operation of the bus service since the takeover, so that they may be in a better position to understand the reason why we are proposing the present Bill and the machinery provided in the Bill for the continuation of the bus service and for the future administration of the railway service.

The position on the date that Government took over the two concessions was that out of a fleet of 253 vehicles, 43 were off the road and required major overhaul. Fleet availability seldom exceeded sixty per cent., and it was therefore necessary to take more than twenty other vehicles off the road for major overhaul. It was readily discovered that no strict system of preventative maintenance was adhered to in the past; that supervision was inadequate; that inordinately high fuel and tyre costs was the price that was being paid for the many deficiencies; and that the steep fluctuations in the revenue and expenditure were the direct result of the poor operational condition of the fleet.

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The immediate problem which faced the temporary Board of Management therefore, was the initiation of a satisfactory programme of preventative maintenance and major overhaul. Such a system of maintenance has in fact been instituted and, in combination with the programme of major overhaul, fleet availability has risen within three months from sixty per cent. to seventy-four per cent. I cannot advocate that we should judge an enterprise of this sort after three months but, surely, such an improvement in fleet availability in three months shows the amount of work that has been done by the people who have been charged with the temporary administration of the service. However, while the programme of overhaul has been costly, the expenditure has been well justified as is evidenced from the increase in daily revenue from \$8,830 for the month of January, 1965, to \$9,130 for the month of March, 1965.

In the interim, Government sought, by way of technical assistance from the United Kingdom, an expert to survey the industry and to make recommendations. Mr. H. Weedy, one of the top experts from the United Kingdom, was selected by that Government, and he submitted a report to Cabinet in February last. This report indicated five specific areas of weakness in the service, and Mr. Weedy recommended:

- (1) An immediate strengthening of the managerial staff.
- (2) An expansion of the existing fleet in accordance with specifications designed for the particular circumstances under which the fleet would be required to operate.
- (3) A training programme for drivers, conductors, and skilled workers.
- (4) The construction of adequate administrative offices and a central workshop and garage.

- (5) The introduction of an administrative structure capable of running the undertaking along commercial lines while maintaining a separate identity from the other departments of Government.

This is precisely what the Bill is designed to achieve.

With respect to the first recommendation of the report, Cabinet has decided to recruit in the United Kingdom, on a three-year contract in the first instance, a General Manager, a Chief Engineer, and a Traffic Manager. The United Kingdom Government have agreed to undertake the recruitment of the personnel under its technical assistance programme, and the training of local understudies will be a stated requirement of the terms of recruitment of these top officers. Our High Commissioner in London and a team from the present management of the bus service have recently held talks with the Ministry of Overseas Development in the United Kingdom regarding the recruitment of suitable personnel, and it is anticipated that these officers will arrive in Trinidad sometime within the next few months.

With respect to the expansion of the fleet the relevant specifications for some 130 vehicles have been drawn up in accordance with the recommendations of Mr. Weedy, and tenders from the top six United Kingdom manufacturers have been called for and received. It was hoped that these orders would have been placed within the next few days. However, there have been certain difficulties with respect to the specifications, and it may be necessary for Government to readvertise and call for further tenders in order to meet the specifications which the management would require upon sound technical advice. Receipt of these vehicles should begin in October or November of

this year and a large majority of them should become operational by the end of the year.

I should like to point out here that the assembly of buses in Trinidad will provide a very important stimulus to the development of a permanent assembly industry which will generate, both directly and indirectly, many employment opportunities for our nationals. Plans for the formulation of a training programme are being prepared by the present temporary Board of Management. Discussions are being held with the manufacturers with a view to having certain local supervisory staff trained in the United Kingdom, who will in turn be responsible for within-the-industry training on their return. The management is also preparing specifications for the design of a central workshop, but a final decision on this matter must await a feasibility study, which is now being undertaken, to determine the optimum utilization of the property of both the bus service and the Trinidad Government Railways.

#### 10.55 a.m.

It is in this context that the Railway comes in while we consider the setting up of machinery for this bus service. We felt that it was vitally necessary not to multiply, but to consolidate, to achieve efficiency and to utilize all the assets which the Government have at their disposal in the field of transport.

In so far as the administrative structure of this Bill is concerned, I think hon. Members will observe that it provides the necessary framework for a satisfactory administrative service. It will be clear therefore from the most cursory examination of some of the figures which I have given to you, Mr. Speaker, that everything humanly

possible has been done during this relatively short period to prepare the bus service for the very important responsibility of providing the public of Trinidad and Tobago with efficient public transport which, as I have indicated, is the stated objective of Government.

I should like to provide hon. Members with some of the background which has led up to the decision with respect to the future of the railway. In 1962, in the presentation of his Budget, the hon. the Minister of Finance publicly announced that Government had decided to undertake the phased substitution of the railway by adequate road transport. To this end Cabinet has been constantly engaged in the study of the basic data relevant to the operations of the railway system. In addition to a technical committee of civil servants appointed shortly after the Minister made his announcement, to consider the implications of the implementation of such a decision, the Cabinet, on the 10th December, 1964, appointed a Cabinet committee to consider in detail the entire question of traffic on the Port-of-Spain-San Fernando branch of the Trinidad Government Railways, and to analyse such traffic in terms of quality in the greatest detail. This committee reported to Cabinet on the 21st February, 1965, a few weeks ago, and a public statement of the decisions of the Cabinet will be announced at an appropriate time, after adequate discussions and consultation with the trade unions involved, having regard to an assurance given by the Rt. Hon. the Prime Minister that whatever is to be decided with regard to the Trinidad Government Railways, both unions, the Civil Service Association and the National Union of Government Employees, will be consulted on these matters.

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One of the serious weaknesses of past policy has been that the railway service and the formerly subsidized bus service have been in constant competition with each other, notwithstanding the disparity in their fare structures. In fact, during the deliberations on the desirability of the bus service an important factor which weighed heavily in favour of our final decision was the wasteful competition.

An economic justification for continuance of the railway service would stem from two main factors. The first one is that it would be necessary to establish that the Railways were an important carrier of freight and passenger traffic, important, that is, in terms of total volume. The second factor would be to show that further capital investment in the industry would result in a reasonable increase in revenue, even considering the railway as an important public utility. The fundamental consideration must be—and here a question must be posed: is it possible to find a suitable and cheaper alternative—not merely to say that the railway is a public utility—but is it possible to find a suitable and cheaper alternative?

With regard to the importance of the Railways as a carrier, the available statistics indicate an overall picture of declining tonnages and revenue, and uneconomic tariff rates. Canes and sugar represent a very high proportion of the traffic, approximately 60 per cent. Canes, however, yield a low revenue, about 70 cents per ton, as compared with sugar, which earns an average of \$1.80; and 95 cents per ton for all other traffic. It is significant that sugar has shown some improvement despite the conversion of bag sugar to conveyance in bulk. But to increase the tariff structure would have adversely affected the price

formula of the cane-farmers, who form some 38 per cent. of the cane-farming industry in the country. So as far as we are concerned, we could not consider any aspect which will affect adversely the cane-farmers of the country in so far as the tariff rates are concerned. It is quite clear, however, that the railway, like its counterparts all over the world, is designed to carry commodities of high weight and low value. It must relinquish to its competitors lower weight and higher value commodities.

Hon. Members may wish to refer to Table I of the Madöry Report, where it is abundantly clear that the railway has been constantly declining in importance as a freight carrier over the last few years. In this regard, it must also be borne in mind that the railways receive a subsidy from public revenue, the extent of which shows no sign of diminution, as evidenced by some figures which I shall give you from, say, 1958 to 1964. In 1958 the subsidy given was \$2,371,237; in 1959 the subsidy was \$2,456,264; in 1960 it was \$2,845,364; in 1961, \$3,247,503; in 1962 a further increase to \$3,645,557; in 1963, \$3,626,921; and in 1964 the final figure is not yet available, but it will be close to \$4 million, or it may be slightly more than \$4 million. It is therefore pertinent to point out here that, pending a decision on the future of the railway, and mindful of its responsibility for the safety of the travelling public, Government, in 1962, replaced certain obsolete rolling stock to the tune of \$1.2 million.

And here I should like to make it clear that this decision of the Government to eventually replace the railway by road passenger traffic and transport has not been arrived at without genuine efforts to rehabilitate the railway, because between



1959 and 1962 nearly one and a half million dollars of taxpayers' money was spent to rehabilitate the railway. The Government sent two or three teams of Ministers and top technical experts to the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States for the purpose of getting equipment and technical advice to see what could be done; and despite all the discussions we have had, no concrete proposals have ever been put forward to show how there could be a significant improvement in revenues that would be commensurate with the expenditure.

There is a further point I should like to make so that hon. Members may be guided and be assured that Government have not arrived at any decision light-heartedly, and to show that we have considered this matter very carefully. The United States Government was approached by the Trinidad and Tobago Government to make a substantial capital contribution on an aid basis to a proposed rehabilitation scheme, and this request was refused on the grounds that such rehabilitation was not economically justifiable.

10.55 a.m.

The statistics with regard to passenger traffic point to no less a gloomy picture. There seems little likelihood that this picture will show any remarkable improvement with time. All this is contained in the Madöry Report.

Lack of flexibility in the rail system works to the advantage of competing forms of transport and one has to admit that the lines which have been run for the present Trinidad Government Railways were at the time designed for a specific need. That need no longer exists because even the sugar companies do not care for the railway

any more and they are resorting to road transport more; they are more mobile and can get to various places more satisfactorily. In fact, I can say here and now to hon. Members that we have had word from the oil and sugar companies, with six months' notice, that they would no longer require the railway for any purposes. In fact, the oil companies have already resorted to sea transport, using barges and so on to transport their equipment, and the sugar companies have gone a long way in their plans to discontinue using the railway. It is only in remote areas that they will still require the railway for a limited time; and for this satisfactory arrangements can be made without injury to the economic position of the railway.

Enforcement of traffic regulations and greater supervision of road transport may lessen the competition but not to the extent that the present annual deficit on the railways which approximates \$4 million and possibly over \$4 million, will show any improvement. There is no sign whatever that this will happen. In short, the railway of Trinidad and Tobago faces the same problems as the railways in other countries where economic development expresses itself in the form of increasing expenditure on social services with consequent improvement of the standard of living. It was evident that the railway would have to continue its reliance on school children for the build-up of its traffic so far as passengers are concerned. This form of traffic does not make any significant contribution to revenue as fares are usually heavily discounted.

Taken in isolation, the figures would bear no great significance unless cognizance was taken of events taking place in competing forms of transport, and here I am emphasizing the developments in competing forms of

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transport, the mobility of other forms of transport, the development of the roads and accessibility of all parts of the country.

While the statistics for hauling of goods by goods vehicles are not available, the records of the Transport Commissioner's Office indicate a steep rise in the total number of goods vehicles plying for hire in the years 1958-1962. This is in addition to a large increase in haulage by sea between Port-of-Spain, and San Fernando, Pointe-a-Pierre and Point Fortin, with respect to heavy equipment. In 1958 there were some 8,487 goods vehicles on the register while at the end of 1962 the figure had risen to 11,279, an approximate increase of 45 per cent. I repeat—between 1958 and 1962 there was an increase of 45 per cent on the number of goods transporting vehicles and in 1964 this will go nearly to 12,000.

In so far as the carriage of passenger traffic is concerned, if the registration of hiring cars may be used as an indicator, the shift to road traffic has accentuated during the period, regardless of the imposition of purchase tax by the Minister of Finance and the subsequent revision of taxation from one year to another in an upward direction. The records show that in 1958 there were 5,746 taxis plying for hire while by 1962 the figure rose to 8,844. The figures for 1964 are not available but between 1958 and 1962 the increase in the number of taxis operating on our roads was 54 per cent. One will appreciate what the position would have been if the Government had not taken the decision to make certain changes in the control of the licensing of these taxis. The fact is that, as a national carrier of freight and passengers, the railway, quite apart from taking no significant part in the economic advancement of the territory, is gradually sinking into a state of pathetic

decline. This is important, It plays no important part in the economic advancement of the country and therefore it is going down and down. The fact of the matter is, we must face this today and try to find a solution to it.

With regard to the capital investment that would be necessary to rehabilitate the railway, I should like to invite the attention of hon. Members to the section of the Madöry Report dealing with the minimum investment programme and the pure diesel programme—pages 16-23. I am not mentioning the other capital outlays which are clearly outside our financial resources. Table 10 refers to the minimum investment programme. You will notice that merely to postpone the decision to substitute the railway by road transport for a period of five years it will be necessary to purchase five diesel engines, four second-hand coaches, considerable garage equipment and tools at a cost of about \$1.45 million. On the assumption that there is some tailoring of the labour force, Mr. Madöry projects a total of \$4.01 million and a five-year accumulated deficit of \$22.4 million or an average deficit of nearly \$4.8 million per annum. In other words, to do a minimum rehabilitation of the railway would cost the Government and country \$4.8 million a year. Just the minimum—I am not talking of the other table at all, which is outside our resources—will be \$22.4 million in a period of five years.

On the other hand, to build a dual carriage-way four-lane highway linking the Beetham Highway to San Fernando, by widening the Churchill-Roosevelt Highway and the Princess Margaret Highway and continuing the new highway from Montrose to San Fernando, with the necessary over-passes and most modern construction, has been

estimated at some \$25 million. In my opinion, as a layman, it would be absolute madness not to consider the question of the roads and make a decision as quickly as possible to utilize any funds that we might consider in this aspect on roads rather than on a subsidy for the railway.

Table 11 on the diesel programme provides for the purchase of nine diesel engines, 12 coaches, 220 wagons, tools, equipment and spare parts, all at a cost of \$7.1 million. Recurrent expenditure is put at \$4.12 million. The accumulated five-year deficit is put at \$25.9 million or an average annual deficit of \$5.2 million. Assuming that there was to be a decision to continue some form of rehabilitation, that rehabilitation would surround a diesel programme as against another programme. Therefore we must assume that we should use the figure of a deficit of \$5.2 million and the figure of \$25.9 million as the cost of any proposal.

To continue it is clear that in terms of the proper allocation of the public revenue, these forecasts imposed upon Government a very real responsibility to seek an adequate alternative. The obvious alternative in terms of passenger transport was an adequate bus service, the capital investment for which Mr. Madöry has put at \$5 million and an annual deficit of approximately \$1.6 million. Hon. Members will recall that in my presentation of the Acquisition Bill for the bus undertaking I had pointed out that we were not saying that we could run a bus service without a deficit, but that we could effect economies and consolidate and use the National Transport Service to the better advantage of the people. We can make adjustments to suit the needs of the people as we wish.

Mr. Madory in his Report has made certain suggestions, and I respect him because he is

a noted expert from Switzerland. I myself have had some opportunity to see some of the work he has done, not only there, but in other countries and I have a great deal of confidence in what he has suggested.

11.15 a.m.

In terms of freight transport, the industry is most likely to be affected by the withdrawal of the transportation of oil and sugar. The statistics of both indicate a pronounced inclination towards other forms of transport. On page 27 there is a table of accumulated deficit, and hon. Members can compare the figures with the Madory Report. I am aware of the Jessop Report and the Report of the Commission of Inquiry headed by Mr. Andrew Rose. The whole country is aware of Government's attitude and opposition to any decision to interfere with the Railway when we took power in 1956. We tried our best to keep our pledge to make an effort to rehabilitate the Railway. Despite the fact that several million dollars have been spent to rehabilitate the railway, these efforts have failed. It is in this context that we have now come to this decision.

The problem of transport of cane-farmers is likely to be greatly relieved by the recent integration of sugar companies. Formerly, distant factories belonged to individual owners and canes had to be transported about 25 miles away, but now that there has been some integration, the question of sending canes to a central factory will minimize the problem. We have examined all aspects of it. We have all the statistics, and after our discussion with the unions concerned we shall decide our course of action.

The phased abandonment of the railway services also raises the problems of labour

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displacement, the provision of adequate roads as a substitute for the defunct railway routes, the consequent traffic problem, and, lastly, the problem of providing suitable alternative freight haulage services to industries, in particular, oil and sugar. The most important factor has been the concern for the future of the employees of the Trinidad Government Railway, and regardless of what party one belongs to, everybody will be concerned with the humane problem of the livelihood of people. This has been the most important consideration in so far as the Government are concerned.

Naturally some of the employees will become redundant if the railway is modified. We have been able to get an up-to-date survey of the staff of the Trinidad Government Railways. The survey revealed that at the end of 1964 there was a total of 1,392 persons employed. They comprised the following:

		<i>Per cent. of Total Labour Force</i>
Permanent and pensionable salaried staff ...	495	35.5
Daily-paid workers ...	691	49.6
Temporary salaried workers (People taken on casually) ...	163	11.7
Apprentices ...	43	3.1
	—	
	1,392	
	—	

This Bill provides for the payment of adequate compensation where necessary when the question of modification of the railway is discussed with the union. However, it is not the intention of the Government—and I should like to emphasize

this—to proceed in this matter in any haphazard fashion. The Government are committed, as I mentioned earlier, to a procedure by which no detailed action will be taken or initiated until thorough discussions have been held with the trade unions involved.

