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THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1986 – 91

Wednesday, December 19, 1990.

THE SENATE

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, December 19, 1990, at 11.20 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator Sir Frank L. WALCOTT, K.A., O.B.E., LL.D., (President);

His Honour Senator M. deL. JORDAN, (Deputy President);

Senator the Honourable L. V. H. LEWIS (Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office); (Leader of the Senate);

Senator A. MORRISON;

Senator N. W. BOXILL;

Senator Mrs. V. C. FRASER, B.S.S., J.P., M.C.F.A.;

Senator A. J. N. PHILLIPS;

Senator T. A. PRESCOD;

Senator J. C. W. WICKHAM, M.B.E.;

Senator the Reverend Canon I. McK. JONES;

Senator L. A. WARD, G.C.M.;

Senator C. A. BLACKMAN, Q.C.;

Senator Mrs. P. Y. FORDE;

Senator J. S. GODDARD, G.C.M.;

Senator the Honourable Dr. C. D. CLARKE (Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs);

Senator A. W. A. McCLEAN;

Senator Miss V. P. BRATHWAITE;

Senator Dr. F. W. ALLEYNE;

Senator T. C. ESTWICK and

Senator Miss Y. V. WALKES.

Prayers were led by Fr. Errington Massiah.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, I am commanded to lay the Land Registration (Suspension) Order, 1990.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Order 45(2) for the balance of today's sitting.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: I beg to move the First Reading of a Bill entitled the Boyce Pension Act, 1990.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, I wish to give notice of a Resolution to approve the lease to Caribbean Sea Island Cotton Company Limited of parcels of land at Spencers, Christ Church, Springhall, St. Lucy and Dodds, St. Philip.

As I have indicated to the other side, we propose to deal with this Resolution today.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 – THE BOYCE PENSION BILL, 1990

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, this Bill, known as the Boyce Pension Bill, is a

consequence of certain decisions which were taken by Parliament in 1977 to ensure that the service of Mr. Chezley Rosevyn Boyce, former Clerk of Parliament, was terminated with effect from 20th October, 1977.

Mr. Boyce had previously been engaged as a teacher in the Public Service and under the Pensions Act, Cap. 25 he would have qualified for service both as a teacher under the Public Employees Pension Act and as Clerk of Parliament under the Public Employees Pensions Act, Cap. 30.

In accordance with section 5(a) of the Public Employees Pensions Regulations, 1961, an employee who leaves the Public Service before age 55, whether or not he has completed ten years' pensionable service, can have his service treated as continuous if he is re-employed in such service for a period of five consecutive years. Mr. Boyce had in fact completed 14 years' pensionable service as a teacher before he resigned, at age 33. He was re-employed under Cap. 25 at age 40 as a magistrate for three years before transferring to the post of Clerk of Parliament for a further period of seven years until his services were discontinued.

It was under section 44 of the Parliament (Debates and Establishment) Act, Cap. 30 that Mr. Boyce was dismissed from his post as Clerk of Parliament on 20th October, 1977 by way of Resolutions passed in the House of Assembly and the Senate on 18th and 19th October, 1977.

This Bill has nothing to do with the questioning of the validity of Mr. Boyce's dismissal. What it does seek to do, though, is to provide him at the time he would have reached the appropriate age under the Pensions Act to qualify for pension with a pension, and the Bill therefore provides that with effect from 1st November, 1987 Mr. Boyce should be granted the pension as set out in the Bill. This includes, based on the calculations done by the Accountant General of Barbados, a gratuity of \$32,538.63, an allowance of \$4,809.96 per annum payable monthly, and an annual pension of \$7,809.27 payable monthly also.

There were several personal Bills a few years ago and in more recent times the beneficiaries have passed away, so that this Bill is nothing new to pensions legislation in Barbados. There is precedent for it. What the Bill does do now, however, is to grant Mr. Boyce a pension from the first day of the month following his 60th birthday with a gratuity and annual pension for the rest of his life.

I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS, Mr. PRESIDENT left the Chair and the Senate went into Committee on the Bill, SENATOR M. deL. JORDAN in the Chair.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

11.30 a.m.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ORDER NO. 2 – TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR FIN- ANCE RE SUGAR INDUSTRY BONDS

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr. President, in 1982 the Barbados Sugar Industries Limited issued bonds on the market in the sum of \$74 million. This sum was guaranteed by the then Government. The servicing of this bond issue was provided by means of a Sinking Fund. On 30th June 1988, the Sinking Fund, because of the injection of \$3 million which formed a component of the 1986 sugar price support package, was able to show a surplus of \$2.7 million. However, by 31st December 1988, the position changed to a deficit of \$3.5 million because of the redemption of \$4 million of bonds. Some improvement did occur on 30th June 1989, but the financial position of the fund thereafter gradually worsened and it is projected to reach an accumulated deficit of \$5.4 million at June 30th 1990.

The Barbados Sugar Industries Limited has therefore agreed to borrow the sum of \$10 million by the issue of bonds for the purpose of augmenting the finances of the Sinking Fund which are used for the payment of interest and the redemption of bonds previously issued. These bonds will continue to be used to finance operations in the processing of sugar cane and to make support payments and loans to sugar cane growers. Consultation with the officials of the Central Bank have led to the conclusion that the new issue should be in three series being 10 years taxable, 7 years taxable and 5 years tax free. The 1990 issue of sugar industry bonds will therefore be \$10 million in the undermentioned series of which, subject to the application received the Directors undertake to allocate not less than \$2 million in each of the following series: Series O – 9.875% taxable bonds redeemable at par 1997 to 2000; Series P – at 9.375% taxable bonds redeemable at par in 1996-97; Series Q at 6.75% tax free bonds redeemable at par 1994-1995.

The Government has pledged to give this guarantee to this issue on condition that it receives satisfactory assurances from the Barbados Sugar Industries Limited that efforts will be made to reach the annual production target of 90 thousand pounds of sugar.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to reiterate my Government's pledge to the agricultural sector of this

country and to the sugar industry in particular and it will continue to do all in its power to support this because of sugar's contribution to (1) employment generation (2) net foreign exchange earnings (3) the linkages with other sectors of the economy especially in this case now that rum has made a breakthrough in the European market, the need to produce molasses to support the rum industry also, the bagasse waste is used in the chicken industry and now also in fertilizers and finally the protection of the environment by the conservation of the soil and the prevention of the degradation of the landscape.

Mr. President, I move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I would like to suggest that the introduction of this Resolution has been entirely unsatisfactory. We are not given enough information regarding the present state of the series of bond issues as to what are the present arrangements and the prospect for the redemption of such bonds. We know that Government has from time to time guaranteed the issue of these bonds.
11.40 a.m.

We also know that when the first set of bonds were issued they were issued against an arrangement where the price of sugar sold locally was supposed to increase from time to time and that the amount of that price in excess of, I think, the 1972 price or some similar year near to 1972, would be placed in a fund for the redemption of these price support bonds.

I am also aware that the extent of the bond issue has been such that that arrangement has proven no longer to be feasible because it would entail the retail price of sugar to be sold on the local market being so high as to be entirely ridiculous. We know that the practice of discontinuing the price increases in step with the issuance of such bonds has been discontinued.

I also know that on an early occasion when that practice was discontinued part of the bond issue was set aside for the redemption of bonds that would have become due in that particular year around 1987. We have not heard anything pertaining to any of those arrangements from the Honourable Senator Dr. Clarke in his introduction.

I would like to suggest that he should make good those omissions in his reply to let us know exactly what is the state of play in relation to these bonds? What is the likelihood that Government would be called upon to honour this guarantee and redeem the bonds that should become due?

I think also this Chamber is deserving of some update on the present circumstances of the sugar industry because if we are going to guarantee the bonds pertaining to the

sugar industry, we should not be doing that in a vacuum or in ignorance of what is going on in the industry. We are deserving of some information as to involve the financial circumstances of the sugar industry and its performance. We have had none of that.

Perhaps, we have had none of that because the sugar industry is in greater distress today than it has ever been. This distress in no small measure is a result of Government's failure to do the right thing and ensure that the problems financial and otherwise of the sugar industry are addressed with expedition. However, in spite of Senator Clarke not assisting us in any of these matters, we, for our part, have the ability to track down some of these things.

The first point I want to direct attention to has to do with the performance of the sugar industry in 1989. On a previous occasion the Senator on the other side indicated that 1989 was not the worst year of that decade for the sugar industry against the instance of another year. That Senator went as far as to attempt to contradict the submission from Senator Brathwaite when she drew attention to the figures.

Today we have the benefit of the 1989 Economic Report. That Report at page 60, table 26, entitled "Sugar Statistics for the Period 1972 - 1989" gives information of a number of aspects of the performance of the sugar industry. In no less than five of those most important entries it is crystal clear that 1989 was the worst year not only in the 1980's but well beyond that.

If you want to start off with export earnings as indicated here in 1989 the export earnings from sugar was \$52 million. The next closest to that would have been 1983 with \$53.6 million. If you want to look at tonnage in 1989 the number of tonnes of sugar exported was 51.8 thousand tonnes. The next closest to that would have been the year before when it was 67.9 thousand tonnes. That was the worst by a long shot.

If we want to look at production, the raw production of sugar in 1989 as indicated by this table was 66.3 thousand tonnes. The next above that within the decade and beyond would have been 1983 it was 82.8 thousand tonnes. If you want to look at the area cultivated it was 11.1 thousand hectares in 1989. The next closest to that would be 1988 when it was 11.5 thousand hectares.

Those of us who would try to get the Senate to believe that 1989 was not the worst year of the decade, once again I am making a plea that we do not make these bald statements but support them with the evidence. I am still willing to be persuaded of the years in the decade of the 1980's the worst was 1989. If perchance the person who would have us to believe that is of a different persuasion now, it would also be in his interest that he should so admit that he was in error when he signalled that.

We heard recently reports of a statement made by the Prime Minister regarding the overall indebtedness of the sugar industry as at some date towards the end of October. That figure was heading towards \$200 million or close to \$180 million. That is the indebtedness to the Barbados National Bank, not the overall indebtedness of the industry because the sugar industry is indebted to other banks also and other organisations. The indebtedness to the Barbados National Bank is somewhere in the vicinity of \$180 million, we are told, as at the end of October. That clearly signals a problem not only for the sugar industry but for the Barbados National Bank.

The reason why the Barbados National Bank has been holding that level of debt for the sugar industry is quite clearly related to Government policy dating back to an early administration. I cannot say that it is related to the policy of the present administration because we are yet to find out what that policy is. However, it is quite evident that the Barbados National Bank has been following through with the type of policy that persisted before until such time as indicated that they need no longer to function in that way.

Basically, what is indicated is that the indebtedness of the sugar industry to the Barbados National Bank is such that it threatens the survival of that institution. If the sugar industry should collapse the Barbados National Bank will go with it unless Government can come up with \$180 million to inject into the Barbados National Bank. Even if the BNB could keep financing the sugar industry so that it would not have to close its doors under the present arrangements, the Barbados National Bank could still find itself with severe problems.

11.50 a.m.

And its auditors impressed upon it the need to make adequate provision for debt not collectable on the basis of the performance of the sugar industry. That brings us to the need for the Government provided they have not yet done this. Up to the last time I was involved in the situation they had not done it, and the indications we are getting, from competent authority is that they did not have any conception of the problem and therefore were not likely to do it.

But Government will have to intervene to provide some level of assurances to the Barbados National Bank which will be satisfactory to the auditors that the Barbados National Bank will not be left holding the bag in the sugar industry, if that entity should fold up. In the absence of such assurances, the auditors will be under an obligation to insist that the BNB makes provisions against a debt which must be regarded as rather doubtful. Such provisions would be of a magnitude as to erode the profits and the capital of the BNB in the very near future. So that, even at that basic level, Government has to address the problems of the Barbados National Bank.

This bond issue itself, is compounding the problems of the Barbados National Bank in one way and would help in another way, because the money that we realize would eventually end up in the Barbados National Bank to reduce the indebtedness.

