



Feature Address by

*Senator, the Honourable Conrad Enill*

*Minister of Energy & Energy Industries*

*At the*

*Centennial Anniversary of*

*Commercial Petroleum Production.*

*Hyatt Regency Hotel*

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His Excellency Danny Montano, Acting  
President of the Republic of Trinidad and  
Tobago;

My colleague Ministers of Government;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

President and Management Council of the  
South Trinidad Chamber of Industry and  
Commerce and other members of council;

Captains of Industry;

Centennial Awardees;

Specially invited guests;

Members of the Media;

It is a singular honour to be the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in this period of our country's history. I am indeed privileged.

Beginning with the driven genius of Walter Darwent and Randolph Rust and continuing across the ages to the men and women who today have the responsibility for this industry, it

is appropriate for us to acknowledge their great contribution in the service of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Today, as we reflect on the journey of the last one hundred years and celebrate this moment in time, we can conclude that we have indeed kept faith with our founding fathers and on all accounts we have done them proud.

Trinidad and Tobago is a pioneer in the petroleum industry because at every stage of

development of this sector, you could find an intervention to support this. We have been at the leading edge of a large number of the world's technological and economic developments since its very early beginnings 150 years ago. From the first efforts by Darwent in the 1860s, which may have seen the world's first oil well in 1866 here in Trinidad and Tobago, rather than elsewhere, to the start of commercial production in December 1907, to the early refining technologies in the 1920's and the almost "magical" use of new well

logging techniques in our oilfields in the 1930's,  
- we were right there at the forefront from the very beginning. World War II saw even more ingenuity and imagination.

Firstly, it was Trinidad and Tobago's oil located as it was on this side of the Atlantic Ocean, that fuelled the Allied war effort to combat the Axis forces as they sought to sabotage cross-Atlantic shipping by using U-Boats operating out of Axis support countries to the south of us. Chaguaramas was not merely an American

exchange deal for the Allied armies but an essential component of the war that followed. So too was the interest of the fledgling aviation industry in our activities. They could refuel here. The ingenuity and imagination developed in the indigenous energy sector extended in many critical and functional ways throughout the country itself.

We recovered casing and tubing from already completed oil wells for use in new drilling activity. Our drillers used coconut fibre and

husks to aerate and lighten the weight of the drilling mud used in that activity. Our sandalwood trees were used to fashion bearings and other critical steel components, out of wood, - I repeat wood, - to replace damaged parts in some of the machinery on board the vessels and craft that operated or had to be repaired here in Trinidad and Tobago. Innovation, Enterprise and Imagination continued in the 1950's as we went offshore. The first offshore platform at Brighton was a 36 slot platform that was a world record for size at the time. Trinmar (Soldado's) oil fields rank



among the world's giant oilfields and by the late 1960's the Refinery at Pointe-Pierre was processing the largest volume of crude in the entire Texaco global operation, bringing crude from as far as Indonesia as well as the Middle East to meet its ever increasing demand.

But it is in the soul and spirit of our people that the energy sector has had the greatest impact by fuelling a level of self-confidence that has changed the course of history.

We also salute the efforts in 1937 when Butler led the way in the fight for decent wages for the working oil man. In time, the struggle continued with George Weekes who through his efforts achieved new thresholds of respect and remuneration.

In 1956, Dr Eric Williams used his command of both history and an understanding of imperialism and capitalism to create a platform for further development. Historically, the oil company trade schools had provided much of

the growing competence of nationals in the laboratories, technical services such as drilling, work-overs, offshore craft, maintenance, welding and refinery support tasks to name a few. However the strategic business areas of management, marketing, professional services such as accounting, engineering, law, shipping, real research and development were still very much outside the reach of nationals.

By 1962 with the achievement of Independence on August 31<sup>st</sup>, one of the

earliest steps was the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry into the Oil Industry. This led to the creation of a Ministry of Petroleum and Mines for the first time replacing the Petroleum Inspectorate as a department of the Ministry of Agriculture, and by 1968 the Petroleum Act was established.

Ironically, in May 1972 new oil had been discovered offshore the East Coast by Amoco Trinidad Oil company and started to flow. By 1973 as OPEC got onto the world stage - Big

Time?, - the Petroleum Taxes Act was in place and by March 1974. Tax Reference Pricing ensured that the revenues earned from the large increases in oil output and in prices flowed to the consolidated fund and was used for the benefit of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

1974 was also declared the Year of Petroleum and one way we commemorated that was with the award of a large number of Scholarships for our best local minds.

In 1975 we established a Petroleum Engineering program at UWI St. Augustine another significant event in our remarkable history.

In 1976, the National Petroleum Marketing Company which brought together under the same umbrella, the retail marketing network and marketing assets of BP's with that of Shell and Texaco was completed. Even more significant as our history will now show, the National Gas Company became the purchaser,

transporter and seller of natural gas in 1975. The story of our gas business I do not need to detail this evening. However we are now bombarded with visitors every single month trying to ascertain the lessons we learned, the secrets we hold dear and seeking to get us to assist them in duplicating our systems, competencies and skill sets.