I must say that since the Bill was tabled two weeks ago we have received one comment from the Civil Service Association in which they have raised two or three points. One is on the question of earnings. They wanted earnings included to take care of people who are outside of the monthly-paid and daily-paid bracket but who have been on the staff for sometime as casual workers. They also wanted to know what will happen to the employees of the Trinidad Government Railway during the period of transition, that is, the period between the establishment of the Transport Authority and the termination of the Railway Board. I can say, however, that adequate provision is being made in the Bill and all these arrangements will be adhered to. On page 12 of the Bill there is provision for compensation; and there is also agreement for negotiation. Everybody's interest would be adequately safeguarded. I suggest that, negotiations with respect to compensation, transfer, redundancy or anything which may arise, should remain until the discussions are taking place.

In addition, it is the intention wherever possible, to relocate monthly staff and daily-paid employees in other sections of the Service. These are only intentions. In order to consider this aspect of the service, discussions will have to take place. But I should like to make it clear again on this occasion—as I have done in the past—and to emphasize with all the force at my command, that the Government

will not overlook in any way the best interest of the hundreds of workers who have served so well under most difficult circumstances at the Trinidad Government Railways.

An important consideration in the conception of this approach to our transport problem must be the provision of an adequate and well designed road system capable of not only absorbing the increased traffic which will be transferred to the road as a consequence of the substitution of the railway, but also to take care of the growing transport needs of the nation. With this in view, negotiations have been begun by Government with respect to a road survey which will indicate a description of the capacity of the existing roads, the measures which should be undertaken to achieve the improvement and the development of existing roads, appraising of all road development over 20 years broken down into five-year phases, and also a detailed estimate for the first five years.

I hinted just now that in order to bridge the immediate hiatus in the existing road complex and to facilitate the plans for the phased substitution of the railway, a decision was taken to build a highway from Chaguanas to San Fernando. Hon. Members are fully aware of this. I take the opportunity to repeat that the sections between Chaguanas and San Fernando and between Montrose and Carlsen Field will be a divided four-lane highway. It is being currently constructed at an approximate cost of \$1.2 million. The first phase of this part of the highway is due to be completed in August of this year. There is a second phase. It is proposed to invite tenders within a month for the construction of that portion comprising Chaguanas and Freeport, including erection of the necessary over-passes. And, thirdly, Cabinet have

recently authorized the engineering designs of the additional lane required on the Churchill-Roosevelt Highway from its junction with the Beetham Highway to the intersection at the Princess Margaret Highway. This design will include all the necessary over-passes to allow for the efficient and fluent movement of traffic.

In summary, therefore, it is proposed to widen and develop the Churchill-Roosevelt Highway from Barataria Junction (near the Taurel Building) right through to Princess Margaret Highway; to develop also the Princess Margaret Highway to the Chaguanas roundabout where a four-lane over-pass will filter traffic into the new section from Chaguanas to San Fernando. This portion has already been commenced. A well established and experienced firm known as Brown Engineers of the United States of America has almost completed the design of the final part of this ultra modern highway stretching from Chaguanas to San Fernando. Government have given long, serious, and careful thought to this problem and have completed a draft programme in order to achieve what I believe will be a most satisfactory solution. Therefore, in assessing the overall social and economic effects of the proposed changes in the railway service, one should adopt a long-term view of the situation.

11.25 a.m.

I have already had occasion to point out some of the problems to be encountered with regard to labour, roads and traffic, and to outline some of the measures proposed to deal with such problems. One has to face the fact that there has always been a significant trend towards road transport with a consequent falling off

in rail transport services. This is understandable in the Trinidad context due to the uneconomical operation resulting from an absence of long haulage in a country of this small size, coupled with high overhead costs in maintaining railway service with a total of just over 100 rail miles. However, for every adverse effect, which the scrapping, replacement or substitution of the railway might have, there is also a compensating one, and it is in this light that I would ask hon. Members to view this proposal.

It is necessary to view the replacement of the railway services alongside the compensating factor of the development of an efficient, and truly national transport system in conjunction with the programme of road development to which I have just referred. However, the solution to the country's transport problem will not be found merely by introducing this Bill and providing the machinery to run the bus service or to integrate it with the railway and run it as one service; there are other problems. It does not only mean we must get more rails, and new buses and modify the railway service. There are larger questions of licences control, road safety, and adequate parking facilities.

In 1962, the Minister of Finance announced the decision of the Government to freeze the number of taxis at the level then existing. This policy has achieved the desired end because those who own taxis have not suffered, they are assured that additional taxis would not be coming to compete. And those who want taxis must be dependent on them as their sole means of livelihood. But while this policy has achieved its desired end it has come to our knowledge that certain abuses have crept into the system and we are determined to take action to

eradicate these abuses and see that the effect of our decision will not be nullified.

It is not possible to over-emphasize the invaluable contribution which the route taxis have made and continue to make to public transport in this country. And it is unfortunate that some people should feel because the Government have taken over the bus service, they have done so with a view to squeezing out taxis. This is not so. It is indeed a credit to the enterprise of many of our people that they should have seized the opportunity to make a livelihood for themselves and their families by taxi operation. The route taxis carry a greater percentage of passengers by far than any other public carrier; and we would have been the poorer without the subsidiary commerce and industry which they have generated; so that no person in his right senses will attempt to conceive any idea about squeezing out anybody, as many people may have been made to feel in various parts of the country.

However, the conditions of unbridled competition and unrestricted entry, lack of regulation, &c., have combined to pose an immediate threat to all those engaged in the trade. In other words, what I am saying is that it is to the benefit of those persons who are already operating the taxi trade, to limit the number of taxis. If the route taxi is to continue to play its part in the transportation system and to provide a decent living for hundreds, and indeed thousands, of our people which it now does, it will become increasingly necessary to turn our attention to two vital aspects.

The first one concerns the almost complete lack of regulation of its operations; and I believe the taxi drivers themselves

will admit that the complete lack of regulation not only is dangerous to road safety and causes accidents but is a danger to themselves and their vehicles. In this regard I should like to draw to the attention of hon. Members paragraphs 16 and 17 of the Rose Commission Report, which read as follows:

“This mammoth growth reflects almost exclusively the growth of the route taxi trade and has led to acute competition not only between route taxis and the motor omnibuses, but also between the route taxis themselves.”

In other words if the Government do not take any action to secure control, the taxi drivers themselves will suffer. And this is what Mr. Rose said at that time:

“It has also greatly contributed to and is sometimes the sole cause of road congestion. Whilst it is true that there are far more private cars than taxis licensed in Trinidad and Tobago, the fact remains that a taxi does approximately 10 times the mileage of a private car, that is to say, an average of about 10,000 miles per month, at a conservative estimate. In effect, this means that a taxi contributes 10 times as much towards road congestion as a private car, simply because it spends that much longer on the roads than the private vehicles.”

Everybody knows some taxis operate two or three shifts, because people want to make as much money as they can to pay for their vehicles. I continue:

“On the other hand it should be noted that private vehicles make a large contribution to peak hour congestion.

Further the large number of taxis plying as route taxis has far outstripped the available stand facilities, and as

these cars ply along bus routes, they have shown a tendency to establish termini in close proximity to bus stations thus leading to greater congestion in those areas.”

This situation continues even today. Any effort to present any form of control, no matter how moderate it might be, encounters criticism, with people making all sorts of allegations. But this cannot continue; one has to take one's courage in one's hands sometimes and do something that is for the good of the country as a whole. In order to protect the interests of the taxi drivers, the owners and the community at large, efforts will be made in the immediate future to provide the necessary facilities and the regulations which are so important to curb some of the more undesirable practices of the route taxi operation, mainly from the point of view of road safety.

The second matter I should like to emphasize in considering the introduction of this Bill by which we are providing the machinery to control the bus operations and to integrate the bus and rail services in one organization rather than having a transport Board and a Railway Board separately is the aspect of road safety and the alarming loss of human life on our roads. This concerns the Government very much. And we are determined to see that this slaughter does not continue.

It must be readily appreciated that the route taxi driver, is not the only person of our community, as some people try to suggest who is at fault in this matter. And I wish to take this opportunity to appeal to all sections of our community whether they be drivers of taxis, trucks, private cars, or jitneys or whatever they might be. Within the last few days we have heard of

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and read in the newspapers of three deaths having occurred as a result of parked trucks on roads without any lights. It is possible that a man's truck will stall on the road where he would not be immediately able to find a light, but generally speaking, it is this spirit of negligence and lackadaisical attitude which exists in certain people that causes them not to realize their responsibility whenever they sit behind a wheel or own a car. This results daily in so many accidents. A little care on the part of drivers, and a little attention to the convenience of, or consideration for others will reduce this danger very much.

11.35 a.m.

A massive and continuing campaign of road safety combined with the introduction of some of the proposals of the Darby Report on the Police with respect to the traffic department as well as certain effective measures by the courts of the country will undoubtedly serve to reduce the present slaughter on our roads. A situation similar to that of the taxis has developed in the transport of freight big trucks. But all these wider aspects of transport to which I have referred are now being studied by the Cabinet.

The hon. Attorney General has already drafted a comprehensive Bill dealing with all aspects of transport in the country. Previously there were several ordinances controlling transport and now this comprehensive omnibus Bill has been drafted. We had hoped to introduce this Bill which would have taken care of the bus and the railway as well, but upon further consideration it was found inadvisable to have a controlling body to operate a day to day routine service. And it is for this reason that we decided to proceed by setting up this separate statutory

board with a view to actually doing the day to day operations running rail and road transport and to arrange for the future of that side of the industry; whereas this future transport authority to which reference is being made will deal with all these wider aspects. This will deal with control of licences for public vehicles including taxis and goods vehicles, introducing regulations for the control of the operation of these vehicles and of initiating a continuous programme of road safety. It is hoped, by the introduction of measures which have been outlined, to find once and for all a satisfactory solution to the various problems which now confront the transport sector of the economy and without which a serious hindrance to the balanced growth of our national economy must surely develop.

Now it is against this background that this Bill is before the House today. I thought it necessary to mention some of these points because if I had not done so it would have appeared that I had passed over a very important consideration or just introduced a Bill to deal with one aspect, leaving out some of the wider issues with which hon. Members are vitally concerned.

The Bill itself, as I said, provides this administrative machinery for the operation of the bus service and for the running of the railway service. At the moment the Railway Ordinance empowers a Board of seven or more people to run the railway. It was revised in 1950. And with these provisions I am sure hon. members are familiar. Now the general thing is that they will operate the services. The civil servants were recommended by the Railway Board and there was ratification by the Public Service Commission. The daily paid workers enjoyed the same benefits, the



same facilities as Government daily paid employees. Now when we took over from the bus companies we gave certain undertakings to the unions. All of these have not yet been implemented largely because of staff difficulties and certain other operational problems which naturally must emerge.

What we propose to do by this Bill is to set up this public transport service board, so to speak or corporation, and this will have a chairman, a deputy chairman, and five other members. These people will be selected from the public, among people with experience in business, in law, in finance, administration and transport and they will be charged with the responsibility of running the bus service. Their powers are set out in the Bill. The Railway Board will go out of existence.

At this stage I should like to put into the records of *Hansard* on behalf of the Government our deep appreciation of the service which has been rendered to this country by successive railway boards from year to year since these boards were established. I am sure that all hon. Members will join with me in putting this on record because they have done a really wonderful job in the face of great criticism and many difficulties which they have encountered. Because to run a service that produces a deficit as high as this one does in addition to the various problems concerned with it is no mean task. I should like to thank them publicly, particularly the last Board which we had under the chairmanship of Mr. Archibald. They have done a very good job indeed and I want to pay public tribute to them all.

Part 1, clause 3 of the Bill establishes and incorporates the corporation for the purpose of administering the Act and the clauses which follow are just the customary

ones with regard to the procedure by which the meetings of the corporation shall be held and by which members may be appointed. On page 6, clause 8 sets out the general duties and powers of the corporation. They are all clearly stated. But I must invite attention to subclause (1) of this clause which requires the corporation to carry on its business in such a way as to ensure the provision of a safe, adequate, economic and efficient transport system adapted to the needs of the country. This is vital and hon. Members will want to know that this is included here so that the corporation will try to do just that.

There is also a responsibility on the corporation to establish a transport system which is in particular, adequate to the needs of school children. Now, this is another very vital aspect. I must point out that as a result of the Prime Minister's Meet-the-people tour the Ministry of Public Utilities was requested to carry out a complete survey of the needs of school children for transport in Trinidad and Tobago. And what we did was to circularize all the head teachers in the country—of Government denominational, primary and secondary schools. We asked them to let us know what the position was—who needed transport, where and what form. It took a long time. Following this, certain patterns emerged. We sent two or three of our officers to the United States of America where they do have a very efficient specialized school bus service. These officers have returned with very valuable information.

But it is very interesting to learn that as a result of this survey requested by the Prime Minister it was revealed that in the course of 1964 a total of 4,700 odd Secondary school children required a public transport

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bus service, and 18,300 primary school children wanted a bus service making a total of over 23,000 children requiring transport service. Now it is obvious that only with our nationalized service can we organize something to meet the needs of these children. It would mean that we shall have to organize special buses in our programme. This is receiving the consideration even of the temporary Board. And in Diego Martin where many hon. Members will have seen the difficulties of school children, we introduced a pilot system shortly after we took over the service and we have found that this is working extremely well. It is a pity to see the children hustling at peak hours competing with their seniors to get a seat of the bus. Sometimes rain falls and this aggravates the situation.

In order to lick this problem we have provided in this Bill that school children be given special consideration and this new corporation will be required to place special emphasis on and to give urgent consideration to the needs of these 23,000 school children all over the country who require a bus service. In many cases children have had to journey many miles from their districts and this crisscross pattern of travel presented an amazing problem which will have to be tackled before a satisfactory system can be introduced.

It will be seen therefore that the country faces a monumental school children transport problem. The corporation which is being established in this Bill will be required to study this problem jointly with the Minister of Education and to present to Cabinet through the Minister of Public Utilities, a satisfactory solution. The typical factors of course will be passenger safety and cost. It will be necessary to determine

whether it is economically justifiable to develop a school bus service which is distinct from the regular passenger transport service with buses specifically designed for this purpose, or whether the existing fleet should be expanded to take care of the needs of school children. And that would mean mixing the seniors and the school children, bearing in mind the limited use of the capacity which would result from the expansion.

The Minister of Public Utilities after one month of operation of the bus service under the control of Government, as I mentioned just now, began to operate one pilot school bus system in Diego Martin and valuable experience has been gained. In future programmes this experience will serve as the basis for future guidance.

**11.35 a.m.**

I should like to refer hon. Members to Part II of the Bill, which gives a certain amount of autonomy to the corporation in the appointment of its personnel and protects the interest of public officers who are transferred or seconded. Provision is also made on page 10, part II of the Bill, for the payment of compensation for loss of office to public officers and other employees of the Government who may become redundant as a consequence of any phased substitution of the railways. With regard to the latter, I have already indicated how Government propose to proceed, but the final provisions which follow in this part of the Act are in keeping with established procedure with respect to statutory boards, meetings, meeting places, seal of office, and so on.

I should like to invite attention to part IV, clause 38, on page 20. This is a very important point. I think that during the debate of the Motor Omnibus Concessions

(Acquisition of Undertakings) Bill, two or three hon. Members opposite referred to the question of security and to the insurance of these vehicles in the absence of a Crown Proceedings Act. I should like to advise hon. Members that some provision has been made for this. Even without this, Government made sure when the buses were taken over that these insurance policies were taken out.

The Bill before the House today is, in my opinion, very simple and straightforward. There are many involvements, which might be complicated, and various opinions which might be expressed and which we look forward to hearing. However, I think that this gives a fair outline of the operation, which will indicate to hon. Members some of the considerations which induced Government to proceed in this manner. That is, to abolish the existing Railway Board and to set up a new Board and run the Transport System as one service; to effect economies in garages, equipment, office accommodation, staff and so on; and to give the assurance that employees will not be displaced from their jobs in the Trinidad Government Railways before adequate consultations are held with the unions. This means that the unions will negotiate with the Government on the terms and conditions for any person or persons whose services may become redundant in any operation that the Board may have to undertake in the future.

The second point is the assurance which I have been asked by Cabinet to make, and that is that in any form of employment which may take place in the future, whenever the phased substitution begins, the present employees of the Trinidad Government Railways will be given priority. These are the two assurances that I should like to make with regard to consultations and

which are relevant to the assurances given by the Prime Minister to a delegation of the unions several years ago concerning the future of the railway employees.

I believe that this is an important Bill because it marks the achievement of one phase of the comprehensive planning of the transport section of the economy which has been undertaken by Government. I wish therefore to commend this Bill to the House and I look forward to a very fruitful discussion of it.

I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr. L. F. Seukeran:** I have in my hands the famous Rose Report which the Minister has taken great pains to quote, and I am very pleased to draw your attention and the attention of hon. Members to page 19 of that report:

“A road passenger transport has developed in Trinidad and Tobago without any serious attempt having ever been made to regulate or control it.”

That is what this report says.