But on the other hand, this bond issue has been reflected as a liability on the balance sheet of BSIL. Quite clearly that balance sheet right now would signal that BSIL is somewhere in the direction of insolvency. It means therefore that if Government is about supporting the sugar industry, they are going to have to find a different mechanism to support the industry, find a mechanism where, if there is going to be any charge on the Consolidated Fund, that charge is fairly well anticipated and planned for because what we are having here is a whole set of outstanding bonds that, if the sugar industry should fold up, they all would fall in the lap of Government. In addition to finding that \$180 million for the BNB, you are also going to have to find a hundred and somebody other million dollars that belong to the bond holders, in accordance with the guarantee which has been given, from time to time, in Parliament, in accordance with the guarantee which we are now endeavouring to give.

Basically, the question about the collapse of the sugar industry is a matter of grave magnitude for Government and the taxpayers of this country. To the extent that this Administration has spent, this Government has spent its time, whatever time it has had – this Administration dates back, in my view to around the 1st June, 1987 – doing nothing constructive, to that extent, it has been failing in its duty to this country. Not only to the sugar industry, not even especially to that, but to the taxpayers of this country. It is past urgent. The date for some kind of effort to resuscitate the sugar industry and put it back on a sound financial and managerial basis has gone. We are past that prudent date. We are just marking time. It is not too late to do something about it. But if we continue in the mode that way ... Do not believe that every day we wake up that the sugar industry will still be there. It will go away. The threats which have been coming from the owners of the sugar industry not to produce which were very strident about a year or so ago, do not take those lightly. Because the owners of the sugar industry, even for their own sanity should get out of it. There is nothing there but heartaches and worry for those the majority of owners of the sugar industry. To the extent that they wake up, from day to day, to confront a Government which has shown no sensitivity to the particular policy of the industry and to the extent that they have lost most of the equity, all of the equity, in many instances, that they have in the industry, it is only out of some kind of patriotism, that is all I can call it, that they continue. Because they are better off doing anything else. Do not believe that the time will not come that they will choose to do something else.

The time for action in the sugar industry, in terms of Government involving itself and finding solutions to the problems is long gone. It is not good enough to say that Government is supporting the industry because they know all the good things that the industry can do for Barbados, as recited, by Senator Clarke. That is not good enough. You have to go beyond words to translate that into action. You have to be men of action. But before you can be men of action, you have to be men of vision. Basically, it is quite evident that this Administration does not have a clue as to how to go about solving the problems of the sugar industry.

We on this side have solutions. We know how to approach the problems. We started to deal with the problems before we had changes in Government, before we had a complete change in Government in 1986. We are willing to resume and effect that solution, in the interest of this country.

We will have to support this resolution because it is part of a feeble effort to keep the sugar industry going, not alive. This is far from what is required, in terms of resuscitating the sugar industry, the question of support price and so on, the guaranteed price, the shift to the idea of a guaranteed price. And the Prime Minister recently is on the record as saying that the sugar industry is not in need of any money this year, that the price that they are getting for sugar is above the guaranteed price. Yes, the price that they are getting for sugar apparently or ostensibly seems to be above the guaranteed price. But this is no indication that they are not in need of support. Because that guaranteed price is altogether too low. The price that they had asked for is in excess of the one that they are earning on the market. On their own calculus, the sugar industry is going deeper into distress this year.

If you want any particular guidance on things like production cost we notice that in 1988, the production cost to the sugar industry represented, in these statistics here, is \$1 360.60 per tonne, an increase over the previous year of \$1 327.80. There is no good reason to believe that in 1989, the production cost of sugar would decline. Even if that declines, it is not going to decline down to the guaranteed price.

I know that Government, the Ministry of Agriculture and so on, some time ago, advanced an argument as to why that price would be the one we have granted because they computed the cost differently from the way the industry computed the cost. But I would rather think that it is not right for Government just to sit at a distance from the industry, compute their own cost and say that is what we will guarantee, without entering into a dialogue to determine whether their computations are reasonable or not. Based on the little insight that was given to us, as to the basis of the Ministry's computations, I would say that those computations were entirely less reasonable than the computations of the industry. In suggesting that the cost of

the industry is in line with what Government is guaranteeing as a price is merely to play ostrich to try to fool yourself and imperil this country. I think that Barbados deserves better from a Government.

Thank you.

SENATOR L. A. WARD: Mr. President, I rise to support this resolution because there is no alternative. This sinking fund was set up in 1982 with a provision for redemption of bonds and the payment of interest on those bonds.

12.00 noon.

The first support that was given to this was in 1982 for the price. The intention was that the 1982 price would form a place and any increase that was allowed by Government would be funds not to go to the industry as such but to go to the Sinking Fund. We agreed that every two years the sugar price would increase but not by any stipulated amount but whatever it was increased by that it would go to the Sinking Fund. The industry would have no control other than the issuing of bonds.

This was done when approximately 14,000 tonnes of sugar for a year was used for local consumption. So any increases in the future that are given would be the 1982 sugar price would go to the industry and anything above that would go into the Sinking Fund.

In 1983 the price was subsidized by an increase on special sugar from \$66.70 to \$81.65 which was \$15.98 per pound and yellows and browns will go from \$57.97 to \$72.58, making an increase of \$19.61 per pound. In 1985 the price was increased again, Sir. That was increased by 6.8 cents on all sugar across the board. It was the next year that an increase in the sugar price was made. This was to raise the levels of bonds and the provision would increase. But in 1987 the Government reviewed the situation and allowed an increase on sugar. Since that, Sir, every year applications were made for increases in sugar but were not granted. But the result was that the last time any increase was given was in 1985.

Mr. President, if we were to look at the cost of this to the consumer using a figure of 14,000 tonnes and we talk about an increase on it, it would amount to \$308,644.00 for 14,000 tonnes. If I use the figure of 260,000 persons, that would mean that it would cost per person \$1.19 per annum. If you divide that by 52 weeks, it would work out at \$2.283 a week. Mr. President, I do not think that anybody going into a supermarket would put it back on the shelf and say that I am sorry you have to make it a little more. I think that would be a reasonable increase.

But Sir, the 308,044 and deduct from that 1.2 per cent which is for research and development, you will get \$340,940.00 to go towards the Sinking Fund which can

amortize \$1,186,111 over 5 years with interest at 9 per cent per annum or \$1,217,536 over 5 years at 8 per cent. Well, Sir, the problem is such that is facing the industry that if you look at the accounts of the Barbados sugar factories these are the figures that perhaps you were referring to. On June 30, 1989, Sir, the outstanding amount of bonds was \$52,700,000 to be repaid by December 31st if this Resolution is passed today and \$14,058,000 will be repaid during the calendar year. So the balance at the end of the year would be \$38,642.00.

The Resolution before us now, Sir, is for \$10 million. So the outstanding balance, if that is passed, is \$46,642,000. In addition to that, Sir, what bonds deemed during the year before December 31st, we had to borrow \$3,500,000 to redeem those bonds. So if you add back to that what we had to borrow you would come to \$52,142,000 and we began with \$52,700.00. Sir, the collapse of the sugar industry that Senator McClean referred to is something I am often questioning whether Government really looks at what would be Government's position if the industry collapsed. 12.10 p.m.

They would find themselves with \$52 million in bonds that they guaranteed, they would find themselves with a bankruptcy of Barbados National Bank, because what the estates or the factory could be sold off for could not cover what is owed the Barbados National Bank, and the write off would be serious.

I wonder sometimes, Sir, if there is a fear that the sugar industry may make a profit. If there is that fear, I think that should be removed from people's minds, because suppose the Government decides to make a grant to the industry to put it back on its feet, that grant could be honoured by the Barbados National Bank who would make the grant and pay it into the factory company. It does not go into the hands of anybody else, it goes straight into the hands of the Barbados National Bank, so there is no loss of cash flow at all. It cancels out and it makes the Barbados National Bank's balance sheet look better, because you are removing a debt that the sugar industry owes to the Barbados National Bank.

I will not go into the price of sugar, because that has been in negotiation between the Government and the sugar industry, but I hope that the Prime Minister's last offer is not his final offer, because if that is so the sugar industry can never come out of the blue.

People will ask what is wrong with agriculture in this country. Mr. President, it is only a matter of there not being any hope or incentive for the people to put their best into the sugar industry. We used to get some very good people coming into the industry, but this is no longer so. Nobody wants to work in an industry that is a continual loss and the most you can hope to get is a ham at Christmas. This may sound like I am making fun, but it is no fun, Sir. The sugar

industry is vital to this country. If the sugar industry goes, it is not only the sum of money that the Government has guaranteed and the Bank has lent, it is what is going to happen to the environment. It is going to, if not kill tourism, be a serious deterrent to tourism, because the people are accustomed to seeing a nice clean Barbados, beautiful cane fields with cane blades waving and so on, but if it is a matter of bush there are glaring examples of what the island would look like in St. Andrew – Senator Dr. Clarke may know – and also St. Philip that I know of, but this is nothing that makes the island attractive.

The island does well with tourism because it is attractive, the people are nice and they are given reasonable service for their money.

With those few remarks, Sir, I support the Resolution.

SENATOR J. C. W. WICKHAM: Mr. President, there is no question about my own support for the Resolution, but I just want to ask a simple question which I hope the introducer will wish to answer. These bonds when they are issued will depend for their sale to the general public on the confidence with which that public expects to be paid the interest. Can Senator Clarke in his reply give any assurance, or Government's assurance, of the repayment of these bonds to a simple borrower?

If I want to buy a bond, I want to know that I am going to get back at least what I bought it for. If I cannot be assured of that, taking all the factors which have been mentioned, then I cannot buy it, it makes no sense for you to buy it. It is as simple as that. The floating of this Resolution suggests to me that of all the alternatives available to Government this measure is the most likely to succeed, and my question, therefore, is, am I right or wrong in that conclusion?

SENATOR A. MORRISON: Mr. President, in rising to support this Resolution I should like to state at the outset that this is not a Resolution dealing with the dissolution of the sugar industry in Barbados as such. In actual fact it is a Resolution dealing with a guarantee by Government to the industry in order to provide funds by way of \$10 million to put into the sinking fund for the purpose of answering the very question which was just asked by Senator Wickham. These bonds have always been redeemed, and in good time.

Senator Ward gave a very good rundown of the beginning of this sugar support by way of bonds, which started in 1982, and there was to be a sinking fund into which monies from the increase in price on domestic sugar should go and provide the kind of funding which would be able to pay interest on these bonds. Over the years no money was put into that sinking fund and in 1988 we came to this Honourable Chamber with a Resolution for \$21 million, of which \$18 million was for the raising of bonds

and \$3 million was put aside to be put into the fund for the first time.

Perhaps at that time you might have accused us of being short-sighted in that we did not make more provision than the \$3 million in 1988. I thought I would have heard arguments to that effect and that we have to come now, in 1990, and ask for \$10 million. The purpose of the Resolution is to provide a further \$10 million to be put into that sinking fund so that people would be able to redeem their interest when it falls due.

Sir, they would not mention this in the debate, but it started to come out in the contribution made by Senator Ward. The whole gravamen of this debate, as far as these bonds are concerned, is a question of policy as regards the increase in the price of sugar to the domestic consumer. We, as a Government, in examining the role of sugar for domestic use, realise that sugar is used not only to sweeten our children's tea, but it plays a very important part in the soft drink industry, and in the baking of cakes and all kinds of pastry. When one looks at the repeater effect which might result from constant increases in the price of sugar every two years, one has to make up one's mind at some point in time whether one is going to allow successive increases in the price of sugar for domestic use over two-year periods, which might put it beyond the reach of some people, and which has a kind of repeater effect into every aspect of operations where sugar is being used as an essential ingredient for people to carry out their businesses, particularly in the pastry industry where sugar is the main ingredient. So, we have come to a mixed policy.

12.20 p.m.

In any case, if that price is increased, the consumer has to pay increased prices over a period of two years every time. So, we are going to do it this way. We have kept down the price of sugar and we are guaranteeing in this Bill that, when the time comes, we will be able to replenish the Sinking Fund from these same bonds. Or, do you want us to go out there and put an added burden on the consumer who is the taxpayer? So, in fact, the Government, in guaranteeing the bonds, will be making that deficiency available when the time comes from the same Consolidated Fund, which also is the reservoir of all the taxpayers' funds in this country. We could not in one breath decide to increase the price of sugar every two years as it might go to astronomical heights.

