
THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

THE SENATE

Wednesday, June 13, 2001

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, June 13, 2001, at 11.20 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator Sir Fred GOLLOP, K.A. (President)

His Honour Senator C. L. BOLDEN, C.B.E., LL.B. (Hons.) (Deputy President)

Senator the Hon. P. C. GODDARD (Minister of Public Works and Transport) (Leader of the Senate)

Senator the Hon. G. S. H. MURRAY, B.A. (Hons.), J.P. (Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office and the Civil Service)

Senator Miss C. Y. FORDE, L.C.P., J.P. (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture)

Senator T. E. BARKER, B.A. (Hons.), M.A. (Econ.) (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources)

Senator the Hon. Dame Patricia SYMMONDS, G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.), P.G.C.E., J.P.

Senator Miss J. C. ODLE, J.P.

Senator G. E. N. BROME

Senator Mrs. J. P. ALLEYNE, Dip. Man. (Hons.), J.P.

Senator D. D. MARSHALL, LL.B. (Hons.) L.E.C.

Senator C. A. MASCOLL, B.Sc. (Econ.) (Hons.), M.A. (Public Finance)

Senator LeR. H. McCLEAN, B.Sc. (Hons.)

Senator C. K. LAURIE, D.I.C.T.A. (S.T.), FBSTA

Senator Sir John Stanley GODDARD, K.A., B.Com., C.A., Hon LL.D.(U.W.I.)

Senator B. R. COLLYMORE, C.M.G.

Senator the Rev. L. W. B. ROCK, M. Div.

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is in Session.

MESSAGES

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have received the following communication from His Excellency the Governor-General, Message No. 2, 2001.

"HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL TO THE HONOURABLE THE SENATE

His Excellency the Governor-General has the honour to inform The Honourable The Senate that he will be absent from the country during the period June 14 to July 20, 2001 on vacation leave in the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

His Excellency further has the honour to inform The Honourable The Senate that, in accordance with the provisions of section 29(1)(b) of the Constitution, the Chief Justice, the Honourable Sir Denys Williams, KCMG, GCM, has been appointed Acting Governor-General for the period June 14 to July 20, 2001."

It is signed by the Governor-General.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have received an apology from Senator Rickinson who cannot be present today owing to illness.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE
ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE
ON MATTERS OF URGENT
PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean, under Standing Order No. 10, has sought leave to move the Adjournment of the Senate. His grounds are that the attack on a nurse in the execution of her duties at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the disruption of services are matters which are definite, urgent and of public importance, and may properly be raised on a motion for adjournment of the Senate. Perhaps I should read the relevant Resolution in its entirety.

“WHEREAS successive Governments of Barbados have always recognised and promoted safety in the workplace; and

WHEREAS there has been an increase in acts of violence against some public workers while in the execution of their duties; and

WHEREAS the most recent incident of an attack on a nurse at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital highlights the poor state of security at that institution, and such attacks engender a state of fear on the part of staff and patients of the Q.E.H., as well as the general public, and that such fear and concerns could lead to serious disruption of the services provided by the sole public hospital on this Island; and

WHEREAS this matter is of urgent public importance;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Senate calls on the Minister of Health to act in due haste:

- (a) to outline to Honourable Members his Ministry's plans for the remedying of the problems of security which now beset the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.
- (b) meet with the health care workers in the Hospital and their representatives to hear their concerns
- (c) take action immediately to address these concerns.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate calls on the Minister of Health to take all possible steps to provide a safe work environment for the nurses, doctors, other health care workers, ancillary staff and patients in order to restore the public's confidence in the services provided by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.”

Under the relevant Standing Order there are two requirements for matters of this kind. First, the Presiding Officer must be satisfied “that the matter is definite, urgent and of public importance and may properly be raised on a motion for the adjournment of the Senate” and either leave of the Senate is given or if it is not given then at least eight Senators rise in their places to support the Motion.

I must, therefore, state whether in my judgment the matter is sufficiently important, specific and urgent. In effect, to change the Business of the Honourable the Senate and to provide for an emergency debate, May's celebrated work on Parliamentary Procedure states that in coming to his decision the Presiding Officer is expected to have regard to the extent to which the matter concerns the administrative responsibility of Ministers and could come within the scope of ministerial action or responsibility and the probability of the matter being brought before the House.

According to the conventions and practices of Parliament, I am not required to give any reason for my ruling but I have given due consideration to this matter. While I have no difficulty in agreeing that the matter is of public importance I am not satisfied on the basis of what is before me that it is either specific or, in that context, urgent.