Mr. A. S. Cooper, in his report on Road and Railway Transport which was published in Council Paper No. 65 of 1933, drew the attention of Government to the need for exercising control over road transport and recommended the appointment of a Director of Transport as a first step towards the regulation of traffic on roads and railways. In that same year, a local newspaper, advocating the appointment of a Transport Board, stated *inter alia*:

“It would be a waste of an excellent opportunity if regulation of private road transport were not also brought under its control.”

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So, today, while we appreciate the Minister's anxiety and enthusiasm to appoint a Transport Commission to take over the control of road and rail transport, one wonders what has become of the famous road transport policies that have been advocated from time to time. As a matter of fact, a former Government, after a series of criticisms and anxious moments, made some little effort, and an ex-Minister has gone down on record as having envisaged some sort of road transport policy. This is what that Government had for a transport policy:

- (1) Only one passenger shall be carried in the front seat of hiring cars and taxis.
- (2) Subject to the necessary legislation being passed by the Legislative Council the number of hiring cars or taxis shall be limited.
- (3) A chequered coloured band of not less than six inches in width, as approved by the Licensing Authority, shall be painted on at least three sides of every hiring car or taxi.
- (4) No structural or other alterations to the internal dimensions of a hiring car or taxi for the purpose of providing additional seating accommodation shall be made.
- (5) The Licensing Authority shall continue to refuse to license a taxi or taxis or small cars under 10 h.p.
- (6) The requirements shall remain that every hiring car or taxi shall have at least fifteen inches unimpeded space measured along the rear seat for each passenger.

I have taken the time to read this because the whole question of a transport policy for Trinidad is a huge joke. This goes

under the name of a policy and it is supposed to be the work of a government. Fortunately for us, that government no longer exists. We have moved on. The Minister is recommending today a technical surgical operation whereby he amputates completely one arm of the transport of this country. However, he has not even told us that he has sat down in consultation with his experts to carry out a diagnosis of the disease. If there were a daignosis it must have been stated in such a helter-skelter way that none of us here have understood the nature of this great disease. How incurable is it? What makes it so incurable? How much has he tried to cure it? Instead of a diagnosis, out of the blue comes this recommendation to cut the arm completely off.

11.55 a.m.

I for one have no objection to the appointment of a transport commission, and I have no objection principally because I am satisfied that this commission, in our era of independence, is more than necessary. We must have an integrated transport body. The administration, the head of it, they must all work as an integrated whole. With that I am in total agreement with the Minister; and I am also satisfied, if newspaper reports are correct, that this commission is being headed by a person for whom I have respect, a man who can go out and get things done, and what we want in Trinidad is people who can put their shoulders to the wheel and get things done. So for that, and that alone, I am very happy to say that I have no quarrel whatsoever, none whatsoever, with the appointment of a transport commission. If I have made the Minister realize where my sentiments lie, then I think I should ask his indulgence to say how very bitterly I disagree with him on certain aspects of his findings.

Now, we have been told here today that the rates charged to the cane-farmers for canes cannot be varied. Does the Minister forget that the cane-farmers were at one time subsidized to the tune of \$40 an acre to plant cane, and that it was during this period of subsidization, when the cane industry had almost been ruined, that the rates of the railway were reduced to such a ridiculous point to encourage the planting of cane? Since then cane has become a very, very successful industry. During 1961 and 1962 the highest prices ever paid for canes in the annals of the history of the cane-farmers were recorded. Therefore if the rates were improved, even by 50 per cent., that would not have made such a great difference to the farmer. But the interesting point is that the emphasis is being placed in the wrong direction. This does not affect any farmer, it affects the sugar manufacturers, and the sugar manufacturers are only allowing the Trinidad Government Railways to haul such canes as are uneconomical for them to haul. That is what the Minister should have said. It is not that the cane pulling is of any benefit to the farmer, it is the sugar manufacturers exploiting the Government's Railways to the extent that they only use the railway for that section of cane hauling that they themselves feel it is uneconomical for them to haul. If you would put the thing in the proper context we could understand it, but when you take away the onus of responsibility from the big man and throw it on the farmer believing that we are stubborn supporters of the farmer and it will get down our throats, we draw the line right away, because it bears no relation to truth in respect to the life of the farmer down below.

The other point with which I am very concerned is that the Minister has put the crux of this issue in one sentence—is it

possible to find a cheaper alternative to the railway? Is it possible? This is a very worthy question that he has asked. Upon it hinges the whole of this debate. But am I to ask the Minister if economy for him means only book-keeping, accounting? What does economy in the life of a nation mean? Does it mean figures accruing from a book-keeper's account? Do you keep the railway, the Post Office or any one of your industries in Trinidad going when they are nationalized simply because they would bring a profit at the end of the year from the book-keeper's point of view? Has he forgotten the broad social aspect for which a government is created and to which it is dedicated and for which it is consecrated? Have you forgotten this broad social aspect? What about it? What theory has the Minister got to offer to the social aspect of it? Is he going to economize on the social needs of a public in terms that a Shylock will think in book-keeping, or as Scrooge, the miser, will think in terms of making up accounts? I have never known any government in any part of the world to talk in terms of economy unless it relates this economy to every factor.

12 noon: *Sitting suspended.*

2.25 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

**Mr. L. F. Seukeran:** Mr. Speaker, may I repeat that as far as this proposition to create a Transport Commission is concerned I can see no possible objection to that for the specific reason that it is long overdue. I presume that the object of this Commission will be principally to take control of the newly-created nationalized bus service; to see to it that it will become the entity in transport that this country conceives it to be, to see to it that it will run on schedule, to see to it that

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it meets the special requirements of the country and to see to it that it might, in time to come, become a paying proposition. With that there can be no quarrel, no dissent, no disagreement. But if Trinidad and Tobago is to face the challenges of the future, the Government have to address their minds now to a broad, comprehensive and forward-looking national transport plan which, of course, is part of a national economic plan for the country; a plan that will have to deal with the whole of transport—every facet of it, not just one face; a plan that is intended not merely for the present but one that envisages the dim and distant future.

It would be most unfortunate to make any *ad hoc* decision in respect of closures of the railway, phased or otherwise, until there has been a comparable and equally ruthless survey of all transport as a whole. It is not enough to brand the railway as having incurred a heavy loss from a book-keeping point of view. That I stressed in some detail this morning, but in every case the real economic cost of providing alternative transport must be costed side by side with the present cost sustained in the railway today to see whether the alternative will not cost more. One will have to consider now whether the bus service will not cost us more than the railway and bus combined. The plan should be referred to the Planning Division of the Prime Minister's Office for a thorough investigation and a study of the national economic consequences. If there is a plan to increase the national production by a certain percentage per annum, there must be an enquiry as to what this would mean in terms of railway traffic and revenue in say another twenty-five years from today. In short, we are not acting for

only today. We promised, when we became Members of Parliament, to legislate for posterity, and it is with posterity in mind that I speak.

The study will have to take into account an estimate for future developments in the field of transport. What, for instance, will be the future of our railway as part of an integrated transport system? What will be the future of road services as providing a modern and effective feeder service to the railway—both under one ownership and not disintegrated as at present with one in ruthless competition with the other.

**The Minister of Finance (Hon. A. N. R. Robinson):** Air transport, helicopter services.

**Mr. Seukeran:** Mr. Speaker, I am trying to be as simple as possible. Is there a possibility, for example, of securing a right division between road and rail traffic, to integrate more closely profits of all sections of transport, the profitable and the less profitable, so that the overall can be made to pay? These are fundamental questions to which any Minister of Public Utilities must address his mind. To dream up something overnight and come to the Parliament of the people and ask informed Members to accept it is not good enough.

This demands a close, careful and studied scrutiny and the Planning Division of the Prime Minister's Office might well be the ones to be given this exercise. No action must be taken without consulting them or unless they have made such a study and reported to Parliament. The terms of reference to the Planning Division might be to survey the whole of the inland transport having regard to alternative services, to economic development, to social

needs, to distribution of industry, policy, and the real cost as opposed to narrow book-keeping considerations; such cost to take into consideration the wider economic aspect affecting the national interest as a whole and social considerations which must not be lost sight of in an independent country.

It would be unfortunate to take any decision to close any section of the railway; for to close any one section will be to affect the whole of it because traffic arising in one area affects the profitability of the rest of the system. All parts of the transport system, be they road or rail or air or sea are members one of another so that when any one part is closed we perform an amputation of a limb of the whole of the transport system. For social considerations it may well be denying transport users in the closed area transport facilities which they otherwise would have had. The impact upon all these facets has to be studied as a whole, not piecemeal. Any arbitrary decision to deal with just one face of transport is a tyro's approach to the broader economic considerations which should characterize this particular Bill.

To talk about closing down the railway because of the loss sustained is much more a political argument than one related to the best welfare of, or the greatest good for, the greatest number. Suppose we had a Board of Trade running a useful service for exporters obviously at a loss; would we want to close it because it made a book-keeping loss of a couple thousand dollars? Perhaps the country would save a few thousand dollars by closing it but would it not lose hundreds of thousands of dollars of export trade? Should we, for instance, close those Post Offices and those delivery systems which work at a

loss and keep only those that make a profit for us?

If the policy for rural electricity is to supply it at a loss in the rural parts and to recuperate it from profits in urban parts, why could not the railway be treated in some such fashion? We may save three million dollars a year if the whole network of railway transport is closed, but we may well have to spend \$20,000,000 a year on improving roads, on providing alternative services or in subsidizing bus transport. And the Minister has gone down on record this morning as telling us that he knows that we shall have to continue to subsidize bus transport because he cannot envisage the bus service making any profit.

At this point it would be interesting to ask the Minister to tell the country what is the position with the bus takeover. Are we making more money? Are we losing? Are we losing less or more than when it was privately run? We may save \$3,000,000 but how much will we have to spend on social cost through the increased congestion of which the Minister spoke?

Before the Minister divorces what I have to say from context, I should like him to make a careful study of what I am saying before he attempts to reply. I am talking of social considerations in a different light, and if he listens carefully he will get the idea.

This has been marked out in England by experts. It has been marked, it has been studied, it has been worked. I am referring to congestion; and it is estimated to cost the British Government \$500 million a year through wear and tear and through loss of working time. This sum took no cognizance of the loss of human lives which are incalculable. When the Minister talks about closing down the railway for economic

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reasons he must bring statistics to prove what the loss on the roads would be. We want to hear them side by side.

**2.35 p.m.**

Proportionately, Trinidad has the highest death rate on the road in the world. Our city roads often cause congestion and traffic jams unprecedented in other parts of the world. Has the Minister made a study of the cost to the country brought about by the congestion, the loss of working time and loss of human lives? If so, will he tell us in his reply what that study has been and what are the statistics relating to it? Can \$3 million loss on the railway be comparable to the loss to be sustained on the road? Is he serious when he proposes this Bill and does not give us those facts? What is the capital expenditure on the railway for the last ten years? He has silently left that in peace.

And what has been the capital expenditure on the railway last year? What is the expenditure on bus transport? The Minister might be in a position to tell us. What is the total acquisition cost of the bus to the country by now? What would be the capital expenditure involved within the next five years to bring the fleet of buses up to the required standard for operating a desirable schedule? How much more capital expenditure would be involved on road haulage vehicles if he decides to take on this section? And how much current expenditure would be needed to subsidize bus transport, and for additional road maintenance? All these are salient economic facts that the Minister should be aware of. This is not a political decision, it is an economic decision and it has got to be made in the light of an economic study. If he does not know the facts he

should consult the Prime Minister's Office. We have an excellent Planning Division there. Let the experts find the facts and come back here with them. I do not say to put all this amount of work on the Prime Minister for while he is capable he does not have the time to do every Minister's work.

I regard as inconceivable that the Minister could make any decision to scrap the railway without the fullest costings of the aforesaid overall expenditure. That is, all costings must go side by side. If the Minister does not understand, let me put it this way: The cost of railway; the cost of buses; the cost of one foot of railway line; the cost of a foot of road; the cost of so many people on rail; the cost of so many people on the buses (bearing in mind that, there will be no railway and all the traffic, the unemployed, all passengers and goods service will have to resort to the bus service) must be analysed. That is what we want—an economic report from the Minister as to the impact of this take-over, say, 25 to 50 years from today.

I should like to ask the Minister what thought he has given to road congestion. Has he got an estimate on this to offer hon. Members today? Has he got surveys and estimates of the new roadways other than the four-lane highway that it would be necessary to construct in order to cope with this tremendous overgrowth of the bus service?

In the United Kingdom, in 1957, it was estimated that 62 per cent. of the "C" class roads were used beyond the Ministry's designed capacity and 13 per cent. of the trunk roads, through roads, and Class I roads were being used at more than double the designed capacity. In Trinidad and Tobago it would not be an



exaggeration to say that our Class I roads are being used four to six times in excess of their designed capacity. That the scrapping of the Railway would add further to this congestion. How will the Minister solve this problem? What will be the cost? We are entitled to know this before we can contemplate any decision to alter any existing system of transport. What consideration has he given to development of rural Trinidad?

Government have pledged themselves to taking industries to the rural parts. The development of industrial estates at Plaisance (near to my own home town) and of other rural parts is an indication of Government's honesty to take industries into the rural parts. Suppose he closes down the railway and someone wants to bring industries, say, to Rio Claro which is now served by rail and which may be the incentive to take industries there, will he discourage such an industrialist from going to Rio Claro or will he think in terms of putting back the railway, twenty-five years from today? Those are considerations that he must have. If he is going to do these haulages by cars, buses, trucks, lorries, or trailers, he must tell us what the cost would be so that we would be guided as to how we should vote on this Bill.

Scotland and Wales both suffered by closing down part of the railway. It is said that history is the judge of the world, and certainly an emergent country can learn a good deal from it, moreso when the head of the Government is a historian himself. But history pronounced both the Scottish and the Irish people as being foolish for having closed down their railway.

This is what the Irish Tourist Board had to say:

"The proposed railway amputation would mean the withering away of the whole of Ireland's community."

Am I to conclude that the proposed abandonment of the railway in Trinidad would mean the withering away of the countryside where these railways operate today? Has anyone worked out what the transport needs of the country would be or even what the potential railway revenue would be, say, in 1990, based on a 4 per cent. increase in production per annum? I think the Minister of Public Utilities would do well here to consult our expert and our very able Minister of Finance who can guide him as to the growth and economics of this country. And if the growth rate is just 4 per cent., has the Minister worked out what would be the needs of transport 25 years from today? He has already closed several miles of our track. How much money has he saved by this closure? I should like him to tell us when he replies. I am inclined to believe that nothing has been saved because this year he tells us that the deficit has gone from \$3 million to \$4 million. The reason for that is that while we closed certain parts of the railway we were not able to effect any retrenchment. And I am glad about that; because I said there were social considerations which transcended cheap, economic, paper book-keeping, average arguments.

2.45 p.m.

The Annual Report of the Central Transport Consultative Committee which worked out certain transport figures in the United Kingdom has this to say.

[MR. L. F. SEUKERAN]

“The negative policy of closing down uneconomic facilities, while contributing a small financial saving, is not the panacea it is sometimes made out to be.”

May I repeat this so that the Minister might take cognizance.

“The negative policy of closing down uneconomic facilities, while contributing a small financial saving, is not the panacea it is sometimes made out to be.”

And surely the British people ought to know, because they have carried out the experiment; they have tried closing down the railway, and I shall prove to the Government how much more the British people have put in the railway since they had this unfortunate experience of closing down certain sections of that form of transport in the United Kingdom.

The problem that Trinidad and Tobago Government Railways face is one faced by many countries in the world. It is neither peculiar nor inimical or inimitable. It is a problem faced by every country. This problem is created by several factors combined. It is created by the growth of private motoring. All over the world there is the growth of private motoring. It is created by the creaming off of the more profitable parts of freight traffic by road haulage. Road haulage has been a great competitor, taking all the profitable parts leaving the railway with the uneconomical parts. But other Governments have risen to that challenge and they have met the situation. Let me quote an example, lest the Minister think that I am talking through my hat.

The Labour Government in the United Kingdom solved this, partly by an integrated transport policy which did two things. Firstly, it ensured that the profits creamed

off the rail to road were brought in the transport pool where they rightly belonged and were not siphoned off by the owners. Secondly, it ensured an economic division of transport between road and rail. In 1952, there were 1,046,000 lorries on the roads of England and yet the British Railway was still paying its way. The reason for this was that 96,000 of those lorries on the road were publicly owned and their profits went to the national pool; so that when the railway lost and the lorries made a profit and both were put together they were able either to break even or to make a small profit.

The Minister told us the railway has competition from lorries, competition from taxis, &c. He never told us what he has done to solve this problem. It is his business to find solutions and not merely to complain. It is my business to complain because I am in the Opposition. It is his business to find the cures.

In spite of the talk about the railway losing money everywhere, the Americans continue to build new passenger lines for commuter services in their big conurbations. In France, where war destroyed 75 per cent. of the rolling stock and most of the marshalling-yard, the French today pursue a vigorous policy of public enterprise, modernization and high investments in rolling stock; their wagons carry an average of 17 tons and they have cut their costs down to nil.

