

This is my fifth article on pronouncements by Government, representing de facto transportation policy. The first four articles were published on Feb 9 and 23, Mar 1 and 8, respectively.

(43) Government announced the lowering of the age of imported used cars from four years to six years. The current quota of 13,500 imported used cars is expected to be reviewed in 2013.

The late Prof. Julien Kenny wrote that *“Cheaper foreign-used vehicles will no doubt result in more private cars, PH cars and PH/TH vans on the roads, more traffic congestion, more time and fuel wasted, more air pollution, more green- house gas emissions, more mobile discos and more roadside garages. The gasoline subsidy now runs at about \$4 billion per annum and will grow with more vehicles. ... More private vehicles on the roads will make it impossible ever to develop an energy efficient national public transportation system, except we spend many, many billions to expand all roads... Think, also, of the need for aggregate for the necessary road expansion to accommodate increased numbers of vehicles... For a low carbon paradigm the only logical option would be to make vehicle ownership much more costly while subsidising a public transportation system.”*

(44) January 2012 announcement that Government is inviting expressions of interest for the design, financing, construction, operation and maintenance of a light transit system from Port of Spain to Arima to be constructed approximately 4.2 metres above the Priority Bus Route. The expression of interest was for the first phase for the project and will be followed up by detailed requests for proposals.

(45) In February 2012, a large group of environmentalists began a protest against the construction of

the highway from San Fernando to Point Fortin and which will pass through Mon Desir Delhi Road in Fyzabad and Debe. They are claiming that schools, temples and an orphanage among other things will be destroyed.

(46) Announcement in February 2012 that the system of disposal of used vehicles will change in due course and there may be environmental issues to deal with, Government has continued with the importation quota system regarding used vehicles which the last Administration had implemented in 2006. He said vehicles imported between 2008 and 2010 totalled 4,882 (2008); 3,360 (2009) and 3,655 (2010). He said the quota stood at 13,497 to date and the ministry did not expect the importation of used cars to exceed that.

(47) Bus drivers returned to work on March 9, 2012, bringing an end to a three day work-to-rule action which left hundreds of commuters stranded for hours waiting for transport on the East/West Corridor. The action began when drivers expressed their frustration with their surroundings at the Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC) hub at City Gate, South Quay, POS. The workers complained about the toilet facilities as well as loose gratings in the yard as several of them have suffered injuries after falling through them. They also complained about the poor conditions of the buses.

(48) On March 7, 2012, the Ministry of Transport advised the public that while it is the law that vehicles must be inspected by the Licensing Division, in accordance with the Motor Vehicle and Road Traffic Act 48:50, the Licensing Division is not in the process of initiating or implementing any drive against motorists, in response to a rumour of a reported move by the Police Service and the Licensing

Division to move on anyone who had not had their vehicles inspected.

But why must the public always wait until the authorities decide to take action before they scramble in a mad rush to obey the law? And why must the State apologize for simple enforcement of the law? This latter action is worrying for me because other major crackdowns are required, and the apparent style of permanent campaigning will not recede, thus completely ignoring any decision that is likely to be considered politically negative to the public, even if technically effective.

Next week, an attempt will be made to assess the 47 de facto policy statement and actions for compatibility and effectiveness, and well as the consideration of other policies that might be necessary for our situation.

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