I, therefore, will not permit the matter to be raised at this stage, but I should say to Senator McClean that there is nothing to prevent him as an Honourable Member of the Senate speaking on the adjournment prior to the close of proceedings today, provided notice is given and the relevant Standing Orders are observed.

ORDER NO. 2 – SECOND READING OF THE
ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT)
BILL, 2001

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I rise to move the Second Reading of the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill, 2001. The amendment is designed to implement the mandatory wearing of seat belts and the use of child safety seats in the automobiles of Barbados. This Road Traffic Act is amended by inserting immediately after Part III the relevant legislation regarding the definition of the seat belts and child safety seats and the objective of this, Mr. President, is to reduce the injury and fatalities that occur in automobile accidents in Barbados.

Regardless of how safely we might drive, we are all human and accidents do occur. The introduction of this legislation in no way diminishes our thrust to improve road courtesy, observance of the existing laws and legislation that surround the safe passage of automobiles on our highways.

11. 30 a.m.

We all recognise that there has been a lack of discipline, an absence of commonsense and courtesy on our roads. On the other hand, some of the courtesy that we see is very dangerous because we do not take into account the other automobiles travelling on the road. Quite often you see an individual stop to call someone out when there is an approaching vehicle behind him and the driver cannot see the individual being called out. I have witnessed many close calls where individuals have been narrowly missed by automobiles.

Mr. President, it has been demonstrated that seat belts have been effective in reducing the seriousness of injuries and prevention of death in many accidents. The history of automobile accidents indicates that most of the accidents occur within a very short radius of the home. Many accidents also occur at relatively slow speeds, 30 to 60 kilometres per hour which is within our speed limit laws. Due to a lack of restraint, individuals have been severely damaged by striking the windshield or steering column resulting in very serious injury and/or death. For a long time the medical profession has recognised that the use of seat belts would decrease significantly the level of injuries sustained on the roads in Barbados. A lot of the injuries are of a significant nature that can disfigure individuals and affect them severely for the rest of their lives.

Mr. President, I have been in the habit of wearing a seat belt whenever I drive and I automatically put on my seat belt and there have been some complaints about the use of seat belts and there is very clear indication that the technology of seat belts has improved over a period of time. I recall that the first seat belt fitted to my automobile was fixed. In other words, it had no commercial reel to it but the commercial reel is now there. In this legislation the description of the seat belt is very carefully phrased.

Mr. President, this legislation makes provisions for child safety seats to be installed in the back seat of the car and properly anchored. This is the proper way to secure infants and young children and it is something that I am keenly aware of as a grandfather. Many of us here in the Senate would appreciate that when someone in the back seat is not secured by a seat belt that the person can cause serious injuries to others in the automobiles in the event of a sudden stop. They can come forward and damage the driver or the occupant in the passenger seat in the front of the car; that is as true for a young infant or child as it is for an adult. Not only would they cause themselves injury but they cause other people injury as well.

Mr. President, it is in this context that this legislation is brought to provide for the compulsory wearing of seat belts and the use of child safety seats in automobiles.

Mr. President, I have no doubt that if this is properly implemented it will reduce the high level of injuries that we have in Barbados.

Mr. President, I will go beyond that. I think that the very act of putting on a seat belt will raise the consciousness of Barbadians about the need for safety. The experience in other countries that have developed a seat belt discipline indicates that the discipline helped to improve the safety consciousness on roads generally.

Therefore, Mr. President, I think that this seat belt legislation will go beyond the immediate action of reducing injury and saving lives. It will also bring about a heightened awareness of the need for safe driving and safe road practices on the highways of Barbados. None of us really need to be reminded of the daily, flagrant violation of road traffic rules and good commonsense of courtesy on our roads. I hope, Mr. President, that this legislation will highlight some of the issues and improve the Barbadian awareness for improved safety on our roads.

11.40 a.m.

The legislation is very detailed and it instructs how the Licensing Authority, before registering any private motor car, self-driven car, hired car, limousines *et cetera*, may refuse to register those vehicles if they fail to satisfy all or any of these requirements, which is to have the properly installed seat belts in the front and back seats.

Some individuals may wish to say that this is an unwarranted cost burden but I would have to ask you what price do you put on a life, especially the lives of those who are dearest and closest to you, who more often than not are likely to be in your automobile. It is unfortunate that we have to bring legislation to bring this discipline into being but the experience around the globe indicates that is the only way that you can save people from themselves.