France, one of the biggest losers in the railway has now made it break even. The Ministers in France do not just go to the country and say it is bad; they find the solution. The French succeeded because they have co-ordinated road and rail transport. And perhaps I am giving the Minister a hint all along in my speech. I am not openly declaring anything; it is for him to

see what I am driving at. France has given a tax subsidy to road haulers to concentrate on roads insufficiently served by rail and put on higher taxes on road haulage that is in competition with rail. That is what the French did. And while the roads are congested, the French have made sure that the congested roads are not used by vehicles carrying heavy goods. In fact, they have devised a system of fixing road and rail haulage on the basis of a real cost operation.

Perhaps I am talking economics in a manner that is not very easily understood by the Minister of Public Utilities but I am sure that the Minister of Finance can help because it is a very important consideration I am dealing with. I am not dealing with a political decision at all; Government have my vote as far as the appointment of the Commission is concerned, but I am asking them to study this problem as reasonable people, to meet the needs of the country 50 years from today.

Let us see what happened in Britain. Ten years ago we were told that the British were losing £50 million a year on the railway. It has now gone up to £150 million. That was the loss in the British Railway in 1954. Let us see what they did. They invested over £1,100 million in their railways in the 8 years from 1955 to 1963. Capital expenditure in 1954 alone was estimated at £110 million. In 1955 there were about 18,000 steam engines on main lines; 7 diesel, 71 electric locomotives. In 1963, 8 years afterwards, there were 7,050 steam engines, 2,051 diesels and 191 electric locomotives. In addition, there were 4,145 diesels and 7,021 electric passenger-carrying multiple units. In spite of the improvement, there has been an overall deficit in 1963, of £150 million. This was reduced last year to

£82 million chiefly by introducing economic measures and increasing efficiency.

I shall prove to the Government that in none of these fields have we ever embarked, leave alone to talk about an efficient railway service. But the British Government, in spite of these heavy losses have refused to abandon the railway. It is because the British Government have projected their plans to 50 years, a hundred years from today, and have looked at transport needs of the United Kingdom in terms of the dim and distant future. That is what parliamentarians are here for; to legislate for posterity. And posterity is the custodian of the country's welfare. Unless we put things right we set the clock back.

I wonder if the Minister is aware that today we are actually subsidizing road haulage. He has said nothing about that. We have heard him talk about a subsidy for the railway. Has he told the country how much we are today subsidizing road haulage? It has been worked out in Britain that a twenty-ton lorry is subsidized to the tune of \$20 a week. Considering the havoc that lorries have done on our roads and the cost of maintaining them omitting other costs, we may well be subsidizing every lorry in Trinidad to the tune of \$50 a week. The Minister talks about a subsidy for the railway; does he not realize that the country will still have to subsidize the bus, and the money will still have to be spent? Or is he going to conjure some new Alladin's lamp or wave a magic wand and say, "let it be done!" and it will be done. It is money that we will have to find; whether we put it on rail or road, it will have to be spent.

The problem of the railway is not beyond us. One way of dealing with it is by tackling

*Public Transport*

Thursday, 22nd April, 1965

*Service Bill*

[MR. L. F. SEUKERAN]

"T" licences, and by "T" licences, I mean road goods haulage licences granted to industrial concerns for the carrying of their own goods.

2.55 p.m.

The number of these vehicles continues to grow daily and unless the problem is solved now there might be a total seizing-up of our roads before long. We cannot build roads fast enough for these vehicles. Various countries have dealt with this problem in various ways. Let it be known that we are not the only country to suffer from the present fate of a deficit ridden form of transport. Some countries have put on much stiffer licences on the basis of proof of need and of the absence of alternative rail transport. Students who advocate stiffer licences argue that this would decrease their contribution to the road traffic problems and would dissuade new people from applying for "T" licences.

Some owners fill up the roads with buses, lorries and little vans only to carry a billboard to advertise their commodities with nothing in them—only a big advertisement all around these vehicles, and they cause considerable congestion. What is done about them? What is done about putting a heavier licence on vehicles like those so that the roads could be made free for people who really want to use them? Other countries forbid lorries using the city and town except on proof of need, for instance, the delivering of building materials and so on. All those vehicles that carry gravel, sand and so on are made to use certain roads; but we heard the Minister say nothing at all, as if this is a small problem; as if it is worth

a penny halfpenny. So he comes to Parliament and says, "Approve this penny halfpenny." Does he not realize that this is an integral part of the economic growth of the country? The whole welfare of Trinidad depends upon transport and if we are going to have improvement in the economic sector, transport is a vital and an integral part of it. [*Interruption*].

**Mr. Speaker:** The speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

*Motion made and question proposed, That the hon. Member's time be extended by 30 minutes—[Mr. A. S. Sinaman].*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Hon. Member's time extended accordingly.*

**Mr. L. F. Seukeran:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do not know why the Minister is alarmed. I am not finding any fault with him. I am only giving him an exposition of my concept of an economic policy for the country. And if he sees any reason in it he can accept it; if not, well, he can send it up to the Prime Minister's Planning Division. There are experts to work it out. What I am saying here is not glib gossip; it is the result of months and months of hard study. It is what other people have done. These ideas are not conjured up by my imagination. I never do that sort of thing. When I want to do it, I do so in the course of fun but when I am honest about meeting the needs my country I work towards it. This is the result of hard work.

Now let us examine the performance of the railway as a social factor. Let us look at the number of people who travelled by train over the period 1954 to 1962:

Year		Passengers
1954	... ..	3,222,249
1955	... ..	3,233,239
1956	... ..	3,415,152
1957	... ..	3,724,160
1958	... ..	4,063,442
1959	... ..	4,286,238
1960	... ..	4,375,087
1961	... ..	4,160,093
1962	... ..	4,402,720

These are passengers travelling on the train. These are people whom the Minister will throw out. And we are now studying what is the alternative. This is not a light measure. From this we note that the number of passengers travelling by train has steadily increased. It increased by more than one million from 1954 to 1962. Is the Minister still willing to contend that this is a mean performance in spite of the derelict nature of the railway that he has abandoned as a Cinderella for the last 8 years? Will he say that this is a mean performance? On the other hand if the Minister would tell us that goods haulage has declined and it accounts for a severe drop in the revenue I would be constrained to agree with him at once. But, ironically, nothing is being said about goods haulage. Everything is being said about passenger transport. My concern and the concern

of this country and the concern of the Trinidad Government is with the 4,402,720 passengers that travelled by train in 1962. That is our concern because it is for them that we have got to find alternative service.

I realize that the railway has been heavily subsidized. It has been subsidized by 48c. a passenger. I realize that. But did the Minister tell us that goods services are subsidized by more than \$5.00 per ton? Passengers receive a subsidy of 48c. Who are they? The workmen going to work. The school children going to school. Government pay a little 48c. on one of them and they are ready to cry the tears of the crocodile for doing this. But they are paying more than \$5.00 a ton to subsidize the pulling of canes, and heavy steel pipes for the oil fields. But the Minister does not say one single word about that at all; that does not come under his examination.

Whether these passengers travel by rail or bus, it is my contention that they will have to be subsidized. And it is now my very humble duty to ask the Minister to tell the country how much less it will cost to subsidize the bus than the railway. That and that alone is the answer that we demand.

Several reasons for the fall in the revenue have been advanced by experts who have studied the railway. And here I want to pay tribute to the Government for having studied this problem or at least having attempted to study it, not from the economic point of view I would say, but at least from a casual point of view, to study what causes the railway to lose money. And here we find very many experts examining the question. One of these experts found that the first reason for the deterioration of the railway was the poor standard of organization, aggravated by the contraction in railway operation since the end of the Second

[MR. L. F. SEUKERAN]

World War. In other words, since the cessation of hostilities in Europe this country has abandoned the railway piecemeal. To talk about abandonment now is just making a big joke. The cutting of the Siparia and the Sangre Grande lines should have reduced not only the size of the operations but also the deficit. But no such thing has happened. If by the elimination of these services we did not save a penny, how would transferring four million odd passengers from rail to road cause us to save anything? The subsidy will have to be paid to the bus service, nonetheless.

3.05 p.m.

You will also have to pay many unseen subsidies, and there will be congestion, loss of time, loss of life and all of those things. The railway has its own track. You very seldom hear of an accident. It needs very little maintenance. You do not have to build roads. You just replace a sleeper here and there. But you have constant work on the roads. The deficit continued to mount since there was no retrenchment synchronizing with the cessation of the services.

The second reason for this deterioration the experts point out, was a dangerous lowering of the technical standards. The third reason is that adequate maintenance is lacking and adequate renewal practice is neglected. The fourth reason is the undue competition from road transport without revision of the railway rates. The fifth reason is a lack of trained personnel in the key posts, and the final reason is the dubious future which has hung over the railways for the last decade.

Why is this railway being abandoned? It is said that we are losing revenue, but Government are fully aware of the numerous

proposals that have been put to them from time to time to prevent this loss of revenue.

Let us examine two of these proposals:

- (1) Regrading the tariffs and rates.
- (2) Increasing the overall volume of traffic.

In the case of the rates, some of these have been on the rate books for over a decade without any change. A twenty-five per cent. increase in the rates of the season tickets alone would mean \$34,000 a year to the revenue of Trinidad and Tobago.

Take Sugar cane haulage is an example of which the Minister spoke, and I will quote the figures. Here we find that the rates have remained unchanged for over ten years. Today, the companies have brought in their own lorries and they use the railway only when they do not find it economical enough to use their own lorries. Some inquiry commissions have even gone so far as to suggest that Government should prescribe by legal order that certain types of transport, especially heavy long-distance freights, use the railway compulsorily.

Let us study some vital statistics, lest it be said that I am not making the point to the satisfaction of the Minister. I am dealing with the very report from which he quoted, the Madöry report. This is by a famous German expert, brought here to advise the Trinidad Government, who advocated in a large measure that the railway should be scrapped. I do not agree with him at all, and he has been in conflict with all the other experts whom I have quoted today.

Let us now study the loss to the railway in terms of goods haulage: In 1954, the railways carried 199,848 tons of cane; in 1962 that dropped to 170,208 tons. In 1954 they carried 62,040 tons of sugar;

in 1962 that dropped to 22,675. In 1954 they carried 18,354 tons of molasses; in 1962 that dropped to 4,975. In 1954 they carried 14,986 tons of estate supplies; in 1962 that dropped to 4,182. In terms of revenue the whole amount dropped from \$643,281 to something like \$185,824—less than half. So you see where you should go to find the reason for the failure of the railway. The railway for passenger transport is a must, and for goods haulage it could be made a must provided that we could have the same courage that we had a few days ago to introduce the type of legislation that would cause people to use it. We would not have to pay out taxpayers' money to the tune of \$40 million, for the capital assets of the railway, as I am told today, and then abandon it overnight. Let us put in another ten million dollars, if necessary, and make it pay.

Several suggestions were offered to the Trinidad Government by the German expert, Mr. Madöry, for the rehabilitation of the railway. The Minister spoke of one of them—the five-year service which could be got out of the railway at a cost of \$4,016,000 per annum. Of course, this would involve retrenchment to a certain extent, but he went on to show what could be done with the railway otherwise. The Minister took no notice of that. I wondered why. If the Minister is offering the country something he must offer everything. The good and the bad. Madöry went on to talk about a pure diesel programme which would demand the purchase of nine diesel engines and a retrenchment in the technical staff of 210 men. It would introduce twelve coaches. It would require 200 wagons and involve an expenditure of \$7.1 million. It would reduce the labour force to 1,145 men.

**Mr. Mohammed:** You were not listening when I quoted that.

**Mr. Seukeran:** He talked about a rail car programme which would require five rail cars and which would cost \$6.64 million. He talked about an electric railway programme on the basis of small railways in Europe, particularly in Switzerland. This would mean reorientating the whole railway system at a cost of \$23.7 million. It would reduce the labour force to 800 men and it would cost \$4.16 million to operate. He talked about an elevated railway programme which would not carry freight but would be specially suited to the Arima line and would be run on the calculation based on the German air-monorail concept. He talked about other concepts. For instance, the French Renault concept, characterized by hanging cars running below a single hollow metallic beam.

The investment in this would cost \$46 million. But, what is \$46 million in a country that has been spending that amount of money for less important things? We would be spending \$46 million over a number of years but we would be securing the country for at least forty-six years. What is an investment of one million dollars a year to keep five or six thousand people employed, to give a service to six million travellers, and as the years go by to ten million? He talked about the tramway programme in Port-of-Spain. The Minister forgot to tell the country that we used to have the electric trams and then some government walked in and abandoned the trams. Now we have an expert telling us to try the trams again. Are we going to do the same thing with the railway—abandon it today and have some expert tell us to try it again tomorrow as the country progresses? That is what we want to study now.

[MR. L. F. SEUKERAN]

**3.15 p.m.**

He talked about the tram system costing \$7.2 million; he talked about only 370 men being required to operate the system, and he talked about an annual cost of only \$1.88 million. That sounds reasonable, reasonable in the light of our prosperity. As against this we can throw the whole load on the roads now; against all these alternative suggestions we can throw the whole load on the roads.

Throughout the investigations this German expert, Mr. Madöry, tried to prove that the position in the railway is that if you want to have improvement you must carry out retrenchment, and this is understandable. The statistics on examination reveal that out of the salaries of the labour force of 1,629 people in 1962, alone swallowed up \$3,268,000. As against this we find a mere \$560,000 spent for material, and \$760,000 again went for sinking fund and pensions. So that if a concern is losing \$4 million, and \$3.8 million of that is being spent on wages, how can you brand the concern as a losing concern? The total operating cost was \$4,588,000. If the railway cannot pay, is it at all surprising? How can any industry which spends 600 per cent more to pay its employees above the purchases of equipment and material survive? How can it? How can you spend 600 times more to pay labour than to buy equipment? And what have the Government done about it? It is for the Minister to tell us. I do not know, I am only a student enquiring.

Now he will throw this load on the roads and he has not told us what the cost of the roads will be, but Madöry worked it out for him. Madöry said it will cost \$18 million plus to put the roads in a condition to stand the congestion.

Now hear again what these great experts from India had to say about the roads. On page 75 of their Report they said:

"It was explained to the team that for a 16-foot wide flexible pavement (tarred road) having 9 inches depth of base, blinded with 1½ inches gravel and 1½ inches wearing coat, the cost was \$340,000 per mile."

That is the kind of road he would build to save the money from the railway—\$340,000 a mile to build one mile of roadway. Now hear what they said again:

"In a report on Development Plan for Tobago by a team of experts which visited Tobago in March-April, 1957 (Bulletin No. 34) it has been stated in para. 626—

'Estimates varying from \$100,000 per mile to \$20,000 per mile have been quoted for the construction of a north coast road in Tobago. In the light of recent road constructing, through virgin forest, in deep clay, under a saturating rainfall of 300 inches per annum, carried out in mountain country in the Windward Islands in 1953-56 at a cost of \$120,000 per mile, it seems to us unreasonable to expect that, in the relatively dry conditions of Tobago, the cost of road construction should not exceed \$80,000 per mile. . .'

And they went on to say \$50,000 per mile for a medium-quality road and \$25,000 per mile for a third-class road is what they would recommend. So here we are going to save a paltry penny on the Railways, put it on the roads, and spend something like \$340,000 for every mile of roadway we build.

Look at the congestion of the streets in other parts of the world and in Trinidad and Tobago. We have something like



1,409 miles of highway, we have a total vehicular population of about 43,000; we have a total population of the country of about 850,000, call it 900,000, today. This works out at about 11 people per vehicle and at about 25 vehicles per mile. In the United Kingdom they have 188,092 miles of highway, they have a population of motor vehicles running into 4,701,704, they have 25 vehicles, like ourselves, per mile, and they have 10 people to a vehicle. In the United States of America they have 2.6 persons using a vehicle, the only country beyond us. Take Jamaica, the next most progressive West Indian country. Here they have 3,203 miles of highway—well, Jamaica comes next only to us—they have 7,098 vehicles only, they have two vehicles per mile, and they have 212 people using a vehicle. Do you realize the congestion on our streets? Do you realize it? Do you see the enormity of the use of the roadway that will have to be made when the railway is abandoned? Do you see it? It is not a simple thing, it is something that calls for very careful study.

Now look at the subsidy we have already been paying to the buses so you will understand what more we shall have to pay. In 1961 one bus company ate up \$539,553.62, and in 1963 \$968,460.60, that is a million dollars. In 1964 they got only \$118,000 as the first instalment that would run beyond a million dollars. The two companies combined must have taken more than \$2 million a year, in a private enterprise which, as the Minister has gone on record as saying, was totally hopeless, inadequate, inefficient, derelict; everything was wrong with it so he had to put it right. Well, when he has put all that right and he has subsidized that and subsidized the children, the workmen, the poorer classes who use the railway

and subsidized the canes that he talked about with all this milk of human kindness in his heart for the farmers, when he has subsidized all these, will he tell us when he gets up to talk in a few minutes what is the extent of the subsidy the Trinidad Government will have to pay for the use of the roads instead of the use of the railway? It is in that light that we have to understand this situation. As a matter of fact, here we were told in this report—and I am referring to the Commission that investigated the Princes Town Bus Company . . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** I want to warn the hon. Gentleman that he has five more minutes.