We have seen something happen in this country in the last month or so, whereby, in order to make it look bad, distributors have been calling on the retail people for money by cash. Whereas people previously had 45 days to pay, they now have to pay by cash. I know that distributors have been calling for their money in cash – A. S. Bryden's, DaCosta's and Mussons. Some retailers are not carrying sugar on their shelves any more, because as they say, the price is such that they are not getting anything off of sugar

and now they are being asked to pay cash over the counter. You see, this is a very involved thing. It is not as simple as it looks. These are the problems Government has to face and grapple with. We are not running away, but problems are being created every day to make this Administration look bad. Not problems of our own creation, because we have done everything as a Government to listen to the sugar people. We have tried by our policies. When they say that we have no policy I should read from the budget speech of 1989 in which a national plan was enunciated where we recognised certain things to be done in the sugar industry – a refinancing package for the sugar industry, provided that it agrees to an overhaul for the organisation of the management structure of Barbados Sugar Industries Limited; an organisation of sugar factories; rationalisation of machinery, equipment and vehicles use; reforming of sugar cane lands; review of cane payment systems; introduction of an exchange for management schemes and a commitment to more efficient utilisation of by-products.

Now, Sir, I know that as of this coming sugar crop that plans have already been afoot to rationalise certain aspects of the transportation of sugar to the Harbour. I believe there will be a large reduction in the use of sugar trucks. They will use trailers as a cost saving measure in the transportation of sugar from the factories to the Harbour. That is one of the recommendations which came out of the Landell Mills Report which we are about to implement for the coming crop season.

It is not as though the Government is adamant where the sugar industry is concerned. We are more or less trying to make the sugar industry viable, and as a commitment of our policy, Sir, it has been stated and restated, that we look forward to the day when we can produce 100 thousand tons of sugar. That is our commitment. We have said that we would use an acreage of about 39 thousand acres and we, the Democratic Labour Party, have always said that we intend to grow sugar on those lands which are very good for sugar cane production and on the marginal lands of this country to grow cotton. We haven't changed that policy, Sir. We are trying to get back to the time where we can produce in this country 100 thousand tons of sugar and I understand the estimate for next year will be 80 thousand tons. So you see 80 thousand tons is not far away from 100 thousand tons and it will show that we are on the way back up.

Government has committed its own estates, and have tried to put back the Belle plantation lands into sugar cane production in an effort to help increase the acreage under sugar cane production. The Agricultural Development Corporation is very busy trying to get other lands of Government under production of sugar cane. So, Sir, I think that this sugar support by bonds is very necessary to the existence of the sugar cane industry. It has built up over the years an enormous amount of debt which started with the Sugar Industry Agricultural Bank which had in those days a

thing called lock-ups. When we got rid of the SIAB, the Agricultural Credit Bank was established for small farmers. Then when the BNB came into existence certain bad loans were left with the Agricultural Credit Bank and the best customers went to the Barbados National Bank. BNB got all the bad debtors from the Sugar Industry Agricultural Bank. So, the debt has skyrocketed over the years with no payment in sight.

This Government has not been chastising the industry because sugar cane production is a very vital part of this country, and as Senator Ward has pointed out, it is a grass and we have not discovered yet in Barbados another grass which is capable of keeping soil from erosion as sugar has done over the years.

We must at all times try to keep sugar cane production at a level which not only preserves our lands from erosion but at the same time brings in the much needed foreign exchange to this country which is so necessary to our economy. Over the years when those debts were being developed, each plantation from a historical point of view would have been buying machinery.
12.30 p.m.

I believe we should have looked at this years ago. Each plantation in Barbados is very well equipped with machinery. Up to today ploughs, heavy harrowing machinery... I believe if we take an inventory of the machinery pool the kind of capacity that can really cultivate not the 39 000 acres which is being complained about but they could cultivate almost 500 000. We had machinery in excess of what was needed for this country. It is in that too that a lot of money has been locked up in the sugar industry bank.

If we get a more rational use of machinery, and a more humane approach to plantations in a particular area assisting small farmers in the same area... Because most of that machinery is lying down after they have ploughed their own lands because it remains useless until the time comes for ploughing and furrowing again.

That machinery could be utilised also, Sir, in helping small farmers put their lands under cultivation and the big strain now which is being experienced by Government with tractors having to service multiple small farmers in various districts, which causes sometimes big delays in people getting the Government's tractors for the service scheme. I believe the plantations could help out in providing that kind of service. There again that would be done at a price. Whereas the Government's tractor service is well subsidised, and within the reach of the average farmer, if you had tractors coming from the plantations, the price would be at a point where it would be easy for the farmer to employ the usage of that piece of machinery.

Sir, I think that Government's efforts under very adverse conditions as far as the world price of sugar was concerned for the last 5 or 6 years, have been to accommodate the industry as it goes along. We have had the rationalisation of factories. I do not know if there is still to be more reduction in the amount of factories in Barbados. I do not know how feasible that is. But there have been talks about shutting down Bulkeley. I do not know if that could ever happen in this country. It would be a sad day. I think the factories are now well equipped to service the industry as it is.

The Government has a commitment to the sugar industry. We would expect an equal commitment from the industry itself that they would come together and work closely with Government for the complete resuscitation of the industry to the point where it used to be at its peak and that we would not entertain any talk about any collapse of the sugar industry of this country. If that is the policy of the National Democratic Party I am sorry for them. If they felt they could let it collapse, it does not have any kind of bearing to the party to which I happen to belong. It has never been discussed in our fora. We will never entertain in this country anybody who sets about to destroy the sugar industry in the way...

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: On a point of order, Mr. President. It seems as though Senator Morrison is trying to suggest that the National Democratic Party has a policy to allow the sugar industry to collapse. Everything I said this morning speaks to the opposite and he was here. Therefore he should not seek to misrepresent what I have said.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I do not think he mentioned you. He is quite free to make these open statements like all of you.

SENATOR A. MORRISON: Sir, the only person I heard mentioned anything about the collapse of the sugar industry in here today was Senator McClean. My reference to the collapse of the sugar industry was with respect to what he said. I said if it is in their policy, Sir. I do not know if it is in their policy to have it collapse but the fact that he mentioned it made me make reference to it.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: On a point of clarification. Apparently you did not understand what I was saying. I was indicating that the policies of the present administration could lead to the collapse of the industry. I suggested that if given the opportunity we would rescue the industry.

SENATOR A. MORRISON: You have said so for the first time now about rescuing the industry. All the time you were talking about a collapsing industry.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I do not think you need to go into all of those. Let us rescue the debate.

SENATOR A. MORRISON: Sir, I want to maintain the Democratic Labour Party's policy on sugar. We have not done anything since we came back into power to signal to anybody in Barbados that we were trying to run down the sugar industry. The sugar industry is public and they have been doing their own kind of development in line with what Government can and cannot do. We have tried to assist the industry at all times. We have never tried to run down any sugar industry in this country. Since we came back into power the Minister of Agriculture has been talking with the industry. We have asked them to help us in certain areas.

Not only does the Barbados Sugar Industries Limited have its own autocratic system of running its own system but we have the Barbados Agricultural Society whose subvention has been increased under this Government since we came back in power. If that is running down something, Sir, I do not know what you would call other things that happened before our time.

Aside.

SENATOR A. MORRISON: We do not deal with agriculture in piecemeal. We deal with the total agriculture in this country. We do not set out one operator against the next. BSIL has had assistance from the Government and small farmers are also entitled to the same assistance that we give to the big farmers in this country. We do not discriminate against our own farmers. That is not sugar. This is agriculture.

I can assure you that the Democratic Labour Party is a broad-based party. We look at everything from a total angle, a kind of cosmopolitan approach. We do not discriminate against our own farmers. Big farmer and small farmer to us need the same assistance. Regardless to what they have or want at the particular time we try to help out our people in that respect. We are not a hanging party. We are a party with understanding. We have knowledge and compassion. We try to meet each particular group in the industry itself, agriculture, in its own way and try to do things that it can function to the good of the people of Barbados. That is our policy.

We have never waived. We are carrying on into the 1990's. We hope when we are returned that we would be able to do more for the sugar industry and to make sure that this sugar industry does not fall or suffer but that it would redound to the help of all Barbadians and the agricultural workers in particular in this country.

12.40 p.m.

SENATOR A. J. N. PHILLIPS: Mr. President, I rise to support this resolution. When I entered the Chamber this morning, rather late, Senator Ward was on his feet. I gained

the impression that he was discussing the demise of the sugar industry. It was then that I looked at "Public Business" and I realized it was dealing with the matter of bonds.

Be that as it may, I should like to make a few observations on the sugar industry and probably, with some reference to other agriculture. The Government has made its position absolutely clear on the sugar industry. The Government has said that any developments or any further developments in agriculture will be around the sugar industry. In other words, the sugar industry will always be at the centre of Government's thinking when it is dealing with its agricultural policy.

In recent times, the Government recognized that cotton could be the second biggest money earner and therefore the Government has embarked on a scheme whereby it is supporting the cotton industry.

However, Sir, I should like to make some reference to some of the weaknesses that I see in the sugar industry. So much emphasis is put on the financing of the industry that one believes that finance necessarily solves all problems. That is not so. Finance has to be managed. One of the weaknesses in the industry is that there is a relatively poor management structure still in place. I do not say this as a reflection on the total industry because this would be untrue because there is a number of very good planters in Barbados and, although this may surprise some Senators, there are a number of very successful holdings in Barbados. But these holdings, if one has any idea of good management, good management is attached to each successful holding there is in Barbados. Mind you, Sir, there is a holding owned by the BS&T. That BS&T has their sugar holdings spread far and wide throughout Barbados. I make this point because they are in different ecological groupings, some being in St. Lucy, St. Michael. In other words, they have the spread. Yet, that holding is a very, very successful agricultural holding and particularly, their production of sugar is unchallenged.

The sugar industry has been going for a large number of years and a lot of studies have been carried out, a lot of them by the Government. But what I find is that those persons who own the land particularly the large land owners have not, on their own, done any serious research to satisfy themselves first why there has been a fall-off in the yield. There has been a number of reasons bandied around such as the compaction of the soil because of the new equipment that is being used, and I refer to the mechanical equipment for reaping canes. There has been some toying with the idea that it may be the fertilizer. But there has been no successful conclusion on these matters. This is absolutely important because there has been some loss of land to sugar. But if some serious effort were made to increase production, we may very well be able to make up for the lapse of the loss.

There has been a lot of talk about the loss of land and a lot of it is that Governments have acted irresponsibly and a lot of land has been used for housing and so on. Some of these comments may be true. But then there are some fairly natural factors that caused some land to be taken out of sugar production. I refer, Sir, to land in the Scotland District which represents a substantial area of the land mass in Barbados. Those large numbers of acres in the Scotland District have been lost because planters in that area recognised that the sugar cane, because of the terrain of the land has become a very difficult problem to cultivate.

There have been marginal lands in the parishes of St. Lucy and in St. Philip that have been determined to be, what you call, "rab land" and it is not worth the effort to bother with this land. Therefore the reason for taking lands out of sugar cannot be pinned only to housing development and matters of that nature.

Another area, Sir – I think I came across this in the Landell Mills Report – was the cultivation methods. I believe Landell Mills did make reference to the fact that there has been too much deep ploughing in Barbados and that the sort of ploughing that we do is not suitable for our land.

The main thing though however is that it is important for those persons who carry on the industry to be able to satisfy themselves and those persons who they may work for that they understand the problems in the industry and that every effort be made to rectify the problems. I believe that if this is done and with the continued support of Government, that sugar will once more increase its production level to the 100 000 tonnes which the Government is forecasting that should be made available by 1994, 1995. Furthermore, we should be able to add to this, provided that we put all things in place.

Mr. President, with those few words, I support the resolution.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question is that... I am sorry.

SENATOR Dr. F. W. ALLEYNE: Mr. President, I will be very brief because I recognize there is a long day ahead of us.

The matter before us has to do with financing the price support element, providing financing for the sinking fund, as part of Government's price support programme.