I do think that this legislation is long overdue and I am pleased to see it has finally come to the Honourable Senate and to the Honourable House. Mr. President, with that, I support this Bill with all my heart and beg that it now be read a second time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I should point out to Honourable Senators that this is the Second Reading of this Bill. It is not the First Reading as stated on the Order Paper. I am advised that the Bill has already been read a first time.

SENATOR the Rev. L. W. B. ROCK: Mr. President, I rise to lend my support to this Bill and like the previous speaker, I would have wished that it had come to us years ago. As it is here now, certainly, it is a good thing.

Sir, like many others, I am deeply concerned for the lawlessness and carelessness which we see on the roads of this Island of ours and there are many of us who think that driving is a right rather than a privilege. It is a privilege that is abused.

One of my concerns, however, is the issue of the time that the Bills give for the transition and I am wondering whether, October, 2001, stated in the Bill for change to be effective, gives a long enough period for those vehicles that need to have seat belts fixed. I would ask that some consideration be given to this because it seems a short period between the passing of the Bill and the implementation of it.

I would like in my support to add that it is absolutely necessary for the Barbados Police Force, as this Bill is passed, to be very vigilant. One of the weaknesses that seems to be creeping into our society is that things that are illegal are allowed slowly to creep into the society and then attempts are made to correct them. Sir, from time to time we hear that the police are having a campaign for this and a campaign for that. I myself wonder whether the wrong message is not being communicated when we have campaigns for some things which actually are laws which ought to be implemented all the time.

I cite, for instance, two concerns that I have. We are noticing that people are using the sidewalks to advertise businesses. Sidewalks are supposed to be there to provide clear passage for pedestrians. When we see business places using the sidewalks to advertise their businesses, it seems to me that they are putting hindrances in the way of the pedestrians. I notice a particular incident where a vendor has built a structure onto the sidewalk so that persons making use of that provision which he has built must stand on the sidewalk and block pedestrians.

Another concern that I have is with the lack of parking at the Hospital. I have witnessed recently that, because of the lack of adequate parking, people have to park their vehicles along the sidewalk, which means that pedestrians cannot use the sidewalks and, therefore, they have to step into the streets and endanger their lives.

The point that I am making is that we have a way of allowing these things to slowly creep into the society and then pay attention when, it seems to me, that it is too late. I am, therefore, saying that as this Bill becomes law, there must be vigilance on the part of the police to ensure its implementation.

I understand that there is provision in the law for the endorsing of licences. I would like to see this practised more where people who have committed certain traffic offences have their licences endorsed; and for so many endorsements, the licences are taken away for a period of

time. I think that this will also help to enforce the fact that driving is a privilege and not a right.

With these brief remarks, Sir, I would like to lend my support to this Bill.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Mr. President, I rise to say a few words on this Bill in its support. Sir, for some time now, I have been looking forward to a debate which would speak to the amendment of the Road Traffic Act.

Sometime ago I raised some concerns relative to the use of the road by persons with vehicles. Senator Goddard alluded to it in his presentation, with respect to how we treat each one on the road. In the old days, I believe that it may be unparliamentary, we used to call such people "road hogs". They are people who really and truly believe that the road is a highway, indeed it is, for their own personal use and that they can do as they like with the vehicles, Sir.

I made the point some years ago in this Senate that a vehicle is a potentially dangerous item and it is only as good as the user. In that regard I would wish to support the call that Senator Rock made in respect of endorsing licences. Sir, that is one of the things that I had noted on my pad to speak about but he has spoken to it very broadly. I would want to support, in due course, something like that as an amendment to the Road Traffic Act.

I do not think that people take seriously enough the danger that they can cause with their vehicles. As recently as two days ago, while driving on a semi major road in the USA, well below the speed limit, there were three passengers in the back seat; two passengers were buckled with across-the-chest straps and the other passenger was buckled across the lap. The two passengers in the front seats were also buckled.

There were two cars ahead, one with a trailer in tow, decided to cross two lanes in front of the car which was in front of us and to make an exit off that road. There was a need for an abrupt shift to the car and the person sitting in the middle of the back seat, even though they wore a seat belt across the bottom, which some cars come fitted with, it was not sufficient to stop the passenger, a five-year-old minor, from tilting forward. The passenger only hurt his foot because of fear but if it was more major, we realised that it could have been more traumatic.