**Mr. Seukeran:** Thank you, Sir. I was really carried away this afternoon and was forgetting to look at the clock, so thank you for your kind warning.

My intention was to look at the social consideration, the needs of the people, the difficulties of the unemployed and all those people who will be thrown out of work. But do not let the Minister go away with the idea that because we will take the people off from the railway and absorb them in the Bus Service it will cost the Trinidad Government any less than it is costing them for working in the railway service. If the idea is to have no retrenchment and to take care of the human factor (in the beautiful language he used—he was concerned with the human problems dealing with the livelihood of people) if he is seriously concerned with the human element I can well conceive that he does not want to retrench anybody; I can well imagine that he will put them to work somewhere else. May I remind him that whether they work in the railway or bus, in the Red House or Forest Department, in Toco or Cedros,

once they work for Government it is the taxpayers' money that will be subsidizing them.

I should like to conclude with this very urgent request to the Trinidad Government. While I have absolutely no objection to the appointment of a commission and my vote will be registered with the Government in respect of this commission being appointed with the view of making the Bus Service more efficient than it is today, I humbly submit and most respectfully suggest that a careful study be made of the whole question of the scrapping of the railway, and of transport, at the level of the experts of the Planning Division of the Prime Minister's Office and, if necessary, other experts so that when we come to a final decision to scrap or not scrap the railway, we shall be doing it as people, well informed and with regard to the future overall needs of Trinidad and Tobago in the realm of transport.

**Mr. P. Farquhar:** Mr. Speaker, five years ago the present Minister of Public Utilities was Minister of Agriculture. At that time he introduced a Bill, the Agricultural Small Holdings Act, which he said was going to produce a revolution in the agriculture of this country. The farmers of this country five years later are still waiting for the revolution because the Agricultural Small Holdings Act is a dead letter. Today, the same gentleman, now that he is Minister of Public Utilities, is introducing another Bill which he says is going to solve the transport problems of this country. It will have no more effect than the 1960 Agricultural Small Holdings Act. It is a dead letter.

There are some people who believe that a Government can govern a country by

passing legislation. Legislation merely consists of Acts of Parliament and those Acts are merely black letters on white paper. Black letters on white paper do not move any goods, they do not carry any passengers. If the Acts of Parliament do have any effect on any problems at all there must be Ministers in power who are capable of making decisions and there must be an administrative machinery that is capable of taking action. In this country it is well known that we have neither. Without such Ministers and without this administrative machinery, the passing of legislation is a mere exercise in rhetoric, an essay in propaganda.

Let us turn to the Bill. Page 6, clause 8 (1), which deals with the General Powers and Duties of the Corporation reads:

“Subject to this Act, it shall be the duty of the Corporation to carry on the business of operating public service vehicles under this Act, so as to ensure the provision of a safe, adequate, economic and efficient public transportation system, adapted to the needs of the country . . . .”

Here we have a formidable array of epithets, an array over which I noticed the Minister stumbled and I had to tread warily myself lest I should fall. But what does it mean? The duty of the Corporation is to carry on the business of operating public service vehicles—so the legislation says—to ensure the provision of a safe, adequate, economic, efficient public transportation system. A corporation which is to carry on the business of operating public service vehicles is, or ought to be, an executive body carrying out operational functions. The design of a safe, adequate, economic and efficient public transportation system is not an operational function, it is a policy-making, planning function. What is this corporation

that we are setting up? Is it an executive body or is it a planning body or is it both or is it neither? You will notice that in clause 8. (2) the Commission is told:

“The duty imposed on the Corporation by subsection (1) includes responsibility for establishing sufficient road transport facilities as in the opinion of the Corporation are necessary or desirable for the purpose of providing transportation for school children . . . . .”

Clearly, a corporation which is endowed with the power of deciding in its own opinion what is necessary and desirable for school children and others is not an executive or operational body. It is a policy-making body. This is an important point because if this corporation is a planning or policy-making body and its field is transport then it should have wide enough powers effectively to plan and initiate policy in the field of transport, but it does not.

In clause 2 of the Bill we are told that the Minister referred to in this Bill means the “member of the Cabinet to whom responsibility for the subject of Transport is assigned”. That is on page 3. But if we look on page 19, clause 35 (2), we find that there is another Minister to whom responsibility for the subject of roads is assigned, so we have one Minister responsible for transport and another responsible for roads. I have never heard of a country—any country anywhere in the world—where roads are distinguished and divorced from transport. If you imagine the running of railways could you imagine having one authority responsible for the operation of the railway trains and another authority responsible for the maintenance of the tracks? Even the Minister of Public Utilities would not consider this to be a reasonable arrangement. Where then is the logic

in distinguishing between certain vehicles which run on the roads, and having one authority responsible for the vehicles which are supposed to be running on the roads and another authority responsible for the roads on which they run?

### 3.35 p.m.

A transportation system involves not only vehicles but also the tracks or the roads and no person is capable of carrying out a policy-making or planning function unless he has got both these things in mind. But we may be told, at least from what the Minister said, that this corporation is not really a policy-making body at all because we are still to look forward to a transport authority which is to be responsible for initiating and working out policy in the field of transport. I do not know why we need this Transport Authority. If there is a Minister who is responsible for transport—and as I understand “transport” will include roads—then it is the responsibility of the Minister of Roads and Transport to initiate policy and planning in the field for which he is responsible; and if it is necessary to have any executive body to carry out operations, then he may proceed to do so. But it appears that this Corporation in the words of the Bill, being capable of expressing opinions of what is or is not desirable in the field of transport policy, conflicts with that intention. Clause 8 conflicts with clause 9. Clause 9 reads:

“In the exercise of its functions, powers and duties under this Act or any other enactment, the Corporation shall act in accordance with any special or general direction given to it by the Minister.”

In other words, clause 9 envisages that it is the Minister who is responsible for

[MR. P. G. FARQUHAR]

making the policy decisions and the Corporation is responsible for carrying out the policy decisions made by the Minister. This is simple and proper.

Why then are we told in clause 8 that the Corporation should bring its own opinion to bear as to what is necessary or desirable for providing transportation for school children and other people? If there is such a corporation, then it is the Minister who together with his Cabinet colleagues, should decide as a policy decision, what should be done about providing transport for school children and others, and then instruct the Corporation to carry these jobs out.

Why then do these things occur in clause 8? Because this is not a bit of legislation which anybody intends to work; this is a political manifesto so they have got to put in this talk of "school children", and "safe, adequate, economic and efficient public transport system", not because those words have any meaning whatsoever as far as the law is concerned, not because they are operative or functional, but because Government want to carry out an exercise in rhetorics.

What must the Corporation do? The Minister says that it is to operate the bus services and to have some jurisdiction over the railways. But this is not what clause 8 says. It says:

"... the Corporation shall have power to carry goods and passengers by rail and roads."

This implies that the Corporation is also to go into the field of road transport. I do not know whether this is so or not. The Minister did not say that. If this is to be the case, what is to be the role of this Corporation as a road transport authority? He did not explain.

We are also told that one of the duties of the Corporation is to store goods. He has not said whether the Corporation has to go into the warehousing field, and, if so, to what extent that is envisaged. Anyhow, we find in clause 8 a host of duties and powers assigned—some operative, some executive, some policy-making; all jumbled together. None of them is designed for use at all.

I want to refer again to the distinction between roads and transport because it is in distinguishing between the two that the Minister succumbs to a very popular fallacy—a fallacy which vitiates everything that he has got to say about the economics of transport. I am sorry that the hon. Member for Naparima is not here at the moment because I wanted to compliment him on the very learned and profound lecture that he gave us on the real costs of transport. My only criticism is that it was too learned and too profound for his audience. But his having said all this saves me a great deal of trouble.

It is necessary, however, for me to underlie this simple point, that everybody who is seeking to compare the cost of railway transport against road transport must consider what the real costs of road transport are. The reason why everybody seems to think that rail transport is very expensive and less economical than road transport is because railway transport happens to be a closed system. The railway has to bear the total cost of the entire operation. One does not distinguish between the cost of operating trains and the cost of maintaining the tracks; the whole thing goes into the total cost and the railway made to bear the cost of the entire operation.

When one is operating a road transport system, people like the Minister of Public Utilities think that the operational cost is the total cost of the bus service. They ignore the cost of running on the roads, which should be implied. To find out the real costs of the bus service one should include the road cost and not only the operational cost of the buses themselves. This point has a great deal of bearing on the entire transportation problem because it applies not only to buses but to all users of our road transport including private motor-cars. Not only the use of the roads for travelling should be considered, but also the use of the roads in cities, at any rate, for parking. Nobody seems to count the cost of this; nobody seems to worry about recovering this cost from the users. But this is one of the great costs of any transportation system; and nobody can arrive at any firm conclusion about the economics of a transportation system unless he deals with these real costs. The Minister in his speech gave no indication that he is even aware of the problem. Fortunately, the hon. Member for Naparima has been able to give us a great deal which bears on this problem.

This brings us to that section of the Bill which deals with the railways—Part III on page 17. Clause 31 says:

“(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act it shall be the duty of the Corporation to dispose, within such time as is reasonably practicable, of all such property held by it for the purpose of so much of its undertaking relating to the carriage of goods and passengers by rail, as the Minister may direct.”

And then it goes on:

“(2) . . . the Corporation shall have due regard to the needs of any industry or community with regard to railway transport;”

Confusion will be seen here again—in subclause (1) the Minister is to give direction to the Corporation about closing down certain parts of the railway transport system, but in subclause (2), it is the Corporation that shall have due regard to the needs of any industry or community with regard to railway transport.

3.45 p.m.

I should have thought it would have been the Minister before he made the direction to the Corporation who would have had this due regard. But of course this point is purely academic because although this Bill talks about facilitating the phased substitution of road transport to the existing railway system, it is clear from the wording of Part III that, in fact, no decision has been arrived at about the future of the railway—no decision at all.

And what has been the history of the Government's attitude towards the railway? The Minister has told us that before the Government came into power they undertook to maintain and rehabilitate the railway. Of course this was not taken on any economic or other firm grounds at all. It seemed to be a good thing to say at the time so they said it: “we will maintain and rehabilitate the railway system.” And then they deviated from that. Why? The Minister tells us that they went along to the United Kingdom and asked for aid to rehabilitate their railway system and the United Kingdom Government told them this was not an economic proposition so they could not get the money. Apparently,

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*Thursday, 22nd April, 1965*

*Service Bill*

they decided then that the railway could not be rehabilitated at all. So they took the view of the United Kingdom Government that the railway was not an economic proposition—a view which is not based on any fact at all because, as the hon. Member for Naparima pointed out, before one can take such a decision on economic grounds, one must have the real comparison of the costs of the alternatives, and it is clear from everything that the Minister has said that this study has not been made.

So the Government at one time took the decision to scrap the railway. Again, as I said, that decision was not based on any analysis of the problem. And then apparently, certain people began to object to that, so the Government gave up the use of the word "scrap" and turned to the phrase "phased substitution". Now this phrase "phased substitution" so far as I am aware was first used about nearly two and a half years ago when a decision was taken by the Government. And what has happened in the two and a half years? Precisely nothing. No plan has been worked out for this phased substitution. No plan exists. What are we phasing? How long are these phases going to last? Is this operation going to take 2 years or 10 years or 20 years, or is it going to take a century? Nobody knows. The Minister does not know, because he has not worked out this problem. He seems now to suggest that he has. Well if he had worked out the problem it would be so much simpler, instead of talking a lot of stuff that was irrelevant to this Bill, to have explained this plan to us. Then it would have been unnecessary for us to have to discuss this matter because we would have had the plan before us.

The Minister, like all other Ministers, refers to certain anonymous experts who guide him in the making of his decisions; the experts have to remain anonymous because if their names were given it might turn out that they are not experts at all. And the studies and recommendations that they make have also to remain a secret, because if they were revealed, it would be obvious that they were not studies or analyses at all; so that we just hear that there are experts involved; and the Minister talks about having all the statistics. But if he has all the statistics why hide them? Surely, there is no question of the safety or the security of the nation involved in such simple objective facts with regard to transportation in this country. If the Minister has the statistics let him place them before us so that we can come to a decision. But he does not have the study; he does not undertake the study, he will not undertake the study, because he does not intend to come to any decision with regard to the railway. And the language he uses in introducing this Bill makes it quite clear that no decision has been taken because he talks about a probable modified system and then he uses the phrase "whenever this make take place". So it is clear that there is no line of action taking shape.

What is this Bill all about? It is supposed to provide for the establishment of a public transport service. What in reality that means is that they are now providing a Board to operate the bus service and the railway. This is all that it means. So this is nothing new. There is no new departure, no new policy decision here involved. Buses were taken over on the 1st January this year, and apparently some sort of body has to be created to be responsible for them. So we are creating this body.

As regards facilitating the phased substitution of the existing railway system by road transport, as I said before, no decision has been taken here, and there is no policy with regard to this. What is going to happen to the railway is what has been happening ever since this Government have been in power. The railway system will be allowed to deteriorate as it has been deteriorating in the past; the deterioration will go on until either the Government die or the railway dies but there is no plan; there never will be a plan so long as persons who are at present responsible for initiating plans are involved.

Therefore, what is the reason for bringing this Bill to the House at all? The total effect that this Bill will have on the country is that certain people after its passage are going to have paid positions as members of this corporation. This is the sum total of this legislation. I do not say jobs; I say paid positions.

The Government have been creating for sometime, and are increasing with intensity during the last few weeks, a number of bodies, providing for paid positions for certain people—boards, authorities, ports and all sorts of things. No work is involved; no jobs are involved, only salaries or fees.

And not only are they creating these boards and authorities to do nothing but they are also having a lot of committees. There are committees for every conceivable thing being created at the present time. And the same naive view that certain people take about the effectiveness of the passage of legislation is also taken about the functioning of committees. What is the real value of a committee? That persons are brought together each of whom has got a positive contribution, however small, to make to a solution of a particular

problem and by bringing all these contributions together, it is hoped that there will be increased knowledge and wisdom in tackling the particular problem. But what happens when committees are appointed in this country? People are brought together who have no positive contributions to make; their contributions are not negligible; not nil; they are negative. And by bringing them together instead of multiplying wisdom, folly is multiplied. And this is what has been happening, and all to no purpose.

Somebody came along and told me that not very long ago this House took a decision to appoint a select committee for some purpose or the other. I said I was not surprised to hear that. The person also told me that I have been appointed as a member of this select committee. I said I was not surprised to hear that I was selected without either my knowledge or my consent. The person then asked me whether I intended to serve. So I had to point out that the enquirer was being very naive. There was no question of service involved. I had been selected in the past to be a member of an External Affairs Committee; that committee was brought together one afternoon and we were apparently to discover what it is we were supposed to do. We did not discover it that afternoon and the committee never came together again. I do not know whether these select committees will meet on afternoons for tea, but if they do, I shall not be a member of the party because none of this is intended to achieve anything. It is just like this Bill—an exercise in rhetoric, an essay in propaganda. They do not know what to do; they do not have the means of doing anything; they have not any idea of what they wanted to do

[MR. P. G. FARQUHAR]

but they must give some impression of doing something, so they pass Acts of Parliament and appoint committees.

There is not a question about whether this Bill is a good or a bad Bill. It will join the whole catalogue of legislation which has been passed in this House—passed with a great deal of beating of the chest and with loud heralds of revolutions in various spheres. It will take its place as all of them. The railway will continue as it is continuing for as long as it can, and will continue to lose more money. That will happen because they have got to pay certain people for doing nothing; and the transport problems will remain exactly as they are. Therefore, it is not possible for me to give my support to this Bill because it is clear that it has not been brought to this House with any serious intention.

**Mr. S. Maharaj:** Mr. Speaker, what a change of heart of the Government in a space of about two or three weeks. Two or three weeks ago when the trade unions of this country virtually fell on their knees to the Government and asked them, to please listen to their representations; the Prime Minister himself personally decided that that Bill should be rushed through. There was little opportunity for any trade union to say one word or to make any representation on the last Bill and a certain other Bill sometime ago, unless they had done so within the two or three days between the First and Second readings of the Bill.

Many of the unions requested a hearing, without success; but today I hear from the Minister of Public Utilities that he is not going to do anything about the railway until he gets representations from the trade unions.

**4.05 p.m.**

I am glad for that change of heart because there has been a change in the condition of the unions. Government are satisfied today that most of the union leaders are stooges whom they can put into their pockets and it probably suits them today to negotiate with the trade unions. I hold no brief for trade union leaders. I say what I think is right whether Dr. Solomon likes it or not. I did not come here through the charity of Dr. Solomon.

**Dr. Solomon:** Why do you like my name so much, boy?

**Mr. Maharaj:** I am glad that they decided to consult the unions. In this long Bill I had hoped to hear something about the railway workers. As I said, I hold no brief for anyone. It was Dr. Williams who called all the railway workers together into the square just before the elections and promised them the moon and the stars. At that time he wanted their votes and the workers believed that the Messiah had come to help them so that their pots could boil. Just as the trade union leaders have deserted the workers, so the workers, if Government handed them a little plum, would say two days afterwards that the Prime Minister was their Messiah.