I particularly wish to commend the contributions of Senator Morrison, Senator Phillips and part of the contribution by Senator Ward which I found very informative.

There are some points however which I wish to clarify on this matter. I think Senator McClean made the

observation that the Government does not have an agricultural policy. Senator Morrison set the record clear on that. If you wish to have a very succinct statement of Government's agricultural policy, with particular reference to sugar, Senator Morrison referred us to the 1990 Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals and they are set out on pages 20, 21 and 22. However I wish to say that, within my knowledge, there is a single comprehensive study for the price support programme adopted by the Barbados Labour Party's Administration and continued under this present Administration. That study has been done by a previous student of mine, Mr. Antoine. It is an excellent study. It is a Master's Study which was done at the University of Florida, Gainesville Campus. I have a copy and those Senators who wish to consult it, I could make it available to you. That study has been highly regarded within universities in the United States and with the United States Department of Agriculture. They have gotten copies of it as well and it is informing their policy on sugar, as far as the Caribbean is concerned.

I mention that study, Mr. President, to say that the study made some important conclusions about sugar support in Barbados. The one which I would wish to draw to your attention is that it finds that the most significant outcome of price support policy begun in 1982 has been that it maintained the value of the equity of the people in the sugar industry. In the absence of price support, given the prevailing circumstances, the equity would have been totally wiped. This is a serious academic study, not a fly-by-night foolishness. It is a serious study which has withstood the test of serious professors, not people who indulge in rumour. I want it to be very clear that the major outcome of price support, started in Barbados in 1982 has been the retention of the value of the equity of the sugar farmers. It was not about guaranteeing employment because sugar generates no more than 7 000 jobs full-time.

I am not particularly gratified listening to certain aspects of this debate this morning, Mr. President. I say so because there was a time in Barbados – sugar has a history – when sugar ruled everything. It ruled the economy, it ruled the Church, it ruled every aspect of our society. It is painful when I find persons like myself getting up and adopting adversarial positions defending the sugar industry. I hold nothing against the industry. But it is time that we face objective reality.

The fact of the matter is that Government does not own the sugar industry. The Government recognizes the value of the sugar industry. I do not wish to delve into these particular matters this morning, Mr. President. The sugar industry is recognized by successive Governments to have value, in terms of agriculture in the country, in terms of the entire economy, in terms of the health of the country.
12.50 p.m.

So nobody is here debating whether or not we should have a sugar industry. The Democratic Labour Party recognizes that a sugar industry is desirable but there has to be agricultural diversification in this country. This was recognized as early as 1962. If you go to the Development Plan of 1962, you will find the first written statement in public policy on agricultural diversification and that was when this Administration was in office at the time. So those persons who will get up and say that the Government has no policy have no respect for record. I, therefore, point them to the 1962-65 Development Plan.

I want to say, Mr. President, that the sugar industry cannot have it both ways. They cannot do as they like when they like and then when they feel that it suits them they come and bat on a different wicket. I would be the last person, Mr. President, to get up and ridicule the technocrats in the Ministry of Agriculture. There is not a substantial gap in technical training between myself and my counterparts in the Ministry of Agriculture. Barbados is fortunate. It has been able over time to train and retain in its employ some of the most highly trained technocrats in the Ministry of Agriculture. Do not let us run down our own people. You are running down people like me when you run down the civil servants, not because I am at the university. I recognize it is people like me that you are running down and I can say with assurance that the technocrats in the Ministry of Agriculture, Planning Unit, went through using the most refined methods which are appropriate to examine the cost of production estimates put up by the sugar sector. I will not attempt to say off the top of my head what those Estimates were which were put up by the sector. I believe Senator Ward is in a better position to speak off the top of his head. But I can tell you that, if you go back to the first proposal put up by the industry and see eventually where they came to, not by way of negotiations but when they were pointed out the errors of their ways, you will realize that there was a game which was being played.

I am saying that the evidence is there that the industry was trying to bargain for the highest possible price. What the Government was interested in was setting a price which would keep the industry in business. It is not the Government's business and I say this as one who majored in agricultural economics. It is not the Government's business to set a price to guarantee the sugar producers a profit as if they do not have a data risk. I want to be very clear on that. So this notion about the Government setting up a support price which is faulty I reject totally. I have said before and I repeat again, Mr. President, that in Barbados 1990 we should not be in this kind of debate. It is a no win debate. It takes us nowhere.

We have in Barbados the technical resources to adjudicate on the matters. Here in the West Indies in Barbados you have the most highly trained cost accountant anywhere in the Caribbean. There is no doubt about this. Everybody is agreed on this and I know that that particular

professional has been trying for sometime to get hold of the books of some of the estates to do a study on the cost production. To this day he has got promises and he has never gotten a book as yet. I approached a gentleman but I will not call his name and he promised to give me some books. I will be glad if you would let us have some books.

Aside.

SENATOR Dr. F. W. ALLEYNE: If you want to see ADC, see the Minister. I am not the Minister so I cannot give any guarantee on that. But you can give me a guarantee on yours. So I want to be very clear that this industry is not owned by the Government, but the Government understands the role of the industry.

Now Senator Phillips spoke about the matter of yields and it is a matter of record, Mr. President, that yields have been declining and they have been at an all time low I think in 1989 at about 6 tonnes per hectare of sugar. I think around 1967 it was just over ten. I want to touch on a point which Senator Phillips raised and he elaborated on it. It is something about which none of the people in the management of sugar can be proud. Here in Barbados you have the sugar research station. In Barbados you have the major facility for breeding cane varieties in this part of the world and the evidence is there that more than 80 per cent of the sugar crop in Barbados is planted in a single variety of cane. The significant thing about that 80 per cent is that it is susceptible to the moth borer. So here in Barbados we are the leaders in cane breeding and yet you find that we have 80 per cent of our cultivation under a variety. I cannot attempt to give you the number off-hand because the sum is in very large digits. But we have about 80 per cent of our cultivation under a single cane variety and that variety is susceptible to the moth borer. That explains among other things a major factor in explaining the declining yields. But I say this. It says something about management. Senator Phillips spoke about management and I know that there are some very efficient managers in Barbados at the cultivation level and at the research level as well. But I am saying that when you talk about press management, it is an indictment upon the industry. So when people start to come and say that the Government is responsible for this and that, ask what are the managers in the sugar industry doing. The fact is that the more progressive managers in the industry are very insecure. One has had to leave and go to Brazil. There is another one which the threat is always over his head to get rid of him.

We have to face these facts and do not come into this Chamber and pretend that the Democratic Labour Party Government is running down the sugar industry. I do not know of any Government in Barbados, not only this Government, which was in the habit of destroying the sugar industry. This sugar support programme started in 1982 and it is a matter of record that until 1985 there was little accountability by the industry for the money which they

were borrowing from the BNB. That is a fact. That accountability only started when Mr. Barrow's predecessor in office in 1985 took over that Ministry of Finance. That is when it started. But there were some sugar men who could have gone to the BNB with a little piece of brown paper – the paper you used to fold sugar in – and said they wanted such and such amount of money and they got it. It was Bree St. John who stopped that and said that there were certain guarantees which you agreed to and you have to fulfil those guarantees. The record is there. It is a matter of policy. So do not come inside of here and make people believe that this Government is running down the sugar industry or the Barbados Labour Party Government did it. I am not here to speak for the Barbados Labour Party. They have to speak for themselves. But I know it was Bree St. John who insisted that that guarantee be honoured. I am saying that I have no difficulty in supporting this particular Resolution, but we have to understand that when you talk about giving more support to one sector there is a cost. You redistribute from one at the expense of the other. So those of us who get up in here and say that you should give them a grant or you should give them more money recognize when you give one sector more the others are losing. You do not have an inexhaustible pool of funds.

1.00 p.m.

Mr. President, I wish to make it very clear that we have not been particularly successful in terms of the objectives of the entire price support programme. This programme was conceived within the context of agricultural diversification, and if certain targets were reached, then a certain amount of the loans would be converted into grants. The fact of the matter is that if you look at the record between 1982 and 1990 you will see that the sugar farmers have not responded well by way of diversification. We have to recognise this and do not let us spin ourselves into this \$10 million which we are talking about. The programme has not been particularly successful.

Look and see the farmers' response to diversification. For a number of reasons some of them have said they do not want to touch cotton, but I am convinced that a sugar man is a sugar man and what a sugar man does, in spite of the declining fortunes of sugar, he will tend to wait and hope that things are going to get good again and he can resume business as usual.

I have no doubt, Mr. President, that sugar will have a place in agriculture, but the days in the era of the early 1960s will not come back again, because the international environment has changed, so the sugar farmers who are waiting for the windfalls which we got in the early 60s and the bumper price which you got in the very early 80s should know that those fortunes are not going to return. I am sure the wise sugar farmers know that and I therefore think, Mr. President, that the Government should be warmly congratulated in indicating quite clearly to the sugar farmers that it is putting its money where its mouth is, but

that it also recognises its responsibilities to the total society. The Government has to support tourism, it has to support manufacturing, it has to support small business, a whole set of other productive things.

Aside.

SENATOR Dr. F. W. ALLEYNE: CARSICOT too, never mind there are some crooks involved in CARSICOT, but I will deal with that when the time comes. I am saying the Government is not in CARSICOT, the Government is in cotton and we want people like you to come into cotton. We know you will diversify into tourism, but we want you in cotton too.

Mr. President, with those brief remarks I support this Resolution.

SENATOR Mrs. V. C. FRASER: Mr. President, I rise to give my support to this particular Resolution, but I would like to say that whereas I know that this Government thinks highly of sugar and the contribution it has made to the development of the Barbadian economy, the Government at the same time has to think of the future of Barbados. We have to think of what our needs are in the agricultural sector and we also have to look at the global picture as regards sugar.

I sincerely hope that the sugar farmers are mindful of the facts in the world situation today. I hope they are mindful of the fact that the other side of Germany is no longer, that there is no longer East and West Germany, and what that means is that Europeans are going to come together even more tightly. In terms of their kind of sugar – beet, maple – they are going to be looking at how they can make money for themselves, so while we are looking at assisting the sugar industry, we must also ask the sugar industry to look carefully down the road at the future and to look at how they can diversify sugar. This is what we have to be concerned about, not only just growing the sugar cane, because it seems to me that we want to have the mentality that we are only to be the producers of the primary product and we want just to allow that to continue.

This Government, by its diversification policy in agriculture, will not want something like that to continue, because as we look to the future – and we have seen the research and the evidence that we have – we know that there is going to be a lot of money in non-sugar agriculture. We are not saying that sugar must go away, but what we are saying is that sugar farmers have to look at what are the needs of the society in terms of products that utilise sugar, and this is one of the things that I would like to appeal to the sugar farmers to look at. Right now people are asking for castor sugar. Where is it? People are asking for granulated sugar. Where is it? Do we expect that if you have a particular industry that is a private industry that you

are always going to look to somebody else, like a government, to assist you in all areas of activity?

It is time that we look at our own icing sugar, as I have said, which will assist us with other industries. There are people who are making cakes in this country as small business people. They are utilising icing sugar. The hotels are utilising castor sugar, they are utilising granulated sugar, all the various soft drink businesses are utilising sugar. Why isn't the sugar industry looking seriously at providing the necessary factory or whatever for refining our sugar, even if they have to talk with their other friends in the Caribbean region? We have to look at these areas. That is a need in the community which will generate jobs, because there are people using sugar for cakes, pies, pastries, drinks and all sorts of things. These are business people too. When they cannot get certain types of sugar, it means that these people have to turn to imports, which is going to cost us foreign exchange. Even although they may turn to imports, some items of sugar they cannot get readily and easily, so I think the sugar producers and the sugar farmers have to look at another area, which is futuristic, which will bring them money, and that is the utilisation of sugar, not just producing one type of sugar but to look at the other types of sugar and the use of sugar.

Mr. President, I want to say that in our diversification policy as a Government that must be looked at and looked at seriously by those people who are controlling. . .

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, with your leave, I was hoping that Senator Fraser might not start developing another point. We are already 15 minutes beyond the normal break time, and unless we are going to be able to complete it within a minute or two we are going to have to break for lunch.