Sir, where the legislation calls for seat belts in the back seat for passengers as well, I believe it does say including the middle passenger seat where there may be three persons sitting in the back seat, to be secured across the upper body as well. Sir, without doubt, even though you may use your car carefully, there is no knowing what somebody else using the road will do and what harm and injury that could cause to you.

Sir, with respect to the three months given for the provision of these seat belts, I think that is ample. In my view, nowadays persons take the time to get sprucing up done on their cars – spoilers, rims, fancy paint jobs, fancy horns, *et cetera* – and they get that done in a very short space of time. I do not think that three months is an unreasonable period of time for this to be implemented.

This Bill has now reached the Senate but it has been discussed in the general public for some time, both on the positive side and on what some people would call the negative side. I do not see any negatives because statistics have shown that the wearing of seat belts saves lives. I would hope that the limit of three months is not extended and sooner rather than later, we can move on in that regard.
11.50 a.m.

Sir, when we speak about the use of the roads, we usually think of only the users of vehicles but I believe that we must pay some attention to the pedestrians who use the roads.

The Honourable Senator spoke about the use of the sidewalks for advertising. I do not have a difficulty with this but, perhaps, it is advertising on garbage cans and so on because we know that nothing in Barbados can happen in isolation and in the same way that we want to protect our pedestrians, we want as well, to protect our environment.

Sir, regarding the use of sidewalks, I notice that nowadays, people step off the road, or walk in the road where there is ample provision of sidewalks. In Barbados, we have been trying, over time, to increase the number of safe walking areas for persons on the highways and byways. I believe that it is the responsibility of all of us, including the pedestrian traffic, to make sure that we use the roads in a manner that is safe for us, remembering that cars kill people.

If I am driving along at the required speed and you decide to step off the road because you feel it is your right and you get bounced, then we all know what kind of attitude often follows. I believe that pedestrians have to be more responsible. Then, again, all Barbadians need to be more responsible in every aspect of life. Clearly, forgetting that cars kill, a “break-foot” takes longer to heal than a fender because you can go and buy a new fender.

We must be more responsible in the use of the roads and that, Sir, includes the pedestrian crossings. We had a debate in here some time ago about the placing of pedestrian crossings. I notice that some have been shifted but, be that as it may, whilst on the black and white zebra crossing, pedestrians are entirely within their right. It does not mean to say that they can just walk across the roads in the flow of traffic and expect the vehicles to stop. Of course that can

also cause injury to the cars behind. And so, the old-fashioned way, you look left, look right and then look left again before you cross still needs to be enacted by every person crossing and that is something that good old-time discipline used to ensure. This certainly has disappeared from our pedestrian use and I would wish that pedestrians, and indeed all of us, for we all get the opportunity to walk at some time or the other, especially if we are talking about healthy lifestyles, but we want to be very conscious of that.

Sir, the other thing I would want to speak to is the actual driver's licence that we must have in order to use these cars and use them safely with seat belts. Interesting enough, my driver's licence just, kind of jumped out at me today. It is past due in Barbados where technology is so advanced that we move away from this little book. Mine looks good because I took the time to get it bound so that it will serve me long. I had it so long ago that I cannot even remember when. If I show the Honourable Senators the picture in here, I believe the Sitting would cease for today...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Would you make it a document of the Senate?

Asides.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: I certainly would, if it would help the cause to insist how we can move away from this archaic methodology of a paper book, where you go every three years on the anniversary or annually, to get the little piece of paper stuck into it.

Sir, for those who like to keep things for history, it may be all well and good but let us be realistic. It is long past the time when we should be able to have plastic drivers' licences, just like people have credit cards, *et cetera*, with a photo I.D. This is commonly used in many other countries in the world, including for identification purposes.

Sir, in looking at this now, they even have my name spelled wrong and, I mean, there is room for human error in this, too. I would like to see, and I am calling on this Senate to bring a motion to the respective Ministry responsible for road traffic, that would bring about a change in the driver's licence that can also be used for identification purposes.

I see other Senators reaching in bags now and taking out equally strange looking documents, and people that I do not recognise. Sir, that might be on the funnier side, but on the real side of it, anybody looking at the photograph – and we know that we only get our licence replaced in full, if it is lost, and therefore a new photograph taken – but for those of us who had ours since 1974 or even longer, we could stand up in court and say that this is not really us. Therefore, again as a document, it fails to adequately identify the person and I would like to see a change in Barbados, with respect to the document used for identification and driver's licence.