I had expected this Bill to contain even one little paragraph saying that workers employed by the Government Railways and entitled to a pension could look forward to being pensioned off at the age of, perhaps, forty years, if they had a certain amount of service with the Government. That would have been something concrete because many of them would be called upon to retire through no fault of their own. That



is all they have to depend on. The Government say, and the Minister says, that Government will look after the best interests of the workers. I do not place any reliance on that. The policy today is, "If you are on my side I will look after your interests. If you stand up on your own and demand your rights I will not look after your interests." There are thousands of cases like that. When Government feel that they can get their votes they look after their interests.

We sometimes wonder why this railway was kept going so long. As a matter of fact, we advocated that it should have been scrapped many years ago, because during the regime of the present Government about \$30 million to \$36 million must have been wasted on the railways that could have been saved and could have made the very men employed on the railways happy and comfortable for the rest of their lives. But, like everything else, they correct their errors very late, if they correct them at all. What we have so far is a proposal on paper. As my hon. friend, the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, has said, there are so many proposals, but very often they are not worth the paper they are written on. These people have to depend on the charity of the Government.

The real reason for the scrapping is that oil and sugar have no use for the railway. This railway was kept going for many years because it was looked upon as a means of subsidizing the sugar industry. Today, the real bosses of this country, oil and sugar, have no further use for the railway. Of course, we have always said that \$4 million are being wasted every year in keeping the railway going. All that you had to do was to make provision for the men employed. That is all you should be concerned with,

but it took you nine years and you are still unable to make provision for the people employed.

This is a country where might is right. This is the country in which we live. The general public of this country are indifferent and careless about the future of this nation. So we can only stand here and protest. People just exist while this oligarchy imposes its will on the frightened, frustrated and bewildered nation. The people are disappointed with the performance of the present Government whom they thought would have pursued democratic lines. Today, the few who had the courage to raise their voices in protest are finally silenced. That is a summing up of the position of this country in a few words, and I defy anyone to deny it.

**Mr. Montano:** Who wrote that?

**Mr. Maharaj:** Let me tell you, Mr. Minister of Home Affairs, there is no man in Trinidad who has ever written anything for me to say in this House. Everything I say in this House I say of my own accord. I pointed out in this House that from 1961 to 1964 the Government wasted \$6½ million of the hard cash of the people of this country. Government wasted \$6½ million on bus concessions and they guaranteed the services, or the keeping of the services, with another \$3½ million, which they have to pay. So the Government in three years, from 1961 to 1964, have frittered away \$10 million of taxpayers' money of this country. They have frittered it away because, previous to elections in 1961, there were no bounds to the Prime Minister's arrogance. He felt at that time that he could have used any amount of the country's money to grant any favours to his friends.

So we have to come back to the root of the trouble, to this question of the wasted \$10 million.

The Minister of Public Utilities, as I have said in a previous debate, is not responsible, although he has come here today and has delivered a long lecture, lasting for several hours, on the question of transport in this country. I know the Minister of Public Utilities can deliver a very good speech. He could speak for another two to three hours on transport in this country, especially when he has a file before him.

**Dr. Solomon:** You are jealous of the boy.

4.15 p.m.

**Mr. S. C. Maharaj:** That is the position. That is what I have got to remind them about. That is the hand of the mighty. The mighty Prime Minister for these three years wasted \$10 million of this country's money, and today we get long speeches about how good a proposal is contained in this Bill which is before us, which will solve the transport problems in this country. Sometimes I have to ask myself if the Prime Minister remembers when he makes certain statements; and here it is the mighty Prime Minister who would like to see the money well spent in the country tells some people in Point Fortin "this is a scandalous violation, it is disgraceful for this amount of money to be spent in this cowshed in Point Fortin". The Prime Minister condemning the people for spending and wasting \$15,000 for building a community centre in Point Fortin, which he called a cowshed, and the newspapers carry it in big headlines:

**"DR. WILLIAMS CALLS FOR INQUIRY INTO SCANDALOUS USE OF GOVERNMENT FUNDS."**

So when the hand of the mighty wastes \$10 million nobody is there to investigate the Government, but for a community centre he says: "I will put up a commission of inquiry to enquire about this scandalous waste of \$15,000." Well, Sir, I am not condoning waste on any side, whether Dr. Williams as Prime Minister wastes \$10 million or the Point Fortin Community Centre wastes \$15,000. I am not condoning either side. But if there is an enquiry on the backs of the poor people of Point Fortin let us have some impartial enquiry too about this waste of \$10 million in this bus concession which was given with all the arrogance that any human being could possess.

This is not such an innocuous piece of legislation as it appears to be. It is not so innocuous. Not at all. If you go through it you will see the usual setting up of another statutory board, the question of the provision for the transportation of school children, as my friend says, the question of the duties and powers of the corporation, and certain incidental matters towards the setting up of a board and the scrapping of the railway. But there is something very much deeper in it when you connect the link between this Bill and the past performance of Government. They are wielding in no uncertain manner the hand of the mighty of this country, and that is how I look at it.

This Bill is vesting the ownership of bus transport in the country in the hands of the Prime Minister—and I am saying the Prime Minister because I know that the Prime Minister is the Cabinet and the Cabinet is the Prime Minister, and to use the word "Cabinet" is just a cover up for the actions of the Prime Minister—that is what this Bill is doing. The Prime Minister is the man who gave out the concessions to whom he wanted,

he wasted \$10 million of this country's money, and now this Bill is vesting the bus concession directly in his hands.

When it was the Telephone Company, Government engineered certain dissentions until they found an excuse for taking over the Telephone Company. Then it was the airways. Now it will be transport. So, one by one, communications and certain services are gradually being absorbed directly by Government. The only vehicle that is left is the creation of the one-party state and then the exercise will be complete. I shall be surprised if it takes very long to bring that about.

My hon. Friend, the Minister of Home Affairs, is worried about democratic socialism. I shall come to that in a minute. There is a great difference between what you are doing and democratic socialism. That is your idiocy. You think that what you are doing here is democratic socialism, so you are copying some philosophy or some policy which you feel this country is accepting, but what you are doing here is completely different from democratic socialism.

The only remaining exercise is the exercise of creating in Trinidad and Tobago the one-party state. This Bill is bordering on the practice of unadulterated communism, the worst form of communism that was practised in Soviet Russia. In Soviet Russia they have started to realize that state ownership alone is not enough. State ownership removes the element of free competition, it removes the question of any pride of ownership and the question of any acceptance of responsibility for a national service and that sense of contribution to the well-being of the nation are removed.

4.25 p.m.

So by vesting in the Government not the transport service alone but several of the services of this country you are practising today a form of communism that even Soviet Russia is trying to get away from. What makes it worse is that the only independence that was enjoyed by the workers who work in these services is now destroyed because the Government of this country has in no uncertain manner destroyed any independence in the trade union movement or any means by which the workers of this country could stand on their own and demand what is theirs on their own rights. The destruction of trade unionism and the vesting of the services of this country, in the hands of the Prime Minister is nothing short of the creation of a dictatorship, is nothing short of the institution in this country of forced labour. That is how I see it. The minions of the Government can say what they like, but I would rather put down my views in the record so that posterity at least can say that I was right.

We do find that while the Government practise the worst, most vicious form of communism, the means of propaganda, the press, are always willing to give the Government's side the edge so long as they keep on protecting certain interests in this country. They can practise and pass as much communist legislation as they want in this House. This I have said before. This innocuous looking Bill has nothing else in it but a tinge of communism and that is borne out by this same obnoxious report, the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Subversive Activities in Trinidad and Tobago. I believe that if these people were investigating the real culprits in this country they would have produced a good report.

[MR. S. C. MAHARAJ]

When you look at page 12, paragraph 60, under the heading "Communist infiltration as a form of subversion", you will realize that this Commission really.....

**Mr. Speaker :** I think that the hon. Member for Princes Town is going off the mark. I cannot see the relation between the Subversive Report and the general purposes of the Bill before us.

**Mr. S. Maharaj :** Mr. Speaker, if you had listened to the quotation, I have absolutely no doubt you would have realized that it has a bearing. I am charging this piece of legislation is a communist piece of legislation.

**Mr. Speaker :** Charging that the Bill is a piece of subversive legislation does not make it so. That is what I want to tell you. To make charges about the qualities of subversive legislation does not mean the Bill is subversive, therefore your quotation will not prove anything in connexion with the Bill.

**Mr. S. Maharaj :** Mr. Speaker, with due respect to you, I am leaving it for the country to judge. These are my charges. Whether the Bill is subversive or not, I am charging that it is a subversive piece of legislation.

**Mr. Speaker :** What I want to indicate is that your charge does not prove that it is so. It does not prove that; and if you want to make quotations to prove your charge it is left for me to rule whether you are bringing in something that is relevant to the Bill or not and then I make my ruling. I do not want to have cause to rule; I am just drawing your attention to it.

**Mr. S. Maharaj :** Do you not think, Mr. Speaker, that it is better you rule after I make the charges ?

**Mr. Speaker :** I can anticipate the trend of your contribution and I just want to avoid a waste of time.

**Minister of External Affairs (Dr. P. V. J. Solomon) :** Give in gracefully, Mr. Maharaj.

**Mr. S. Maharaj :** I do hope the Government will give Members of the House an opportunity to debate the Report at a very early date.

**Mr. Speaker :** A most pleasurable decision.

**Mr. S. Maharaj :** I think I have proven beyond the shadow of a doubt that might in this country is right. Those in big positions can waste the millions and if the poorer ones happen to slip up all those mighty ones can institute a commission of inquiry and so on but there is no one to tell those who have wasted the millions that they are wrong.

I must say that I have to change the aspect of my speech in view of your ruling, but for the benefit of the Minister of Home Affairs let me tell him what is, in a few words, the difference between communism and socialism in view of the charges I have made. He seems to have the wrong idea. Of course, I take it that he does not know the difference and that is why he made these wild charges.....

**Mr. Speaker :** Am I to take this as an aside ? It is not a contribution on the Bill at all.

**Mr. S. Maharaj :** Yes. In view of my charges I said that communism is the imposition of the rule of the minority. In a communist country the state owns the lands and capital while the people become instruments of production. The state distributes the produce and abolishes inheritance. That is just a line in order to give him the difference because he is at times charging that democratic socialism is in fact communism. What I want to prove to him is that what he is practising is communism.

**The Minister of Home Affairs and Local Government (Hon. G. Montano) :** Mr. Speaker, since you have permitted the hon. Member to digress to this extent, may I say that I am quite aware of what communism and democratic socialism are. However, I am not sure he appreciates the difference.

**Mr. S. Maharaj :** Socialism is more concerned with the people than with profit. It assures the workers good wages, secure jobs, proper pensions, medical insurance, part ownership of business and industry and aims at making the individual a happy and responsible member of society. Socialism is the greatest enemy of communism. There is a very great difference between socialism and communism.

**Mr. Speaker :** I think the hon. Member for Princes Town is taking too great an advantage of the opportunity I gave him for the aside with his hon. Colleague, the Member for San Fernando East. When I allowed it it was to raise the debate to a standard of comradeship, but to proceed to give a lecture now on socialism is, I think, going too far away from the Bill. If the hon. Member for Princes Town would revert to the Bill before the House all of us would be very happy.

5.35 p.m.

**Mr. S. Maharaj :** The employment situation in this country is certainly worse today. We have to be aware of a piece of legislation such as this which could marshal the forces of Government to employ their supporters with the hope that they will get their support in return.

This Bill will vest all powers in the hands of the Prime Minister who will transfer these powers to a statutory board. Everybody knows what the employment situation is in this country. That is why sometimes we have to make sure that nothing would be done in this country which would give employment on a partisan basis. We have seen it done so often in the various statutory boards. We know fully well that there is discrimination in employment and we feel that, on the basis of creating employment for people, every citizen in this country should have equal opportunities.

I should like to quote from a little booklet written by the Prime Minister in which he criticized the former Government of Trinidad and Tobago on the economic problems of Trinidad and Tobago. He said :

“The problem of jobs is therefore the Number 1 priority in Trinidad and Tobago, not jobs in domestic services or selling sweepstake tickets, but productive jobs adding dignity to the worker and wealth to the country. The principal test of the Ministers therefore is whatever could be done to provide productive jobs.”

Sometimes I like to read these little booklets because these were the little booklets that were read all over this country and gave the people the impression that with the new Government there would be so much productive jobs that there would not be want in this country.

[MR. S. C. MAHARAJ]

We are now getting a completely different story because I read where an hon. Member of the very new Government said :

“If you are lucky to be employed hold on to your job.”

These were the words of advice of the Minister of Public Utilities when he was addressing workers of the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission on Sunday night last at a long service award ceremony. He also noticed that in these days of mass unemployment the entire world is entering into the rat race that is so fast that everyone is left struggling for survival. Therefore, when I see an avenue in which there can be so much discrimination in employment, when I read the promise of employment by the Prime Minister, and now this pronouncement by the Minister of Public Utilities, I have to ask myself what has happened to the citizens of this country. These things make me look on the side of the workers.

Money is wasted and frittered away by the millions, yet Government cannot provide a means of production to employ people in this country. I am concerned with the waste more than anything else. I want people to be employed. I do not want Government to find the means of employing those who are their supporters, and for the rest, the devil could take the hindmost. That is what is happening. Setting workers to destroy workers is almost manifest in almost every phase of employment.

This Bill cannot solve the problem unless clauses 23 and 24 are removed.

Clause 23 says :

“The funds and resources of the Corporation shall consist of—

(a) such amounts as may be appropriated therefor by Parliament;

- (b) all sums from time to time received by or falling due to the Corporation in respect of its operations;
- (c) sums borrowed by the Corporation for the purpose of meeting any of its obligations or discharging any of its functions; and
- (d) all other sums or property that may in any manner become payable to or vested in the Corporation in respect of any matter incidental to its powers and duties.”

This has always been the trouble.

Clause 24 says :

“(1) The Treasury may guarantee in such manner and on such conditions as it thinks fit the payment of the principal and interest in respect of any borrowing of the Corporation under subsection (2) of section 22.

(2) Where the Minister of Finance is satisfied that there has been default in the repayment of any principal monies or interest guaranteed under the provisions of this section, he shall direct the repayment out of the general assets and revenue of Trinidad and Tobago of the amount in respect of which there has been such default.

(4) The Corporation shall make to the Treasury, at such time and in such manner as the Minister of Finance may direct, payments of such amounts as may be so directed in or towards repayment of any sums issued in fulfilment of any guarantee given under this section, any payments of interest on what is outstanding for the time being in respect of any sums so issued at such rates as the Minister of Finance may direct, and different rates of interest may be directed as regards different sums and as regards interest for different periods.”

If, for so many things, Government just guarantee with blank cheques stating that all expenses will be met from the Treasury, how do we expect this business to succeed, especially when the men who are appointed are supporters of the Government? If anything happens tomorrow they will get Government's protection because Government expect their support. That is no arrangement for a businessman at all. This fact was absolutely borne out when the Government gave the last bus concession under these conditions. The White Paper said:

"The new concession shall be operated on the basis of a Service-at-Cost Agreement providing for guaranteed return to the concessionaire, after the payment of all legitimate operating expenses of not less than 14 per cent. of gross revenue (before deduction of income tax) for the use of his equipment, risk and management, subject to the following conditions:

- (i) Establishment of a Public Utilities Commission which shall fix fares. (Pending the establishment of a Commission existing fares shall remain unchanged).
- (ii) Where the revenue from the fares proves insufficient to meet the guaranteed return, the deficit will be met by Government subvention.
- (iii) All revenues in excess of that required to give to the concessionaire are turn of 17 per cent. of gross revenue (before deduction of income tax) would be credited to a 'Regulator Fund'".

4.45 p.m.

So they were guaranteed 14 per cent. and they were allowed to make up to 17 per cent. And if there were any deficit it would have been met by a subvention. So obviously

which company in these happy circumstances would really go out of its way to at least make the company pay? Why would they, for instance, try to cut down their managerial expenses? It is the same thing here. There is nothing in this Bill that would encourage this Board to operate the bus concession as a business concern, because it is guaranteed by the Government. So when my Friend says that he is going to give this country this wonderful service I am certain that it is just a question of time to see what would happen.

Perhaps, I should quote from *Hansard* of Monday, 4th September, 1961, to prove this point. The Minister of Communications and Works in the last Government made the same mistake when he piously gave this House the assurance that these concessions would pay after a time. I am quoting from a speech delivered by Mr. Constantine when the concessions were being granted. He said:

"The Government says to these concessionaires, you must make 14 per cent. on your legitimate expenses. If you do not make 14 per cent. we shall make it up to 14 per cent. and then you pay income tax. But, in order to encourage the concessionaires to make a little for themselves, Government is saying you can make 17 per cent. before depositing anything in the Regulator Fund. Between 14 and 17 per cent. he has not to deposit. Over 17 per cent. he deposits in the Regulator Fund for a rainy day. Anything in excess of that would be credited to the Regulator Fund."