SENATOR Mrs. V. C. FRASER: I just want to say that I was about to close off my point there and to make a strong plea, to reiterate the fact that we have to look at this if we want to go down the road to the future and the sugar industry wants to make a real serious contribution to the total development of sugar by utilising the product, and also to the total development of the economy by hiring more people. More people will get employment from the spin offs of the actual sugar.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 2.15 p.m.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to, and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the sitting accordingly.
1.15 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is sitting.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Just a few comments as I wind up this Debate in response to some questions raised.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Senator Brathwaite wanted to speak.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Unfortunately I wasn't informed that anyone would speak before he started.

SENATOR Miss V. P. BRATHWAITE: Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No. I want to make it clear. Senator McClean must not do that. You see if a Senator is not in his or her place when the Debate has started they cannot come in after and start to push through when somebody is on his feet. Senator Clarke was on his feet. So, there are those courtesies within the Parliament that must be adhered to not others behind sort of goading you on to do those things. You don't do those things. The parliamentary procedure must be adhered to. When somebody is on his feet speaking, and you are not there, you cannot come in subsequently, without making any statement to the Chair, but just want to push him off. It can't function like that.

SENATOR Miss V. P. BRATHWAITE: Mr. President, it was not my intention or my desire to push Senator Clarke out of his place.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No. The rules are there, Senator. I have to adhere to the rules.

SENATOR Miss V. P. BRATHWAITE: Yes. What I rose for was to indicate to the Chair that I did want to speak and to enquire whether you would grant me as a matter of privilege, and also enquire from Dr. Clarke if he would have given way. But if the Chair is not so minded, I shall allow Dr. Clarke to proceed.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No. No. If you said the Chair is not so minded. If you had informed me I would have done it. I did not like the manoeuvres that took place. Go ahead.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr. President, in winding up the Debate on this Resolution, there are just a few comments I would like to make. I believe it was Senator Wickham who enquired if someone invested in these funds what would happen in case Barbados Sugar Industries Limited went into default. The addendum to the Resolution clearly states that Government's guarantee of the new bonds is conditioned, that is, Government will guarantee them, provided that there are assurances from BSIL that efforts will be made to

reach the annual production target of 90 thousand. The answer to that in a nutshell, is that Government will guarantee the payments so they are virtually risk-free should individuals decide to hold them.

Senator Ward raised a few questions in connection with, I think, increasing the price of sugar, that if we increased the price of sugar then it wouldn't be necessary for the price support over time that you would be able to put into the Sinking Fund and redeem your bonds over time. Senator Morrison was at pains to point out (1) that already the price of sugar is fairly high (2) sugar is an intermediate good and consequently it will increase the price of other goods of which it forms an input or raw material. Furthermore, there are certain industries, I believe – the biscuit company that is trying to break into some extra-regional markets – have been having problems with the price of sugar but the price is already high. It would be a subsidy. Indirectly, sugar is used by almost every one in the community and again they will have to pick up the burden to subsidise a select few. This is exactly what it is and I think we should call a spade a spade. It will be a direct subsidy to the sugar producers.

One last comment. Senator McClean, has been the advocate of privatisation in this Chamber, and I was really appalled to hear him suggest that Government now should virtually take over the sugar industry. Government has no shares in the sugar industry and we cannot really talk about privatisation...

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: On a point of explanation. I didn't suggest that Government should virtually take over the sugar industry. I did indicate that Government has to be forthcoming in terms of making some contribution to the solution of the problem.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Not literally take over. I am sorry, Senator McClean. I think you are suggesting that Government should become part of the problem. Government is not a shareholder in it, and if it has problems, it should re-order its affairs. We have been hearing over and over that Government should privatise this industry and now you are asking us to adopt and take on to ourselves another industry if for no more than to manage it or finance it.

Mr. President, Sir, I move that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE LEASE TO CARSICOT OF PARCELS
OF LAND SITUATE AT SPENCERS IN
CHRIST CHURCH, SPRINGHALL
IN ST. LUCY AND DODDS
IN ST. PHILIP

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, in presenting this Resolution to the Senate, I do it as a duty and a responsibility.

The matter of CARSICOT happens to be the subject assigned to me along with the only Minister of Agriculture there is at the moment, and there is only one Minister of Agriculture. I am not the Minister of Agriculture. I am Minister of State assigned to be responsible for certain matters which are within the portfolio of the Minister of Agriculture, CARSICOT being one of them. There are 4 or 5 of them, Markets being one of them. That's why I could speak with certainty on the matters relating to Markets a few days ago.

I present this Resolution with a very heavy breast because the genesis of the Resolution, Mr. President, is a Cabinet conclusion in July of 1988 at a time when the Government had high hopes that it had found a partner that could be associated with the Crown in its right of government, in pursuance of the development of a cotton industry as a means of earning scarce foreign exchange to supplement shortfalls of sugar, indeed to complement the existing foreign exchange earnings from the sugar sector in this country. The story is so well known and partially documented that in introducing this Resolution I will not go into the details, except to say, that since the decision to lease these lands at Spencers and other places, so much water has flowed under the bridge that Government was forced in January of 1990 to indicate, in no uncertain terms, to the other party, to the company, CARSICOT, that Government was not happy about the manner in which it had participated up to then in the affairs of CARSICOT. Indeed, Government's concerns, when communicated, brought the sort of response from the President of Scothall's which indicated that Scothall's would wish to withdraw from any of the business activity of CARSICOT unless it was permitted to be the sole seller of cotton. There is no way that a Crown in its right of Government could pass on to any individual, external company a right of that nature. Several months later, there were many releases to the press, few of which were made by the Crown. Indeed, in terms of my responsibility for affairs of CARSICOT, I have never made any statement to the Press and indeed I have no intention of making any statement to the Press at the present time. However, it is my duty to present this Resolution, although I am totally aware of the infelicitous conduct of the other party to the original agreement for the establishment of the company CARSICOT.

2.25 p.m.

I have nothing more to say on the matter at this stage, Mr. President except to move that the Resolution be passed.

SENATOR Miss V. P. BRATHWAITE: Mr. President, I think it is indeed unfortunate that having presented a Resolution concerning the matter of the Caribbean Sea Island Cotton Company that the Honourable Leader could not find it perhaps possible or maybe necessary to apprise this Honourable Chamber of the details regarding that company and the cotton industry as a whole.

Indeed, the Honourable Leader did say in his introduction of this Resolution that he does not think it necessary to enter into the details. Mr. President, it is common knowledge that CARSICOT is riddled with problems and that whole operation... If not for any other reason, if this Chamber is to be asked to give its support to a measure such as this, we need to have those details. We need to know what is the present state of play with CARSICOT and its related operations.

Is cotton already grown, already reaped and is standing or lying somewhere subject to a court order? This all came about since Government entered into this arrangement with local interest as well as foreign interests from diverse parts of the globe. They entered into this arrangement against the caution of the Opposition.

I remember personally urging Government at the time when the guarantee for the National Bank was being debated in this Chamber to have a look again at this particular enterprise. I told them at the time that not only for ecological reasons, not only were they acting against the judgment of the Landell Mills Commodity Studies Report and the recommendations contained therein, but also it seemed to have been an action against good commonsense and good business sense to saddle the taxpayers of Barbados with such a situation where there are so many players involved. That was the term I used at that time. There were too many players involved from as far afield as Canada, Montserrat and St. Kitts/Nevis. There were contributions to be made both at the governmental level and at the level of private enterprise in the form of private companies owned in those countries.

What we have seen happen, Mr. President... And we do not know all the details, but any right thinking person must be of the view that something is terribly amiss in the operations surrounding CARSICOT and the cotton industry. Government needs to take us into its confidence and, indeed, the public of Barbados, tell us what is happening, what has happened and what further action is proposed.

Mr. President, this court action to which I adverted earlier has also raised some other very serious legal implications. The Government in the last few days has issued a statement confirming the fact that the Barbados

Defence Force was instrumental in lending assistance in taking some physical possession of this cotton.

SENATOR L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, I do not understand how a Senator who is trained in a profession could come in here...

Mr. PRESIDENT: That is on a point of order?

SENATOR L. V. H. LEWIS: Yes, Sir. It has to do with the statement that the Defence Force assisted in taking something. The statement which was put out by the Crown in its right of Government was very specific as to the circumstances in which, on grounds of security after the Police stated their inability to keep the cotton secure that the Defence Force was asked to secure the cotton on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture who had been entrusted to keep the cotton by the Marshal of the Courts. That is the correct position. Any statement contrary to that is totally incorrect and untruthful.

SENATOR Miss V. P. BRATHWAITE: Mr. President, what I have said is not contrary to the position that the Honourable Leader has just taken. If the Defence Force is asked to provide security for cotton because the Police had stated their inability to do so, then the Defence Force has rendered assistance in taking care of the position of that cotton. So let the Honourable Leader be very clear in his mind. As he said, I happen to be a practitioner of the law and understand very carefully what I am speaking about. It is not contrary to what the Government has said in its statement nor is it contrary to what the Honourable Leader has just sought to put on the record by means of a point of order.

What I was saying, Sir, is that it raised some very serious implications because nowhere has Government denied that the Defence Force was asked, indeed to participate in that exercise and nowhere had Government denied that the Defence Force rendered assistance after a court order which stayed a first court order which was made. Nowhere...

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: On a point of order. If the Senator does not know the facts of the case, she should not go into them. The fact of the matter is that even although a court decision is taken until it is properly communicated it is not of effect. The Senator would know that. So I do not understand why people who know better say these things.

SENATOR Miss V. P. BRATHWAITE: Mr. President, the order was served on the appropriate parties and the parties were present in court when the order was made so they were seised of that knowledge. As I said, nowhere in that statement that was issued was this matter denied. The explanation that has been given by Government in that release is totally unsatisfactory. They have not

answered the questions or addressed the issues. Why is it that after a court order was made staying the first court order it was thought necessary to proceed as though the first order had not been stayed? That is the issue.

2.35 p.m.

Why was it thought necessary to proceed as though the second order had not, in fact, stayed the first order? It sets a dangerous precedent, Mr. President. It is to such a matter that the Government must turn its attention and answer the issues.

Mr. President, the Minister of Agriculture has gone on record as saying, words to the effect, that there is no problem with the CARSICOT arrangement; that the only problem was that they did not choose carefully who they got into bed with. But by that very admission, Sir, there is a serious indictment on the Minister. How can he be acting on behalf of the Government of Barbados and on behalf of Barbadians and not ensure that you take the reasonable care as to the persons who you indeed get into bed with? That does not exonerate the Minister or the Minister of State with responsibility for CARSICOT from this matter.

On the previous occasion on which I spoke, that was the guarantee by the National Bank, I drew attention in detail to the Landell Mills Commodity Study Report. As Senator Morrison and Senator Phillips stated earlier this morning in an earlier debate, sugar cane is a grass that Barbados needs. Ecologically, it contributes to the soils of Barbados in maintaining the integrity of the soils and economically, it is a grass which earns foreign exchange for this country. It is for those reasons, along with others, that the Landell Mills Commodity Study Report cautioned Government that they removed sugar cane from the soils of this land, at its peril.

I am now happy to see that this Report has been taken off the shelves at the Ministry of Agriculture and dusted and being read by the Members on the other side. I would wish that they read, not only the parts which they find to be beneficial or to be politically expedient to any arguments that they might put forward, but to read the report in total. Because that is a Report that was commissioned, by their Government.

At the time when this matter, the question of the BNB guarantee came up, in this Honourable Chamber, that Report was then in existence. This Government still then saw the need to dig up first and second crop canes to plant cotton. What has been the result in the light of all of those urgings, both as to the kind of arrangement you are about to get into and as to the fact that you are actually going to dig up sugar canes to get into cotton production? Government has got nobody to blame but itself. It can invite no sympathy with regard to this CARSICOT arrangement.