Our energy sector holds the key. It provided leadership, attitudes to work making a 24 hour work day an acceptable norm, giving technical

and problem solving capabilities and most importantly giving our people the confidence to treat with an international industry and show that we knew best how our conditions can be made to work for us and them. The leadership training it provided to our nationals cannot be overstated. It has overflowed into many other aspects of national life not least of which are politics, engineering, international relations, sport, community relations and management. We are also into agriculture as evidenced by PCS Nitrogen's model farm (a modern attempt at improving the agricultural companies that



came out of the oil belt), and into the financial industry in the form of the International Finance Centre.

Equally important to leadership have been our efforts at education. From the company trade schools we have added the National Energy Skill Centers in the 1990's to the outpouring of effort in the last decade, into first and foremost UTT and its vast array of programs. Many of them are designed to meet our ever growing technical challenges, including the Maritime

areas as we move further and further offshore. We have supported that expansion by expanding the programs for the feeder school systems at COSTAATT and the technical colleges, as well as the even more basic need levels such as gaining the appropriate entry level requirements that are now mandatory for work in the modern world as we understand it.

Our Energy based State Enterprises, have consistently created value to the nation and in particular to their various communities in which

they operate. Since 1974, Trintoc and later Petrotrin continuously served almost all of South Trinidad- from Pt. Ligoure to Guayaguayare; from Moruga to Barrackpore, and has inspired the efforts being made by other companies to treat Cumana as a new part of the international oil industry. Soon Tobago will become more fully integrated into the family of the industry as the National Gas Company establishes a gas supply for industrial development there on our sister isle.

Throughout it all, the evolution of the energy industry has propelled business activity, especially rewarding those who have been willing to step forward in a spirit of entrepreneurship, enterprise and independence

Atlantic LNG is one case in point. Not only does it continue to provide large revenues and foreign exchange for Trinidad and Tobago, but its advent created the opportunity for building a world class fabrication facility in La Brea. Today, it provides highly skilled competencies at the level of welding, engineering design,

project management and international exposure to best practices in negotiation, finance, and hopefully, sales in the future as this facility becomes a supplier for the rest of the Western Hemisphere. We expect Alutrint to have an even more profound impact on the lives of our people and on the world as we move forward. Similarly, we are confident that our plans for plastics production will rise above the challenges posed by current economic global conditions.

We embrace the international industry with whom we share bonds of mutual interest and respect, confident in our ability to perform and deliver alongside the best in the world at the highest standard. We welcome their initiatives in technological developments and recognize that they value our people as significant assets in every field of endeavour. We celebrate their many successes and their continuing efforts in developing the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

In a future of clean fuels, we stand ready to engage the world with our expertise in the use of what was once a wasting asset - natural gas. We also believe that we can show the world a better way to partner – small with large, developing with developed, ex-colony with imperial power, and new nation with mature country.

With the world on the cusp of change, Trinidad and Tobago stands at an elevated crossroads, where Opportunity meets Possibility. For every

step that has brought us this far, we owe an incalculable debt to the many pioneers, both sung and unsung.

Globally all of the forecasts for energy consumption point to carbon-based fuels continuing to play a dominant role in the energy mix for several decades going forward.

Trinidad and Tobago continues to be discussed in the international circles as having the “Trinidad and Tobago Model” of natural gas-



based development. It is this view which has seen us as having one of the most diversified gas-based industrial sectors.

In Trinidad and Tobago we are witnessing the emergence of modern, commercial and entertainment centres which have been transforming the national, economic and financial landscape. We are a small country able to demonstrate global leadership and once again it places us in a position where our “model” of doing things has set a new standard.

The collective energy experience has helped shape this reality.

But may i remind you that all of this did not happen by guess, it was caused to happen, it was based on a vision, a vision grounded in a belief system that promoted one objective, the improvement in the quality of life of all our citizens. One observed by successive governments and meticulously promoted for the benefit of all. One therefore cannot spend a few moments acknowledging the role of

Government in this journey. History tells us that the role played by the Government and the way it managed energy policy contributed to our success. It is therefore appropriate to acknowledge the role played by our current Prime Minister in this story...

“As we move into the next one hundred years, another generation of energy sector pioneers will be called to duty. May they serve as faithfully and as happily as you and other have served. And may they, too, find in their work,

the joys of creativity and discipline - as so perfectly symbolized by that other expression of our energy enterprise, the steel pan.

We would continue to see in Trinidad and Tobago modern government buildings blending elegantly into the architectural landscape. We would experience very shortly a modern transportation network with major highways criss-crossing the country and a light-rail transit system connecting the major population centres. We are building capacity for us to

benefit from an increasingly knowledge-based economy with the University of Trinidad and Tobago Campus at Wallerfield; and we are developing major regions of the country with state of the art petro-chemical, LNG, steel and alumina plants with substantial down-stream activities.” We are also doing what we must to continue to achieve a reduction in poverty and social ills. We are creating a modern industrial state and we will make a difference. We have done this because of our energy assets. In the next one hundred years we will be recorded

history, let us continue to write our history by  
our collective deeds.

Thank You.