That was wishful thinking. Not a cent has been deposited in the Regulator Fund. As a matter of fact none of these concessionaires ever made an attempt to make a profit or even cut down their losses. And we find the same thing will happen because the

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conditions are similar. Already we have passed, in the Select Committee on the Estimates, I think, \$4 million to meet the deficits of these companies. We are getting credits from the United Kingdom to the tune of, I think, \$5.8 million. It would be all right while the buses are new, as we might be able to cut down the losses, but in the end we shall be owing \$6 million; and the losses that we have today in rail and road transport will almost be the same in road transport alone. And this country will be saddled with another \$6 million or \$17 million in bus transport.

I do know that the Government are responsible for providing the public with a cheap and efficient form of transport. But we have had too much waste in this country and this Bill does not give any direction to the cutting down of that waste in road transport. So what Government are doing, to my mind, is this; they are scrapping the railway; they are putting the bus transport in its place, vesting it in the hands of Government but they have removed every element of the business side of transport. In this country transport cannot be run, as I said in this House, by Civil Service methods. There must be the correct approach if it is to pay, and naturally if this service is just given a blank cheque and guaranteed by the Treasury we can expect that we are not going to cut down the losses even over a long period.

As I said, when the buses are new, losses would be cut down, but I do not think that the machinery can be guaranteed to give very good service beyond five years, especially when the public is handling it and when there is not that national sense of responsibility and that feeling of ownership which the workers must possess if we are to have a good transport system in this country.

Independence to Trinidad and Tobago does not mean ownership by the Prime Minister and his employees. That is not the meaning of independence. Independence means the participation of everyone; everyone who is resident here; who is a citizen of this country in some service. But day after day what we are having is legislation being passed in which either the citadels of freedom are being destroyed or the means of employment and so on vested in the hands of Government to do as they please. I see absolutely no hope for the future of bus transport in this country.

There is one little redeeming feature. I think it is clause 19, where my Friend says that he is going to provide within three years some pension scheme for the workers. Well I feel that a worker is entitled to a pension as of right and not merely by the grace of the Government. I do not want to see pensions guaranteed to bus workers only; I feel that everybody in Trinidad and Tobago employed either in private enterprise or in the public service should be guaranteed some form of pension, or superannuation; some form of security for his old age. In the circumstances I do not think I can support this piece of legislation because I, like the hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, feel that this too has been another wasteful exercise in this House.

**Mr. K. Mohammed :** Mr. Speaker, by and large from the three contributions we have had opposite, it would seem to me that there has been in one case a great deal of misunderstanding; in another case a great deal of misconception, and in the other case, a great deal of suspicion. So that against this background I shall merely attempt to put the record straight rather than to give a detailed reply, so to speak, to the points made.



The hon. member for Naparima had perhaps written his speech long before he heard what I had to say, so that during the course of his contribution he dwelt upon several points which I had already emphasized in my opening remarks. Whether he did not hear what I said or could not change the contents of his considered speech I do not know, but I must compliment him because he did put in a great deal of research as he always does. But in fact, the basic points he made I had already dealt with in my presentation of the Bill. Perhaps if he had paid attention he would have found that it was not necessary for him to make the points he did.

The hon. Member began by saying that the transport policy of this Government is a big joke and he quoted from the Rose Report. Now in my presentation I made it quite clear that a solution had not yet been found for the position in the country so far as transport is concerned, because of the rapid development of the transport industry. The development of road transport of Trinidad and Tobago has been phenomenal and can match that of metropolitan cities like London, or Paris in France, or New York in the United States of America. I had thought that any person who would make a study of the development of road transport in this country would come to the conclusion that such a development had taken place as a result of rapid expansion and the economic development of the country.

There is a further point which I should like to make with respect to certain comments made by the hon. Member for Naparima, and it is this: in analyzing the railway or in analyzing the economic development of the country or the road transport system one must take into consideration that Trinidad and Tobago is such a small

place. In making any statement on the railway, as Mr. Madöry pointed out in his report, we must bear in mind that Trinidad and Tobago rail lines consist of only about 100 miles and they run in three simple directions and do not really include other areas of the country. As we know this line runs from Port-of-Spain via St. Joseph to San Fernando. The Siparia line was cut off, but we had to put it back when the bus strike was on. The crop came in and we decided to leave it. There is the other line operating between Port-of-Spain, Jerningham and Rio Claro. This line too was cut out when it was found out that it was not suitable to take the weight of the coaches and that life and limb were exposed to danger. During that period in the Rio Claro area, even though the Devenish Bend, that dangerous hill, was not rectified, people carried on their business with some inconvenience, naturally, and within a few weeks they were able to get accustomed to other means of transport and it did not materially affect their day to day life. Now that the Devenish Bend has been cut and the road has been improved, with the number of passengers who use the Rio Claro line, it is a very simple matter to arrange for a few buses to take those passengers to and from Rio Claro.

Now, the hon. Member for Naparima, as well as the hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, spoke in such a tone as would give listeners to the debate either present here or on the radio, the impression that the Government are a bunch of jokers, the ministers are incompetent and not knowledgeable about their business, but that these two learned Gentlemen, one who represents Naparima and the other who represents Pointe-a-Pierre are the only ones acquainted with all the problems of the country; the knowers and finders of the solutions of such problems.

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This seems to me very conceited because no Government worth their salt would come to Parliament with a proposal without getting the facts and figures that would be necessary to enable them to arrive at a conclusion.

I have before me certain data and I should like before making reference to them to say to these two hon. Members that after the Minister of Finance made his announcement, as I outlined in my presentation, the Government immediately set up a high powered expert Civil Service team of economists, experienced people in accounting, administrators, people experienced in the Public Service Commission for the placing of staff, sociologists, etc., to comprise a committee to advise Government as to what course we should take, what part of the railway may go and what part should not go. This committee worked for nearly two years and reported to Cabinet, as a result of which Cabinet felt that there were other considerations involved and went on to appoint a Cabinet Committee to work with this team and to make final proposals which will be discussed with the trade unions and then this plan will be presented to the country.

I did not in my opening remarks attempt in any way to say in what way the railway will be modified. I did not say that, nor has any Minister of Government or the Prime Minister either here or in a public meeting said at any time that the Government are going to scrap the railway. What we said was that we were going to have a phased substitution of the railway and that we were going to modify the railway services placing the emphasis on road transport development where alternative transport will fit in better. The whole situation has now changed because we have taken over the bus enterprise and we cannot possibly have one board or one authority running the

buses and another to run the railway and another one to run the trucks, or yet another to run the taxis. This is part of our policy, upon which we have been working very carefully.

Hon. Members will recall that we had the Rose Commission which made a comprehensive study. We decided that we could not implement all of these recommendations, but we did implement a substantial number of them. Following this we had several local committees investigating various aspects of transport problems ending up with the Madöry Report which was not merely an analysis of the Government railway or rehabilitation of the Government railway. I should like to refer the hon. Member for Naparima to page 1 of the Madöry report. In it he will see that the terms of reference included this very study which he advocates should be made. And I agree with the hon. Member that in order to arrive at a final decision, on a matter of such great importance, these considerations must be taken into account. Here are the terms of reference :

1. "To advise on the utilisation of the Trinidad Government Railway either wholly or in part, as a means of transport having regard to :
  - (a) the annual deficits incurred in its operation and the probable effectiveness of various suggested measures for reducing or eliminating such deficits;
  - (b) the present condition of its rail system, rolling stock and equipment;
  - (c) the probable cost of any programme for rehabilitation with or without electrification."

which means that these three items alone took into consideration most of the points

he made. But the terms of reference did not end there. They went further :

2. "In the light of the present role of the Railway taking into account the geographical, social and economic factors involved in its operation, to advise on the implications of replacing the Railway by other means of transport with particular emphasis on the likely effect of such replacement on :

- (a) the labour situation including the possibility of deployment of the labour force of the Railway and its absorption in other enterprises;
- (b) the existing road system including the probable cost of such extension as may be necessary to enable it to accommodate an increased volume of traffic."

And this is a point, he rightly stressed that in order to take any decision for modification of the railway which will impose a greater strain on the existing roads, plans and programmes must be devised in order to find other roads. This is elementary and even a school child will understand it. Therefore, it was included here. I continue :

- "(c) other existing means of transport including their capacity for expansion or improvement;
- (d) the operations of commercial and industrial users of the Railway."

This is another important point to which the hon. Member for Naparima made reference. He even said that, if somebody wanted to set up an industry at Rio Claro, surely he would want to find out whether there is adequate means of transport, and asked whether an examination has been

made of what part the railway would play in this. I would suggest for his consideration and for the consideration of other hon. Members that the points he raised have been adequately answered in the terms of reference which I have just quoted, and which were drafted by Cabinet and given to Mr. Madöry. Not only that, but I submit with the greatest respect that the fact that Mr. Madöry is one of the top experts in Europe who has done similar examinations for other countries in a position like ourselves, I respect his opinion. And this was a thorough and complete analysis quite apart from the various other analyses to which I shall refer in a little while and which were done locally by our own experts. In order to save time I think there is no need for me to go into the details of the points the hon. Member has raised.

**Mr. Seukeran :** Mr. Speaker, will the hon. Member give way to a question ? I am pleased that he has regarded what I said as something that a school child can understand. He quoted the terms of reference. Will he kindly tell us what part of the Madöry report advises him on the social and economic factors which will have an impact on the country and to which he said he has paid attention ?

**Mr. K. Mohammed :** Mr. Speaker, I had thought the hon. Member had read the report. If he looks at the table of contents he will see the following :

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Terms of Reference ...	1
The actual condition of the Railway ...	5
The annual deficits of the Railway ...	7
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The future trend of the Trinidad Government Railway deficits	15
The minimum investment programme ... ..	19
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5.05 p.m.

**Mr. L. Seukeran :** This farce must stop. I have asked him to pinpoint that section of the report showing the social and economic impact that this commission, or this top expert, Mr. Madöry, has advised him on, so that we could know on what basis he has formed his opinion. Let him quote the section of the report.

**Mr. K. Mohammed :** I was trying to advise him so that he could help himself. We are very busy people. He has made his analysis. Please let him allow me to make mine. I was just drawing his attention to the fact that if he wanted to see that section—it is a very big report—he would find a reference to it in the contents table. He could then take his time and read it. My submission is that this report alone, with the terms of reference, would cover the points he has made. In addition, I should like to say that the only reason why I have not quoted from these documents in my presentation is that we have not yet spoken with the trade unions. We have given our word to the trade unions that we are going to discuss the details before making them public and since the Bill before the House is merely to create the administrative machinery for the operation of the bus and rail services of the country, I did not think it necessary to go into these details.

**Mr. L. Seukeran :** Yes, now you are talking.

**Mr. K. Mohammed :** It may be necessary at a later stage, after we have arrived at some agreement with the trade union concerned, to make it known to hon. Members, and at that stage they will have it. I shall just give you an idea of what this first document is : “ Interim Report on the Substitution of the Trinidad Government Railways by Road and Rail Transport,” submitted on 19th August, 1963. This analysis deals with labour problems, road problems, traffic problems, industry problems, economic and social effects, disposal of railway assets, and so on. All the points that he has asked for are here.

Then there is this summary, made by the same committee which had, as I told you, qualified people to deal with this matter. This is an interim report on the substitution of the Trinidad Government Railways and in this there are tables dealing with every facet of the operation of the rail and road passengers transport : Would unemployment be created ? Would redundancy be created ? What would be the position with respect to those four million passengers to whom the hon. Member referred ? All this must be dealt with in the report. Then there is a later report prepared recently by the Ministry of Public Utilities when the Cabinet was asked to make certain vital decisions with respect to the railway and the bus service. In this report is provided additional up-to-date information, as recent as 1964. The decision taken by Cabinet with respect to an approach to these trade unions was taken early in 1965, so this final report which was presented to Cabinet only a matter of weeks ago contains very up-to-date information.

Quite apart from that, I think the hon. Member stressed a point about the roads. He should try to recall that during my

presentation I dealt at great length with this point, and I emphasized the alternative proposals—not just proposals which might be implemented but proposals which have already been implemented to start actual road construction. He knows that.

He made another point and I think that I should refer to it in order that nobody would misunderstand the intentions of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. He said that there were some four million passengers using the railways and asked what would happen to these passengers. I should like to draw his attention to the fact that out of the four million passengers—and I will quote a year at random, say, 1960—3,600,000 passengers travelled between Port-of-Spain and Arima. And this much I can say, that our tentative decision, whatever it may be, does not involve any interference with this section of the line between Port-of-Spain and Arima. It does not involve it at all and at no time did we say this. What, therefore is the position of the remaining passengers?

There were 360,000 passengers travelling between Port-of-Spain and San Fernando. This would include the passengers who are counted from Port-of-Spain to St. Joseph and a number of them who may get off between these points. We have not broken down the figures but I would say that since the traffic is so heavy here, we would be able to put this at a lower figure. Also, on the Eastern line, going to Rio Claro, it amounted to about 200,000 passengers for 1960. On a percentage basis, the Port-of-Spain to Arima line carried 81.7 per cent., the San Fernando line carried 13.7 per cent., and the Rio Claro line carried 4.6 per cent.

It is clear, therefore, that the concentration of passengers on the railway is between Port-of-Spain and Arima, and since the

Government—tentatively and without committing us in any way—have taken as a part of their decision not to interfere with the Port-of-Spain to Arima line—we are not mad—then the problem does not arise at all. So what are we arguing about, if we have said in clear terms that we are not interfering with it at all? We did not say that we would interfere with X, Y or Z. As I said before, these are matters that we have to negotiate. Therefore, we must be given some opportunity, and hon. Members must await the factual information which we present before arriving at their own conclusions. This is so far as the passengers are concerned.

I would just say, for your information, that so far as the San Fernando line is concerned it was reported to me by the General Manager, I think it was in 1962, that on a Carnival Monday and Tuesday there were forty and seventy passengers respectively using a train that comes from San Fernando to Port-of-Spain and goes back. So you see how the whole pattern of transport in this country has changed. That people prefer to get a taxi to drop them right to their doors is another fundamental factor that has to be considered. In the light of all these things and the fact that the buses can go into the various roads and can drop children near schools, whatever the arrangements might be, new considerations must be involved in any transport policy of the country.

As I said in my opening remarks, so far as the railway is concerned, this railway was designed to meet the particular needs of a particular time but those needs no longer exist. The hon. Member mentioned that it is because the sugar companies and the oil companies no longer want the facilities that Government have made this decision. This is not so. When I referred to the cane farmers

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I was not saying that we were taking this decision because the cane farmers would or would not be adversely affected. I never said that. What I was trying to explain was that if any attempt were made to interfere with the existing tariff, the price formula for arriving at the price for farmers' canes is so designed that the cost of transportation is a vital factor. Assuming that the farmers had contributed 38 per cent. of the total sugar canes produced in this country it would have meant an increase to the extent that it would be charged in the price formula for transportation of canes. For myself, I would never support any revision that would operate adversely against the cane farmers, because the larger companies have a means of transporting their own estate canes by their own trucks and private railway lines.

I just wanted to clear up the points that the hon. Member made. I think that he should be complimented for the very thorough research that he has made and especially for the amount of research that that he did to come up with the statistics from France and the United Kingdom and so on. However, if I may say so, these examples could hardly be made applicable to Trinidad and Tobago because the railway service lines for tubes and railways are nearly one thousand miles criss-cross in London alone, compared with one hundred miles in Trinidad and Tobago.

5.15 p.m.

Where millionaires travel by tubes and trains and by buses in London, here, ordinary people, the working man, would come to his motorcar and drive right into Port-of-Spain. So the travelling pattern, the traffic habits of the people are so different that these examples and quotations, while very

good for our own purposes for guidance, will hardly apply. I cannot see Trinidad and Tobago having monorails from here to Tunapuna, running by electricity, and so on. This is a new thing which could be introduced in areas where conditions are quite different. But I cannot see us going into that at the present time when there are other cheaper alternative means that are less complicated and equally efficient. I hope I have clarified that point. This full and comprehensive survey has been taken.

Another point that the hon. Member was harping upon was that if we cannot find the experts in the Ministry of Public Utilities we should ask the Prime Minister to get the support of his Economic Planning Division. I think we can tell him that all the proposals here involve the Economic Planning Division. In fact, at the moment the Secretary of the Cabinet Committee is the Deputy Head of the Economic Planning Division of the Prime Minister's Office. He is aware of all of these, and he agrees—in fact we do not make any decision in Cabinet involving such far-reaching matters until the Economic Planning Division is adequately consulted. So I should like to clarify that point.

The hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre began by expressing his doubts as to whether he could accept the word of this Minister or of any other Minister, having regard to past performances. He made particular reference to the Agricultural Small Holdings Act. This is not the first time he has made reference to it, and I would admit in public that I did say I was hoping that when this Bill was finally implemented it would create a revolution as far as farmers are concerned, because one of the great deficiencies of our present farming population is the fact that they do not have security of tenure, and

since the majority of them are tenanted farmers other than Crown land tenants, they are put into very great difficulties. We have run into some difficulties which were unforeseen when this Bill was introduced shortly before I relinquished the post of Minister of Agriculture, and it coincided with the introduction of the Town and Country Planning Bill. There were certain necessary things to be done with respect to this new Bill which was introduced, and as a result the difficulties in finalizing arrangements with the implementation of the Town and Country Planning Bill, it was not possible to introduce this. Then we achieved independence, as a result of which we were advised by the Attorney General that certain changes will have to be made in the form of the drafting and so on. It is for this reason that the matter has been delayed. We apologize for it. But I doubt whether it is fair and reasonable for the hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre to be so frustrated that on each occasion he would stand here and make reference to such a minor point. It would seem to me that he has confidence in nobody whatsoever; I hope he has in himself.