I go further, Sir. The public of Barbados has been made to understand that a new company has been formed which might probably succeed CARSICOT in full or work alongside with CARSICOT or in some way, be supplemental, to the CARSICOT arrangement. The Leader, in his introduction, made no mention of this company and perhaps, will supply some further details when he winds up. He might wish to apprise us too about the status of this company. Is it in fact yet properly incorporated, under the laws of this country? What will be its role and function? What are the implications, *vis-a-vis* CARSICOT and the cotton industry, as a whole? We need to have some assurances, both in this Chamber and the public of Barbados, generally, in relation to CARSICOT. Because if we were not to have such assurances, we are not in the position to support this resolution. We need to have some more assurance. We need to know what has happened to that new company. We need to know what is happening to CARSICOT. We need to know, for example, Sir, if the question of the directorships and shareholdings and equity participation by others in CARSICOT have been rationalized and are all on legal footing now.

This company has been subject to court action after court action. The public of Barbados which has guaranteed that operation through the BNB guarantee has a right to know. Government cannot come in here and pretend... The Honourable Leader did not pretend. But then again, he did not tell us what is wrong and what further action Government intends to take to put those wrong things right. That is what we need to know, not to gloss over the bad and make us all go on as though nothing has happened. Something has happened. All Barbadians are aware of that.

Senator Alleyne this morning referred to certain infelicities with regard to CARSICOT. He knows it and all Barbadians know it. He might not have used that word. I think he probably used a word that is more common in the Barbadian vernacular and probably, less refined. For that, we were not surprised. But he knows it. The Honourable Leader knows it. The Minister of Agriculture knows it. Barbadians need to be taken into the confidence of Government.

Let us know what has happened to CARSICOT. Let us know what is happening now and what further action Government intends to take to safeguard the interest of Barbadians.

But further, Sir, not only the guarantee, but we find now that Barbados, in terms of the provision of lands for growing cotton, this is a further injection of equity into the CARSICOT operation. In other words, Barbadians are being asked to put in. What are they getting out of it? I wish to have those assurances. I think this Chamber is entitled to have those assurances that I mentioned earlier. Are the directorships properly constituted? Are the shareholdings in place? The equity participation by the other parties

involved. What about managerial capabilities, staff competence? These are matters to which the Honourable Leader needs to turn his attention, in his winding up because, Sir, even though we might not have chosen well who we get into bed with, we have a duty, the Government has a duty to this country to determine that you make that rest as comfortable and as beneficial as possible. That is the point that must be made. Let us know about this new company and tell Barbados the truth about CARSICOT and what Government intends to do about the future of cotton and CARSICOT, in this country.

SENATOR A. J. N. PHILLIPS: Mr. President, I want, Sir, to describe cotton as a prime commodity. There have been, in recent days, a lot of criticisms, a lot of aspersions on matters of that nature cast relating to the loan which the Barbados National Bank granted to the Caribbean Sea Island Cotton.

I want to remind Honourable Members, in this Chamber, that where there is a commodity product, where there is a prime commodity, very often a lot of money has to be spent before the results become positive. I make reference to a product like oil that during the 1960s, I believe it was, the investigation of oil wells went on in Barbados spread over a number of years, without any success. I do not have any figure, as to what would have been the cost of that exploration. But indeed I believe it ran into millions of dollars. That is because those persons who were seeking oil recognized it is a prime commodity and that, in such instances, it may very well take years and a lot of money before you get a positive result.

The same thing, Sir, I believe applies to gold in Guyana. It is not every day that a gold miner goes out there, although you know the gold is there, and find gold.

I have every confidence still in the cotton project. I am not making my reference not just to cotton. I am speaking of cotton, as a prime commodity product, for our country. All the indications are that if we can produce a successful cotton crop that the foreign exchange gained would be substantial. ~
2.45 p.m.

My understanding quite clearly is that the foreign exchange gained will exceed that of sugar. I quite well recognize the points raised by Senator Brathwaite in relation to the suitability of sugar cane as opposed to cotton. However, it would not be in the best interest of our country to only rely on one product that generates high foreign exchange. Therefore, Sir, I am still of the view and remain very committed to the cotton project. I feel, Sir, that in the fullness of time Barbadians who now criticise the present Government are going to be very complimentary. I know that complimenting may be difficult of this Government by some persons, but I am sure that as soon as this cotton project begins to produce high returns on foreign exchange

that all reasonable Barbadians will jump on the band wagon and compliment the Government and probably they themselves may try to make hay out of the successes.

All of us in this Chamber, Sir, know of the genesis of the cotton project. We knew the cotton project was in Barbados many years ago when people like Mr. Roy Ward and persons who grew cotton and they in a very small way recognized that cotton was the kind of crop that was desirable. As I said earlier, I like Senator Brathwaite recognize that there is a problem when it comes to soil erosion and matters of that nature when it relates to cotton. There is a problem with the control of weeds and it has its problems, Sir, but it also has its advantages as soon as we come good.

In the parish where I live, there is a large acreage of cotton planted at a plantation called Spring Hall. I believe its name is mentioned in this Resolution. At Spring Hall, Sir, I can assure you as did the Minister in charge of the cotton project that about 75 per cent of the cotton planted at Spring Hall is in good health presently. I know, Sir, that cotton has the possibilities of attacks from diseases such as the boll weevil and probably other diseases such as the boll worm I am told. But nonetheless presently cotton is in good health and really looking good. At least the people of St. Lucy are satisfied with the effort that the Government is making with the cotton project.

Now Sir, having satisfied this Chamber that I remain committed to the cotton project, I cannot say, Sir, speaking from conscience that I can support this Resolution. I have a serious problem with this Resolution in that I am the chairman of an organization that loaned substantial sums of money to this CARSICOT company and from all the evidence it appears that this money is now jeopardized because of some peculiar happenings. The crop itself was not a success. However, there was some cotton and I believe that cotton still remains the subject of a Court hearing. Unfortunately, I had a very uneasy feeling the last day at the Senate in that I sat here and heard an Honourable Senator questioning a judgment handed down by a Honourable Judge of our Supreme Court. Furthermore, Sir, what makes that worse is that I know as a matter of fact that there was a high degree of prompting from another Honourable Senator who has a trained mind and who was the main cause of the Senator who did not have a trained mind in that regard for making the presentation that he did. Sir, because having a background as to what has happened with this CARSICOT Company, I feel that those persons who have a love for their country should not want to castigate the Government for what went on. The Government sought partners. Senator Brathwaite alluded just now to the fact that the Minister did not make a good enough effort to determine who he got into bed with. You know, Sir, and I know, Sir, that human beings, man and woman who love each other dearly, probably court five or six years and then they get married, realize then that there is

a problem. We cannot any longer make it and then sets in the divorce proceedings and inevitably they are separated.

Sir, we are talking about trying to establish a business with a company located in Canada. It is to my knowledge that the Government of Barbados investigated this company through all the resources that were available to the Government to determine the quality of the company that they were getting in bed with and the personnel who were the chief executives of this company. The response was very favourable and the Government embarked upon this investment project with Scothalls of Canada. It is important, Sir, to recognize that the cotton industry is not a simple industry. Barbadians know a little about cotton but, unfortunately, we do not know a lot about cotton. It was important that we sought out persons who had a good knowledge of cotton and on whom we had to rely substantially. It is for that reason, Sir, that the Government allowed that company to hold 51 per cent of the shares, because the Government recognized that if you know that you have a good thing and you do not have the expertise to make it work you have to seek assistance. Assistance was sought and, as I said before, all the necessary checks were made, the checks were satisfactory, and the Government embarked on the Caribbean Sea Island Cotton project.

Sir, persons who now get into this Senate and pretend that they do not know about what went on with CARSICOT are out there Sunday night after Sunday night telling Barbados all about CARSICOT and now come in here, Sir, pretending to be innocent and giving this Chamber the impression that they know nothing about what went on. That, Sir, is the kind of deceit that kills off this society.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: On a point of order, Mr. President. I think basically the distinction between a Senator knowing something...

Mr. PRESIDENT: I would not have an interruption at that point by anyone. No name was called.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: To that extent all the names were called and he could probably have meant me.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No, no, no. You cannot have an interruption on that.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Mr. President, reference was made...

Mr. PRESIDENT: No, no. No reference was made to you, Senator McClean. You are assuming that someone is speaking to you. I cannot have that.

SENATOR A. J. N. PHILLIPS: Sir, the Senator need not feel uneasy. He does not speak much, Sir. I could not be referring to him, so he need not bother.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No, no. It is not a matter of making reference to him. He must understand the Rules of the Senate. His name was not mentioned nor any insinuation directed towards him and I do not see any reasonable position for him to rise on a point of order as if something was directed towards him. I would agree if something was directed towards you, but do not dare risk that. I have to guide the debate in a fair and proper manner and not as you would like it guided. It must be done in a proper way in accordance with the rules. We have rules.

SENATOR A. J. N. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. President. I want to make reference to certain transactions, Sir, that would cause any reasonable person to lose confidence in a partner after these transactions had taken place and the partner recognizes that there is a problem and all is not well, and that there is enough evidence to show that the areas questioned are really and truly of a very questionable nature.
2.55 p.m.

I refer, Sir, to a transaction which took place where a partner of Scothalls presented a cheque for Bds. \$59,000 to the Manager of the Branch of the bank and had that cheque for \$59,000 converted into cash, 590 one hundred dollar notes. The next the bank knew of this transaction, and what made the transaction look below board, was that the money, as I understand it, was returned to the Central Bank wrapped in almost the same manner as it left, and of course there was the accompanying advice for the conversion into Canadian dollars.

Then, Sir, we had a situation where a substantial amount of money was advanced to a company for legal fees. This company was investigated and was found not to have any knowledge of law, yet an amount of some U.S. \$60,000 was forwarded to this company. Those were the early days, Sir, and the Barbados Labour Party, through Mr. Henry Forde, picked it up, quite frankly even before the bank of which I speak, and Mr. Forde made it known on the Floor of the House of Assembly about his findings. I believe at that stage eyebrows were raised about the problem relating to the importation of equipment, where money that should have been guaranteed by the EDC Line of Credit was not guaranteed after that institution realised that all was not well, that there were some peculiarities on the invoices and matters of that nature, where some items landed in Barbados but were intransit to Belize, and a whole lot of other peculiar transactions that caused a great deal of discomfort among those persons who would have been involved in this project in one way or another.

When my Board looked at that project, we were satisfied, based on the projections, that this was an excellent project which was of the sort that the institution could readily support. The whole thing has turned sour, Sir, but like some business arrangements, like in some marriage arrangements, funny things happen after they get going and

decisions have to be taken to divorce these situations in the best interest of possibly both parties.

It is against that background, Sir, along with a number of other things, that I from conscience cannot support this Resolution here before this Honourable Chamber.

Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR N. W. BOXILL: Mr. President, I rise to make a statement that, though painful to me, I have to make. This will be the second time in my life since I have been a member of this honourable party that I will have to vote against it. As you will remember, Sir, the first time was with the 18 year olds not being hanged for committing premeditated murder and so on.

On this occasion, as I said, it pains me, but I have to support the Honourable Member who has just sat down in everything he has said, although he knows a lot more about what he is saying than I do. It is not that he knows more about what he is saying than I know about what I am saying, I mean about the subject.

Mr. PRESIDENT: That is understood.

SENATOR N. W. BOXILL: Thank you, Sir. As youngsters we remember years ago cotton used to be next to sugar in Barbados. I remember my old people picking cotton at four cents per pound or something like that in those days, but I have always been hearing about the Sea Island Cotton from the West Indies as being the greatest cotton we could get.

As the Honourable Member has said, you court a woman for a lot of years sometimes before you get married, and you sometimes get to the point of saying, when you are in love, "I would eat you," and then after you get married you are sorry you did not, but this situation is one of those situations where we were all glad and happy to see that we were going to have a ginney back here, cotton would become next to king sugar, and anything that can bring in the hard currency is something that we want in Barbados, so we were all happy about this situation. The happiness has turned out today, as far as I am concerned, to be unhappiness.

There was a lot of talk, as you are well aware, Sir, going on about this CARSICOT, Scothalls and sometimes you wondered whether they were talking about D'Arcy Scott, it sounds so close, and you began to wonder what was really taking place. As I said, I will venture to say that I am one of the most loyal Barbadians living in this society today. I do not run my country down because somebody else is in office. I keep telling people that this is my country. When you run this country down there is nowhere else for you to go, unless like some who have their passports and can go into America. America is no bed of

roses for us who live here in Barbados. If I went to heaven, Mr. President, I feel I would want to come back to Barbados so long as they would let me come back. I am not so sure I would like heaven. This is one of the best countries in the world. Why should we be running it down?