Sir, my final point in speaking to road traffic, I would just like to reiterate this, because sometime ago I spoke to the standardisation of ages for different things in Barbados. We know at age 16 we can drive a car but we have to be 18 years old to vote. I am alluding to the fact that as citizens, we have responsibilities and roles to play in this country. I do not see how we could at age 18 be able to vote but at age 16, we can drive a car, an equally responsible role.

I would wish again, Sir, to see us standardise the age by which we are able, responsible and liable for the acts that we truly take. I am not at this time trying to increase the age for a driver's licence, that is not my intent. The intent is to standardise the age generally, whether it is the drinking of alcohol – and I am going to touch very briefly on that – the voting at general elections, the driving of motor vehicles, the ages for other acts which will determine whether or not those acts are punishable by imprisonment, *et cetera*. I would like to see some sort of age standardisation.

Briefly to speak about alcohol, if we are going to be driving potentially dangerous vehicles – because we know that some vehicles are very high tech these days, if you touch a button, you are from here to there – it is past due when we also need to put instruments in place where persons who are drinking alcohol must be more conscious. I speak of using a breathalyser or some other mechanism to ensure that if we are going to be social animals and drink alcohol, which in this society, we all do – if it may be one, some may drink more than one – but if we are going to drink, we should not drive. It is common, as it is canvassed in other nations in this world, that a designated driver is selected. That way, you do not put yourself, your passengers, oncoming traffic and its passengers or pedestrians at risk when we use these vehicles.

Sir, I am pleased to support this Amendment to the Road Traffic Act and to ask that other Senators support it as well.

Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, one cannot deny the fact that seat belts are indeed very important mechanisms for persons against serious injury while travelling in a vehicle.

It has been proven that seat belts can reduce the extent of injury to persons who are involved in accidents. However, seat belts can also give a person a sense of false security because we must emphasise that seat belts do not prevent accidents. They merely reduce injury, and when we see what is happening on the roads today, we wonder

sometimes, if persons are aware of the danger that they pose, not only to themselves but to other persons because of their recklessness. We see this exhibited on our roads from time to time.

The last Senator spoke on the consumption of alcohol by drivers as a real danger in our society. I do not think that this could be overemphasized because what we are seeing are large crowds of young men assembling at gas stations at night, especially on week-ends, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, guzzling large quantities of alcohol and then using the roadways of this country as race tracks for their own enjoyment. I understand there is a degree of gambling that takes place coming out of these events also, fellows challenging each other and racing on our highways.

The kinds of accidents that have resulted from these escapades, Mr. President, there are no seat belts in the world that could have saved some of the persons who lost their lives in these accidents. So a seat belt, even though it could help to prevent injury in what may be considered to be a relatively minor accident, this certainly would be of no help to persons who are involved in some of the accidents that I have witnessed.

I would also support the call for breathalyser tests for drivers on our roads in this country, particularly the drivers of public service vehicles.

12.00 noon

What I also find quite strange is the fact that at a recent car rally which was held in Barbados one of the main sponsors of that car rally was an alcoholic beverage company. That rally was sponsored by a beer distributor, but yet we are going to tell persons that they must not drink and drive but you are targeting people who are interesting in following the rally because we get hundreds of people following these rallies from point to point and the rallies are being sponsored by a beer company.

Certainly, the beer company is not going to sponsor a rally unless they want their products to be sold and the persons who are going to be targeted would be the persons who are supporters of the rally. Obviously, Mr. President, to suggest that persons would choose to drink only after the rally, I think, is a little puerile because obviously persons are going to consume these beers when they feel the urge to drink and I think to ask somebody to exercise that kind of discipline and have a drink only after the rally would be stretching it a bit far.

So you have a beer company sponsoring a motor activity, you get a tobacco company sponsoring cultural activities, and you get these anomalies arising in our society, and we seem not to pay enough attention to them by believing that things can just go along and everybody would do what is right. I have heard persons alluding to

the fact that considerable strain is put on our health services because of the number of accidents that have occurred in this country. You have many persons in the country ending up with severe injuries and having to be hospitalized which put pressure on the emergency services.

I must say that no one need fear that I am going to take this discussion now into a discussion on the health services, neither directly or tangentially, but I think it is important enough for us to understand that the resources of this country are being stretched considerably by the number of accidents that are occurring on our roads. As a small country with limited resources, we cannot afford to have the resources which should be used for persons with chronic illnesses which may not be of their own making because none of us can determine what would be our state of health but, certainly, why should we have to divert resources from treating cancer or diabetes or some of these other ailments to have to deal with situations of persons who are just being reckless and irresponsible on our roads.