I never at all said, as he quoted me as having said, that this Bill that we are presenting was going to solve the problems of transport in this country. I was merely analysing the problems as we saw them in the Ministry. I was merely explaining that in order that we should have an integration of both the rail and the bus service under one organization we had considered these factors, and that in the introduction of the other Bill, which would deal with the general control of other facets of the transport industry—because this Board here, this corporation which is being created by this Act, is merely a functional body or an

operational body, and to the extent that all other statutory boards in every country give the Minister the power to reflect cabinet decisions or directives where overall Government policy is involved—such a provision has been included to allow the Minister to give general or specific directions. Therefore the Board will function, operate and run the service just as the Railway Board was running the railway or the Central Water Distribution Authority runs the C.W.D.A., or the members of the Board of T. & T. E. C. run the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission. All those Ordinances include a provision where they are told that their function is to distribute water, their function is to rate and charge for connexions, their function is to supply electricity and to charge for that electricity, and that they should utilize some of their capital in the generation of new supply areas. All those Acts contain the same provision, where their powers are defined, where they are told they can do X, Y and Z; and finally, where the Minister is empowered to give general and specific directions.

This is necessary. What is the use of creating a body which will have to exist in a society where the Government are finally responsible for the financial control and financial subsidy, if any, and then the Parliament will have no say in this matter? Because once the Minister is involved the Parliament is bound to be involved. Under the Exchequer and Audit Ordinance all these accounts must come to Parliament. It is the Minister who has to present these accounts to Parliament, it is the Minister who can be pulled across the table by Members opposite if that authority fails. If the Minister's power is removed, then they will be left absolutely free, therefore the rights of Parliament

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will be jeopardized and the very democracy which they advocate so frequently will be denied to the people of the country.

It would seem to me, therefore, that on this point a closer examination will reveal that the suspicion by the hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre is quite unjustified.

The hon. Member asked whether this corporation is a policy body or not. I think I have explained, and therefore I would not repeat references to it. This is quite simple and clear, and the powers as reflected in the hands of the Minister have already been explained.

I do not agree with him when he says that clause 8 conflicts with clause 9 because, as I said, this is a normal provision which is put into all bills wherever these statutory authorities are created.

He said this is not an operative document, but a political manifesto. Well, Sir, I do not know what to say about that. These sorts of statements are becoming very frequent in the House, and people read disaster at every corner. In everything that comes before this House some people read disaster and read trouble and point a read light where there is none. My own view is that if the hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre thinks that this is an election manifesto he has adequate opportunity if and when he goes to Pointe-a-Pierre to put it to his constituency, and then when the time comes they will decide whether this manifesto is good or his might be better. This is the only way in which I can analyse it, because I never introduced any political considerations in the introduction of the Bill. I merely tried to state what I felt was the background relating to the creation of this authority and why I believe these facts and figures should be given to hon. Members.

5.25. p.m.

The hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre also asked why it is that the corporation is going to be given the power to store goods. I should like to remind him he was a civil servant once and should know. The railway at the moment has the authority to do some storage, and since this authority is taking over the functions of the railway it is an automatic provision that this Board will also do some storage of rice and other things in sheds and people who leave goods there have to pay a rent, just as the Port Authority charges a rent for storage in their sheds. I hope that no red light or suspicion will be recorded against this if he understands that the provision is put in to allow for a continuation of what is now existing.

The hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre said that the lecture of the hon. Member for Naparima was too learned for his audience and I only hope that he includes himself in that audience. I prefer to leave it right there if he includes himself.

The cost factor including road cost plus operational cost that the hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre referred to has been taken into account in all these reports. After all, there is not only one economist in this House; we have them in the Government too and in making any analysis of the cost factor, the cost factor on roads must be taken into account, otherwise all these records would be incomplete. Mr. Madöry himself told us that he has taken this into consideration in his cost factor as well, so I should like to assure the hon. Member, if it is any consolation and if he will believe it, that the cost factor was taken into consideration.

I have already explained page 17, Part III of the Bill. Confusion, he says, might be created between the direction of the Minister



with respect to disposal of property. I should like to explain that at the moment all the assets of the Government Railway, although governed by the Railway Board, are vested in the Crown and, since this is so, only the Minister can approve of the disposal of this on behalf of the Government and the Corporation will then decide as to the detailed implementation of this disposal. For example, if it is stated by the Ministry of Community Development that they would like a railway shed in a particular area to go towards the building of a community centre in Petit Morne or El Socorro or Diego Martin, then it would be a matter of the Ministry of Community Development to let the Minister know. and if the Minister believes that this is in the interests of the national good, then the Corporation will be asked to release this asset which belongs to the Crown and not to the Corporation as such, since they are the custodians of this particular asset belonging to the Crown. As far as that is concerned, there is, in my view, no conflict whatsoever.

The hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre went on to say that we went to the United Kingdom for aid and because the United Kingdom refused us aid we took the decision to abandon the railway. I should like to make it clear that I did not make mention of going to the United Kingdom for aid. What I said was that the Trinidad and Tobago Government, from its own resources, had invested about \$1½ million in rehabilitation equipment and a rehabilitation programme and this was in accord with the pledge we gave in 1955 before we became a party, and in 1956 when we assumed the reins of Government we said we were going to make every effort to do what we could to rehabilitate the railway. We kept that pledge. We tried our best with all the means,

financial and otherwise, at our disposal to rehabilitate this railway, but we have come to the conclusion, as a result of all these analyses made by foreign as well as local experts, that no matter what amount of money is spent to rehabilitate the railway, there is no question of rehabilitating it to the extent that any service it will perform will be commensurate with the investment required. This is a simple point I tried to make. We had approached the United States Government during the Chaguaramas negotiations for utilization of part of the aid money towards the rehabilitation of the railway. I did not mention the United Kingdom Government and the reference was in that context.

The hon. Member requested to be told the meaning of "phased substitution". We mean that we cannot remove a particular section until there is an alternative to it and therefore it is phased to suit. If an alternative has been provided between Jerningham Junction and Rio Claro by the cutting out of the Devenish Bend, then about six buses will be needed to facilitate the three hundred passengers that travel there daily. Therefore, we have to find the six buses and once you have cut out the Devenish Bend, which has been done, and we find six buses to put there, that is "phased substitution".

The hon. Member went on to say that no plan has been worked out for phased substitution. I think I have answered that point in the facts which I explained. We have actually made a complete survey and analysis of compensation and everything. This is a matter which we will discuss with the trade unions concerned.

He referred to anonymous experts whose names are never given. I am not going to accept that. I referred to two experts;

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Mr. Madöry, the Swiss expert, and Mr. Weedy the U.K. expert. I mentioned the names of both experts and I quoted from their reports. I do not have any secrets nor do their reports contain any secrets. Mr. Madöry's report has been published and the section of the Weedy report was only presented to Cabinet about four weeks ago and I quoted in essence in my presentation what he said so I do not plead guilty to the hon. Member's very wild allegation that we hide the names of these experts for ulterior purposes.

Some people feel that the effect of this Bill will be to provide paid positions for certain people. I do not agree with this. This is a very important point and I should like to clarify it. Some people believe that those Members who serve on statutory boards make a world of money. This statement by the hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre is a very serious aspersion on the genuine, loyal citizens of the country who devote their time with no pay to serving on these boards. Even in a body like T. & T. E. C., which has to deal with so much of the country's revenue and expenditure, the members are paid a paltry \$40 or \$60 a month. This is what they get as an out of pocket allowance, especially with the C.W.D.A. or Railway Board and Port Authority. The Chairman is paid \$120 a month as an allowance. So any suggestion that this Board, which is going to be set up for the running of the bus and railway services of this country, is going to be a Board created to provide employment or pay opportunities for any citizen must be rejected and I resent it very strongly because I know when we want to get people to serve on a Board how difficult it is to find people of the right calibre, with service in the particular field that is required. There is no justification for that remark.

I am sure that the question of jobs is something we must take into account. I do not know what is the general allegation made about jobs. There are people who apply for jobs in all places; they apply in Government and in private enterprise. Nobody goes directly out to discriminate against anybody. People look for jobs on the basis of their qualifications, particularly in the bus enterprise. You have to look for people who can do mechanical work, who will want to do cleaning or washing of the buses or driving or conducting. After all, people are taken on a basis of special assignment. I do not see the point the hon. Member is making.

He concluded by saying that the Bill is an essay in propaganda and we do not know what to do. In view of what I have said already on some of the statements he has made, I shall not comment upon that because, since many of his points have been based on misconceptions and a lack of proper knowledge about what is taking place, it would be futile for me to attempt to answer those points.

The final contribution made was by the hon. Member for Princes Town and he lamented the fact that three or four weeks ago Government refused the trade unions when on bended knees they begged for an extension of time so that they would be able to consider the Industrial Stabilization Bill and today we are so generous that we are awaiting discussions with the trade unions before we announce the decision with respect to the railway. Here again, this statement is inaccurate and untrue. The report of every single organization which sent one in was considered by Cabinet, including those who opposed the Bill. I think the Prime Minister, during the course of the debate, did mention the names of those

organizations who were able to make their contributions and make suggestions, and all of them had adequate opportunity to present their views. It is not within my knowledge that anybody went down on bended knees and did not get any opportunity to make representations. In fact, those representations were made and considered, and several of the proposals, including proposals by certain hon. Members opposite, were included in the amendment to the Industrial stabilization Bill.

### 6.35 p.m.

The hon. Member referred to the lack of provisions for compensating people. Well, there is no problem in this at all, because in the proposal which has been drawn up for discussion with the trade unions, adequate provision has been made and there is no need to put it in the legislation until the final form is known. In any event since that is a matter for negotiation and nobody knows whom or how many people will be affected, the better course should be to leave it for negotiation.

The hon. Member also said that the public was careless about the future of our country and that some people are fed-up with and frustrated by the Government and so on. My only comment on that is: if that is so, I am equally sorry there is no alternative to the Government at the present time. And if the people are fed up and frustrated they will be even more fed up and frustrated when they think of the fact that there is no alternative. There is absolutely no alternative.

The hon. Member talked about spending \$10 million. First of all, let me say that \$10 million, as far as my records go, was not the figure involved. And he also said that, there was more waste and it calls for

an inquiry into the spending of this \$10 million or whatever the figure might be. We have gone into this matter over and over again because year after year—1961, 1962, 1963 and 1964, we spent a considerable time discussing this question of the method which was adopted in awarding the concessions to the old concessionaires. We pointed out that we were experimenting with a system which had operated successfully in the United States of America, and granting that subsidies were necessary in order to run such a public service, and allowing for a reasonable managerial fee, we had hoped that there would be an improvement in the situation. That was not to be, however, and we said so. That is why we have gone into the acquisition of the bus system. So I do not think that it is wise to harp on this system because the fact of the matter is we made a genuine try. That method did not work so we are adopting the new method which is one that has been successful in many other areas and we feel confident that we shall succeed.

He also said that this Bill is putting the ownership of the bus enterprise into the hands of the Prime Minister. This statement, in my opinion, is most unfair and most uncharitable and I think of all persons, the Leader of the Opposition should not make such a remark. It is most unfair. Regardless of differences that exist politically on matters of principle, I think it is wrong, because after all the Prime Minister of a country is the Prime Minister. From the point of view of our external relations no statements should be made which could jeopardize the integrity and prestige of our country. It is very wrong and I should like to deny that categorically.

As the Minister responsible for the operation of the bus service of this country and the

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one who will still be responsible if this Bill is approved by Parliament, I can give the country the assurance that we shall do our best to see that the statutory corporation operate the service in the best interest of the nation, without fear, favour, bias or ill-will towards anybody. To do otherwise has never been our intention or our policy. If it has been mentioned, it has been mentioned by people who do not know, or by people who know but want to create mischief.

To say that this Bill is putting ownership in the hands of the Prime Minister is a serious indictment against the integrity of those people who would have to serve. I am not in a position to announce the names of the people, but the Bill provides for seven citizens of this country to serve. I should think that, from that aspect the hon. the Leader of the Opposition would agree with me that this indictment is undesirable and unfair. I am quite sure that he would take steps at a later stage to rectify that statement or the effects of it.

He said that the only thing left would be the creation of a one-party state. The only reason why a one-party state might be created is that we might not have an opposition. My advice is that the Opposition bosses should get together and form a formidable opposition to avoid a one-party state being created. A one-party state cannot be created by one side, it is because of the failure of another side.

On this question of democratic socialism, I am not qualified to speak, but all I can say as a mere casual observer is that it seems as though state ownership is a very important and fundamental principle of it. The bus enterprise, the railway and the corporation constitute one aspect of the Government's policy to see that we own

these essential utilities which we would be able to get to the highest degree of efficiency for the general good of the public. I do not know what political tag would be attached to it, but our concern is efficiency and economy.

He said that there was no provision for operating this enterprise on a commercial basis. I wish to assure him that in this Bill there is such provision, and to remind him of Mr. Weedy's advice "that everybody must make every effort to operate this bus service on commercial lines." Therefore, the Board would be comprised of people who would have experience in various fields—people in transport, accounting and law. It would be a good business organisation. Naturally, for the first few years a subsidy would be required. Mr. Madöry in his report, as I pointed out, said that for the first three to five years a subsidy would be required but nothing to the extent of \$3 million or \$4 million. He pointed out what would be required, and as I explained, steps are being taken to implement all these recommendations which have been made.

To this extent we have done a tremendous amount of work, but there is a great deal more to be done. It will be done as soon as the machinery and funds are made available to us. I think that the creation of this statutory board or corporation to operate this bus service is a great improvement. It is fulfilling the pledge given in December when the Motor Omnibus Concessions (Acquisition of Undertakings) Bill was being presented to the House. And the fact that the railway would be integrated and that these two facets of our transport industry are complementary to each other, would make it possible to bring them together and utilize the facilities they have in the best interest of the country.

I look forward to the support of all hon. Members.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill committed to a Committee of the whole House.*

*House in Committee.*

**5.45 p.m.**

*Clause 1, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clause 2,*

*Question proposed, That Clause 2 stand part of the Bill.*

**Mr. Mohammed:** Mr. Chairman, I beg to move, that clause 2 be amended by substituting the words "Public Utilities" for the word "Transport" in the definition of "Minister".

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 2, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clauses 3 to 34 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clause 35,*

*Question proposed, That clause 35 stand part of the Bill.*

**Mr. Mohammed:** Mr. Chairman, I beg to move, that clause 35 be amended by substituting for the words "or otherwise" occurring in line 7 for the words "or otherwise; and".

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 35, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clauses 36 to 48, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*The Schedule.*

*Question proposed, That the Schedule stand part of the Bill.*

**Mr. Mohammed:** Mr. Chairman, I beg to move, That the following amendments be made to the Schedule:

"(a) in item 1 thereof, by inserting the following paragraph immediately after paragraph B as paragraph C thereof:  
"C. By repealing section 44D thereof";

(b) by re-numbering paragraph C, D and E of item 1 thereof as paragraph D, E, and F respectively;

(c) in paragraph E as re-numbered of the said item 1—

(i) by inserting after the words "the Corporation" in paragraph (d) of subsection (1) of section 77B, the words "established under the Public Transport Service Act, 1965";

(ii) by inserting the following new sections immediately after section 77C:

77D. (1) Regulations may make provision generally as to the conduct of persons using a station and in particular—

(a) for appointing any place, being the property of the Corporation or being part of a road, a station for public service vehicles;

(b) in the case of a road, for authorising the Corporation to do all things as are necessary to adapt the station for use as such, and in particular

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to provide and maintain waiting rooms, ticket offices, refreshment places and lavatories and other similar accommodation in connection therewith;

- (c) for authorising the Corporation to make reasonable charges for the use of, let on hire to any person, any accommodation so provided; and
- (d) for the use of any such accommodation.

(2) In this section "Corporation" means the Corporation established under the National Transport Service Act, 1965, and "station" includes bus stops and coach stations and terminals that may be used by public service vehicles the property of the Corporation as parking places.

77E. Regulations may contain provisions for imposing on any person contravening the regulations, a fine recoverable on summary conviction

of two hundred and fifty dollars or imprisonment for three months for each offence."

- (iii) by re-numbering section 77D thereof as section 77F; and (d) in item 2 thereof, by substituting for the words "Nothing in this Ordinance" occurring in paragraph B thereof, the words "(5) Nothing in this Ordinance".

*Question put and agreed to.*

*The Schedule, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Question put and agreed to, That the Bill as amended, be reported to the House.*

*House resumed.*

*Bill reported, with amendments; read the Third time and passed.*

*Motion made and question proposed, That the House do now adjourn to Friday, 30th April, 1965, at 1.30 p.m.—[Hon. A. G. Montano].*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourn accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 5.50 p.m.*