I got up to talk about this CARSICOT business. I am not going to support this Resolution, for reasons which I am going to state, and I am going to shock the Senate with some of the things which I am going to say.
3.05 p.m.

These people came here, with the sole intention, of taking this little country, this little paradise of ours, for a ride. They had no intention of helping us at all. First, they brought in all sorts of bad cotton to ship out of Barbados as though it was Barbados sea island cotton. Now, that is fraud in its highest form. They they ordered a tractor that should be coming here to Barbados which found its way to Belize. How could a tractor coming to Barbados find itself all the way in Belize. A tractor can't drive. It can't run through water. It is not amphibian. This is robbery with a V – Robbery with Violence. These are things that the people should know. They never intended to help us get off this sea island cotton business.

Let us not forget that when Dr. Haynes was Minister of Finance and he went to Japan he came back here and told us how cotton would bring the economy of this country back up because they had made arrangements. That's why I am so surprised to hear the way Senator Brathwaite is talking. You wouldn't believe that Senator Brathwaite belongs to ... The rate per pound was an enormous sum. He was saying at the time that cotton will take over from sugar. I was somewhat happy for the simple reason that although you can burn sugar cane you can't burn cotton. Not that I don't want to see sugar about here because I like my little rum and you must have the molasses and so forth. Sugar serves a useful purpose. It has been here for years from the time we were born. That is why they brought us here as a matter of fact.

But, the point I want to make explicitly, is the dishonesty of these people, and I regret that we allowed it to go so far and so long without having one or two of them in prison. The only thing I regret about having to put them in prison is that we might have to feed them. But some of them should be in prison; they shouldn't be running about here. They have the temerity to talk about their putting somebody out of work. They were thieves and vagabonds that came down here to take this little paradise of ours for a ride.

I heard Senator Brathwaite mention something about the Defence Force being used to protect cotton and I mentioned *sotto voce* when she was saying so that even if the Defence Force were used to protect, it was not coming from St. Lucia, Grenada or Golgotha, but it was the

Barbados Defence Force that we have to pay every month. They have a right to protect our property. Are we going to stand here and let everybody take us for a ride?

What is shocking about the whole thing is that long ago I gave a little warning, because I did not like what I saw was going on. I didn't know a lot about it but you know, you always have to be chary and wary when you see certain operations and certain people involved in certain operations. You have to ask yourself certain questions and I hinted a long time ago as far back as 1987 when I hinted beware of the Greeks when they bring gifts. But, nobody paid me any mind.

Here it is that tomorrow we will see headlines: "Boxill Votes Against His Party". I am very sorry. I will have to vote, not against the party, but for integrity. I am voting against this measure. I am sorry I have to do it but I have to because my conscience would not allow me to sleep or walk the streets as an upright and honest person, as I think I am, if I supported this sort of measure that comes before us here today.

I am extremely sorry, Sir, but with those few remarks – I don't want to steal the thunder from the other speakers who might speak on this but I would like to make it explicitly clear that the tractor does not cost \$25, it costs hundreds of thousands of dollars and that is hundreds of thousands that have gone down the drain, and as the Honourable Member has just said, they supported this venture in all good gesture only to find out that it has turned sour.

With those few remarks, Sir, I beg not to support this Resolution. I cannot support this Resolution that is before us. I thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR THE REV. CANON I. McK. JONES: Mr. President, I must confess that I am a little confused by all that I have been hearing as far as this Resolution is concerned. It would seem to me that we have been misrepresenting some of the Senators who have spoken in the idea that they are against cotton. I don't think there is anybody in this Honourable Chamber that is opposed to the project of planting cotton and trying to get a very fair return from our efforts. As far as I am aware, they said that the quality cotton that we have in Barbados is some of the best in the world and that the Japanese are more than anxious to buy all of the cotton that we can produce. I have also been hearing that it is possible that if we get a very good acreage planted in cotton and it comes up and grows healthily that it might even outdo sugar. So I believe that anybody who is a Barbadian would like to see cotton really bringing us all that foreign exchange that we are looking forward to.

There are a lot of things that have gone wrong. Yes, we know. What I think caused the whole debate to go on the wrong side is that some Senators were thinking that there were other Senators who are opposed to the idea of

this cotton. I don't think that is true. What I think is true is this. Senator Brathwaite was saying that she would have like to have heard a lot more about CARSICOT and what is the position with CARSICOT before she could even come to terms with this Resolution that is before her. That is the impression that I had in my mind. My mind is not your mind. That's how I have seen it. In other words she felt that there has been so much talk about what has gone wrong in CARSICOT and all of us know about this. For example, we have been told that there were certain officers or managers of CARSICOT that were getting tremendous monthly salaries of \$10 and \$12 thousand and we wanted to know how could any business pay that kind of money if they were not getting big returns. We couldn't find that any returns were coming. These were the kinds of things that I think everybody in Barbados would like to know a little bit more about before we can decide whether we can go ahead with this Resolution or not. If it means that by procrastinating over the passing of this Resolution it may cause this business to reach the Courts and, as a matter of fact, it is in the Courts already, and you have to get it decided by the Courts, it is possible that that Court order or decision could take anything like two or three years before it really comes through and that would be two or three years we are losing all the money we could be getting from cotton. So, my feeling is that if it means that by not passing this we may delay the amount of foreign reserves we can get from cotton for two or three years, I will be in favour of passing this because this is my Barbados and I have no where to go. If there is something that can happen that can bring a lot of money to Barbados through this cotton I am all for it. I think that that is what has caused the whole trouble.

Regardless of what has happened in CARSICOT, what we would like to know is that if this is passed, who are the people who would be the directors and the managers? If we can get that information, that we could feel justified in the personnel that we are appointing, that they are men and women of integrity, well, then, I would be all for passing this Resolution. Thank you.

SENATOR L. A. WARD: Thank you very much, Mr. President, I will be very brief; but an idea such as this contained in this Resolution was brought to me by these same people who represented CARSICOT and who were trying to persuade me to lease the estates of which I am Managing Director to them in CARSICOT. I, being an agriculturalist, not only a sugar planter, in the past, I began to question these people and the more I questioned them the more suspicious I got from the answers that were coming. So, after maybe an hour or more of this I told them: "Listen, if cotton is a profitable thing to grow none of us are against working for money, we would grow our own cotton." 3.15 p.m.

The reason why I would say this to you is that if I lease these estates in which I am under your control your one idea is to grow cotton at any cost. The protection of the

soil of these estates would not be your concern. As soon as you grew cotton year after year and you got down to rock stone, you would come and tell me, "These are your estates, come for them".

I told them as soon as they grow cotton successfully in Barbados and we see the method under which you can grow this cotton, you can come back and talk to me. If I could not give my consent to lease the estates of which I was in control, I cannot support the lease of these estates to those people.

I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I want to share the views of my colleague. Senator Lewis, ought to have given us more details in his introduction. I presume that the lands referred are vested in the Crown rather than vested in the ADC or some such entity owned by Government. I presume that there is some good reason for the delay in bringing the Resolution here because CARSICOT did not start to operate yesterday. Therefore, we should be given the benefit of the reasons for such delay.

What I would say is that the fact that this has taken so long to reach Parliament is expressive of other things that have gone wrong with CARSICOT including the putting in place of the Board of Directors. At this point I would say that Senator Phillips did reflect on the contribution of my colleague Senator Brathwaite and indicated that she know much about CARSICOT to the extent that she was capable of informing the public about it. Therefore, she should not have indicated that the Leader of Government Business in introducing the Resolution should have given more details.

I want to point out that irrespective of my state of knowledge on the particular point, Government has a responsibility to inform this Chamber of important matters pertaining to any measure before it. It has nothing to do with how much Senator Brathwaite or any other Senator knows about the situation. Responsibility rests with Government to clearly inform this Chamber of all salient matters.

If perchance they should omit so to do, other Senators can, in their own discretion, make their contributions. But it should not fall to other Senators to have to make that type of contribution. Even if they do, it would still be of a different significance from if the statement comes from the Leader of Government Business and the Minister responsible for CARSICOT.

It is not yet too late for Senator Lewis in his summing up to give us further and better details surrounding this matter which can better guide the Senate as to how they should vote in this situation. We have already had indications that at least two Members from the Government side are not going to support it. What I would say from our side we cannot

support it either. The reason why we cannot support it is largely for reasons such as outlined by Senator Brathwaite.

At the same time we are not going to obstruct Government in this matter. We will abstain from voting and let Government determine exactly whether they are going to support it or whether they are going to vote it down. We do not want to impede them by taking an opposite position from them. We certainly cannot countenance Government's involvement in this by taking the same position as they would take in the matter so we would just quietly abstain and place our views on the record by way of comment.

Basically, what I would say is that if even everything said by Senator Boxill was true about the character and intention of the partners, even if we concede that Government did not know this beforehand, Government should still have been sufficiently vigilant to pick up the first signs that something was going amiss. Government should have been sufficiently involved and protective of their stake in the whole measure that even the most crafty could not have taken us for the type of ride that we have been taken for in this project. Therefore Government and the Ministers responsible for our involvement in CARSICOT must accept responsibility for what has happened to this country in this measure.

This is not to say in the least that anyone is defending our unfortunate partners, unfortunate from our point of view, perhaps, even also unfortunate from their point of view because if you hear the story told by the partners they too believe that they have been hard done by the whole measure. I am saying that is because of particular failings on the part of Government and persons appointed by Government to act on their behalf in this matter that we have come to this most unfortunate juncture. It avails us nothing for Government to try to avoid facing up to that fact. There is no way that Government can be satisfied in its own mind that it acted properly and in good time in every regard with respect to this measure.

The situation facing the Barbados National Bank is an especially distressing one. It should never have happened because important officers in Government would have been privy to the key decisions at particular points in time to be sure that things did not unfold in a way that would leave the Barbados National Bank holding the bag in the way that it has where they do not even now have a claim on the cotton that is in dispute as to whether the Army should be holding it or should not be holding it, or should have intervened or should not have intervened and matters of that like.

What I would not, however, hear is that if this measure is passed, it will have the effect of enhancing the value of CARSICOT which value is probably negative at the moment but, nonetheless, it will enhance the value of CARSICOT.

3.25 p.m.

We do not really need a study by anyone graduating from a United States university to tell us that when you inject funds, by way of grant or whatever means that that has a positive contribution on the equity situation of the company which would be benefiting from that injection. That is not an esoteric point which we have to study with any detail. It is obvious it stands on the surface, in the same way that it stood on the surface that any funds which came the sugar industry's way by virtue of a better price for sugar resulting from the bonds would have made some contribution towards the equity of those businesses and stop it from eroding at a more rapid rate. Those are quite obvious points.

Therefore, Government in making up its mind as to whether they want to vote for this or vote against it. It is quite evident that these two Government Senators are not happy with it. These are two of the most staunch Government Senators. I take their position as a clear signal. They are the spokesmen on that side for Government, as far as I am concerned. You all would have to determine where you are going, in relation to this particular matter.

But again, the question about lack of expertise was pleaded, on behalf of Government. Government not having the expertise in cotton and so on and therefore they had to get these partners and things of that like. Government may not have the specific expertise in cotton but people in Barbados and, indeed, Government ought to have general expertise in the management of companies and the formation of companies, in the oversight of the formation of companies. Things might have gone wrong at the technical level also but the tractor which found itself way into Belize was not a technical matter pertaining to the growing of cotton. All of the other infelicities we have heard about were not in the technical area as such. They were manœuvres of a type that alert persons skilled in management would have detected and should have been in a position to protect against.

Systems should be put in place to prevent certain rather gross types of abuse. Systems should be put in place, up front. That is basically, it would seem to me, one of the principal failures in CARSICOT in that sufficient effort was not put in place to get the thing well organized from the start. It was only at the last minute that they brought in the expert, the Minister of everything that is good and everything that is not so good to help them out. Perhaps it would have been better if that Minister were there, from the start, trying to set up CARSICOT, rather than doing a salvage operation that it is far too late to salvage.

Thank you.

SENATOR Dr. F. W. ALLEYNE: Mr. President, I have no doubt that cotton is an important part of the future

of agriculture in Barbados. Cotton has the potential to make a greater impact on the Barbadian economy than sugar. It has a capability for industrial and agricultural development in Barbados which far surpasses sugar. It can create the opportunity for us to acquire a level of industrial skills in Barbados which sugar does not require.

I can think of the scenario in which we start from the planting and come through when we go to the spinning, the manufacture of cloth and specialized types of goods which have niche markets which are important for us, as a small country. I have no doubt that cotton will be an important part of the future of agriculture, in Barbados.

This resolution before us, as I understand it – I was not present when the Leader of the Senate introduced it – seeks to vest these lands in CARSICOT to facilitate the cultivation of cotton. I am aware, for some time, because I have heard a talk show host speaking on this matter. We have a relationship so I have tried to find out as much as I could about this particular project particularly from the talk show host, among other persons. I have been concerned about aspects of the management of this project for some time.

I am aware that, in Barbados, there is a lot of developmental work going on in cotton breeding, developing varieties and so on and improving the quality of Sea Island Cotton for which we are well known.

As I have said earlier, Mr. President, I have tried to understand the difficulties long before this surfaced in the public arena. As I understand it, a Government which was anxious to escape from monoculture in sugar came upon the cotton project. And, as I said earlier, cotton offers possibilities for agricultural diversification and industrial development which are unmatched by any other activity which we have known in the agricultural sector.

My understanding of the situation is that the Government jumped at this opportunity to get into cotton. But I also recognize that there are a lot of smart men flying across the world. They are the best dressed men you find sitting down in the jets when you find them in First Class.

I recall the scandal in the United States of America – that is a big country – the Lockheed scandal. That, based in the United States, was like an octopus across the world. That is the United States, one of the most powerful economies in this world. No Germany is up there now.

I have heard references to management, capability in the public sector. I have heard references to that in this debate this afternoon. When we speak of management

capabilities certainly the United States has to be one of the economies which is best endowed with management. That Lockheed scandal took hold of the United States economy and rocked it. It not only rocked the United States, the biggest companies in the United States. It stretched across to Trinidad. It stretched cross the world. Look today with the scandals of insider trading in the same United States with all those highly investigative capabilities. I am saying these things, Mr. President, to say that those of us who say that, in Barbados, these things should not have happened seem to betray a certain unawareness of the world today. High level crookedness is one of the most profitable professions. I say professions because it is practised. It is something which people study and perfect.

I am not particularly taken in by this notion that the Barbados Government is feeble in a way that the United States Government was not feeble when it was engulfed by the Lockheed scandal. I am not going to buy that, Mr. President.

What I have suspected... For quite some time, I have tried to satisfy my own mind that everything was on par. I make bold to say this afternoon that I was appalled that one of the major partners Scothalls Ltd. should be taking to court a matter which affects all Barbadians because when the arithmetic is done Scothalls owes Barbadians money and Barbadians do not owe them one penny.

I am worried that people can walk in and out of Barbados, commit all kinds of wrongdoings and they are not charged for them. I am saying some of the major actors of this cotton project, on behalf of the company which is suing – not CARSICOT, they are suing Barbadians – they should be arrested and charged for fraud. Mr. President, that is what I am saying.

Take, for example, there is one item which they sent into Barbados and charged it at \$90 000. When the proper check was made, it cost \$68 000. There is another item they sent in here at \$45 000. When you did a proper check, it cost \$10 000. There is evidence, Mr. President, that these very partners in this company went and cut price tags off old card boxes, falsified the prices and stuck them on to the crates when they sent the equipment here. I am talking about crookedness, at the highest level, whether Vere Brathwaite likes it or not. I use the term crookedness when she was referring to lack of refinement. But crookedness is crookedness by any language.

I will support Government's policy to diversify agriculture. I have always been interested in agricultural diversification. It is an area of my professional interest.
3.35 p.m.

Mr. President, I cannot say that I know what the position of the parliamentary party is on this matter. I cannot say that I know that. I know what my position is and

I cannot say that given my knowledge of the infelicitities committed by these people Scothalls that I would do justice to this Resolution if I did not at least abstain from it. I believe that I would be doing the wrong thing if I did not abstain on this Resolution. I cannot support it.

It is a pity that the Leader of the Senate did not consult with me before this matter was laid. I am in full support of the cotton project and I am in full support of agricultural diversification. But Mr. President, I want to have nothing at all to do with crooks. Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR Mrs. V. C. FRASER: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to say that there was always an old phrase that I was taught and it was that when crooks are reigning dishonesty becomes legal. Barbados has always been a country that has been welcoming people to their shores with open arms. This particular CARSICOT/Scothalls situation in this country shows us quite clearly that it is not always the intention of people who come to our shores to be well wishers and good doers. We are a country that happens to be under the lifts of developing countries. In developing countries we tend to lean heavily on people coming from developed who have certain expertise. We are very innocent people and we tend to be very trusting. I believe that Government took these people to be honest and sincere persons who were highly skilled and were happy as every Barbadian was knowing the history we had with cotton.

I recall when I was working at ADC when cotton was going in Barbados and many poor people were able to benefit by reaping cotton, even school children. It was under this very Democratic Labour Party Government that that happened with Roy Ward at the time as Chairman of the ADC. Therefore, Barbadians hearing that we were going to have cotton revived, they were saying we know when cotton was being grown at Wildey and being reaped. All the people from the Pine area had extra cash. In the evenings and early mornings before school, the school children reaped cotton and that was known to be excellent cotton because it was hand picked. Therefore, at the end of the week many people were able to draw large sums of money at that time from the ADC for picking cotton. I believe that hearing of this and knowing of that history people were anxious to see cotton resuscitated in Barbados and also to hear of the number of things that would be done by these people coming in and the amount of jobs that would be generated and so on. I think that can happen to anybody anywhere. In travelling, reading, and watching your various channels on television and so on, you get to see how crooks undermine systems. Therefore, when I see crooks involved in anything and I see them trying to pull down my country, which means they are pulling down me as well, I am not going to get anywhere near them for them to pull in me.

This particular situation whereas I love agriculture and diversification, I would be the most happy person when

Government gets cotton going again without anything to do with these two particular companies. Therefore, I will not support this particular Resolution. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, I will at the appropriate time bring to this Honourable Senate a forthright and lengthy statement concerning the new company as was asked for. In doing that, I will give important details about CARSICOT. But I think that it would be remiss if I did not have it recorded that after the formation of the company in 1988 up to the end of 1989, some 18 months after, there had been one meeting of the directors of the company. There had been no meetings of the shareholders of the company. The actions taken by the company had been done by Nitin Amersey, President of Scothalls who is also Chairman of CARSICOT. Other actions were taken between May 1989 and December 1989 by Clifton Maynard, Managing Director of the company. They were the two actors. When it became known that certain transactions were going to be questioned by the directors of the company, Nitin Amersey the President of Scothalls acting as chairman of the company initiated the action that caused the Accountant to be dismissed and services to be terminated which have subsequently been the subject of a Court suit. It was Amersey who took that decision. It is also a fact that Amersey attempted and wrote a letter to the Managing Director who was a Government appointed director terminating his services. But the Managing Director was wise enough not to take any notice of that because he was aware that there had been no meetings of shareholders. He was also aware that at that stage there were only two directors although the by-laws of the company require three directors and if he had walked away from that situation the company would have fallen straight in the lap of Nitin Amersey.

Indeed, subsequent information and the legal activities in the Courts suggest that that was the ploy. The Government had taken a position and I am duty bound as a Member of the Cabinet to bring the matter before Parliament. It is a matter for Parliament to decide whether it supports the Cabinet position or it rejects it.

I beg to move that the Resolution be passed.

The question that this Resolution do now pass was put to the Senate and the Senate divided as follows:

Ayes: SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS. – 1

Abstentions: SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE, SENATOR A. W. A. McClean, SENATOR THE REV. CANON I. McK. JONES – 3

Noes: SENATOR A. MORRISON, SENATOR Dr. F. W. ALLEYNE, SENATOR Mrs. V. C. FRASER, SENATOR A. J. N. PHILLIPS, SENATOR Miss Y. V. WALKES, SENATOR T. A. PRESCOD, SENATOR T. C. ESTWICK, SENATOR N. W. BOXILL, SENATOR L. A. WARD, SENATOR M. deL. JORDAN – 10

Mr. PRESIDENT: The vote has been taken and the "Noes" have it.
3.45 p.m.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, Government Business for today is now complete. I think it would be remiss of me if I did not express formally to you, to this Chamber and to the staff of Parliament greetings at this Yuletide season and wish for all of you a very merry Christmas.

It is possible, Mr. President that we may have to meet again before the new year comes and that is why I am not extending New Year greetings yet, but the business before the other House suggests that it may be necessary to have a meeting of this Honourable Senate. However, I wish Members on the other side, on behalf of the Members on this side, I wish you, Mr. President, and the officers of Parliament every blessedness during the coming season.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I would like to wish all the Members a merry Christmas, at least a sober one, and I hope it will be enjoyable.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: I beg to move that the Senate be now adjourned *sine die*.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to, and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.
3.50 p.m.

CONTENTS

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS 2064

The Land Registration (Suspension) Order, 1990.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS 2064

Suspension of Standing Order 45(2).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS 2064

A Bill entitled the Boyce Pension Act 1990.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS 2064

Notice of a Resolution to approve the lease to Caribbean Sea Island Cotton Company Limited of parcels of land at Spencers, Christ Church, Spring Hall, St. Lucy and Dodds, St. Philip.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

THE BOYCE PENSION BILL 1990 2064

Senator the Hon. L. V. H. Lewis, 2064.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR FINANCE RE SUGAR INDUSTRY BONDS 2065

Senator the Hon. Dr. C. D. Clarke, 2065, 2076, 2077; Senator A. W. A. McClean, 2066, 2071, 2077; Senator L. A. Ward, 2068; Senator J. C. W. Wickham, 2069; Senator A. Morrison, 2069, 2071, 2072; Mr. President, 2076; Senator A. J. N. Phillips, 2072; Senator Dr. F. W. Alleyne, 2073, 2074, 2075; Senator Mrs. V. C. Fraser, 2075, 2076; Senator the Hon. L. V. H. Lewis, 2076; Senator Miss V. P. Brathwaite, 2076.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE LEASE TO CARSIOT OF PARCELS OF LAND SITUATE AT SPENCERS IN CHRIST CHURCH, SPRING HALL IN ST. LUCY AND DODDS IN ST. PHILIP 2077

Senator the Hon L. V. H. Lewis, 2077, 2087; Senator Miss V. P. Brathwaite, 2077; Senator A. J. N. Phillips, 2080, 2081; Senator A. W. A. McClean, 2084; Mr. President, 2081; Senator N. W. Boxill, 2082; Senator the Rev. Canon I. McK. Jones, 2083; Senator L. A. Ward, 2083; Senator Dr. F. W. Alleyne, 2085; Senator Mrs. V. C. Fraser, 2086.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS 2087

Senator the Hon. L. V. H. Lewis, 2087; Mr. President, 2087.

SUSPENSION 2076

Senator the Hon. L. V. H. Lewis, 2076.

RESUMPTION 2076

Mr. President, 2076.

ADJOURNMENT 2087

Senator the Hon. L. V. H. LEWIS, 2087.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ALLEYNE, Senator Dr. F. W.
BOXILL, Senator N. W.
BRATHWAITE, Senator Miss V. P.
CLARKE, Senator the Hon. Dr. C. D.
FRASER, Senator Mrs. V. C.
JONES, Senator the Rev. Canon I. McK.
LEWIS, Senator the Hon. L. V. H.
McCLEAN, Senator A. W. A.
MORRISON, Senator A.
PHILLIPS, Senator A. J. N.
WALCOTT, His Hon. Senator Sir Frank L.
WARD, Senator L. A.
WICKHAM, Senator J. C. W.