So it is okay for us to tell people that they have to put on the seat belt but what are we going to do about the number of young men, as I said before, who are using the roads of this country. Any night where I live very often at two and three o'clock in the morning I can hear engines screeching as people use the highway as a race track. What is amazing is that while persons would call the police and tell them "look, people are racing out here", it would go on for hours after and you wonder, well, what happened to the call that you made.

You have situations where, as I said, there are also locked-up business places. You know, when you drive into some gas stations now you cannot find anywhere to park but I guess that is the responsibility and the problem of the gas station owners. You also have a situation where in many cases these people harass people who are going to do legitimate business in these gas stations. I think that it is time that we stop being hypocritical and stop turning a blind eye to many of the things that are going wrong in this society merely because we do not want to offend some group of people.

I know that recently we have seen a development in this country where it is said that you do what pleases the majority and I keep making reference to this because I always say that today you are in the majority but tomorrow you might be in the minority. Therefore, we must pay attention to doing what is right and it is about time that we take some serious action in dealing with those persons who have been using these roads in the manner in which they have. I have no problem with legitimate car rally exercises which are organised by regulated bodies because motor sport is probably the most popular sport in Barbados at this time. It is probably the

only sport that has been able to maintain that core of support for many years now, and when you see the number of young people who are following motor sports, you will know that it is a popular sport.

However, I have a problem with those persons who have been carrying out illegal activities and I think that the sporting bodies need to police this themselves and to assist the police in bringing it to an end because it reflects negatively on them when they have their legitimate activity.

We have another problem with our roads. At this time road works is going on on every major road leading into Bridgetown. There is a detour on every major road and it has gotten to the point now where when you go on the detours you are seeing other detours. There is this, I do not know how to describe it, Sir, but for some reason somebody believes that you need to dig up all the roads in Barbados at one time, at least all the roads in St. Michael, because when you go outside of St. Michael you will find that there are some roads in some very bad conditions which nothing is being done to them but in St. Michael all the major roads leading into Bridgetown are being blocked off.

It would be interesting if somebody could probably do some research on the number of stress related illnesses that have resulted from people having to spend hours sitting in traffic on the roads. It would be interesting to know what is happening there because I have seen where it took me an hour to get from Bridgetown one evening to Government Hill and in that hour I spent 45 minutes getting from Lower Roebuck Street up to the Globe Roundabout. So when people are in this kind of situation every day to what extent is production in this country affected. Because of the amount of time that people have to spend sitting in the traffic not only would they end up being late, you also have a situation when you get to work you are so frustrated you now have to get yourself into a frame of mind that you can work properly.

Some people will believe that this is a minor point but I know of a case where a gentleman told me that he moved his business from Bridgetown to St. Philip and that one of his employees who lives in St. Michael who used to be late every day trying to get into Bridgetown that that employee has not been late one day since he moved to St. Philip and his productivity has gone up considerably because of his moving away from Bridgetown.

So the frustrations which people face in trying to get into Bridgetown must have a negative impact on productivity in this country at this time. I think that something needs to be done and that there needs to be some greater coordination to ensure that at least some of the main arteries leading into the City are free that people can go about their business without the amount of hindrances that are going on now.
12.10 p.m.

Sir, nobody can understand, except probably persons involved in the Ministry of Transport and Works, why we have this situation existing at this time. It is totally ridiculous, Mr. President, and I believe Barbadians can demonstrate their concerns for the manner in which this is done as a means of protest. I think that Barbadians should boycott coming into Bridgetown for one day during a two or three-week period. Then people would see exactly how people feel about what is going on.

Now I have seen, for example, one Minister of Government who does not feel the impact of the traffic congestion because I recall seeing one morning a blue light flashing on the top of a car and I also heard a siren. When I looked around, it was the Prime Minister who was able to manoeuvre through the peak traffic by putting on the siren in his car. However, all of us, as ordinary Barbadians, are forced to endure the trauma of having to sit in traffic for considerable long periods of time.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: On a point of order, Mr. President. As a Minister of the Crown, I have no difficulty at all with the traffic because I come to work at 7 o'clock. If the Honourable Member would schedule his work around high density traffic hours, he might also find that he would have no difficulty.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No point of order.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, we have heard of red herrings and perhaps we have also heard of moments of public relief. If everybody decided to leave home earlier, all that would happen is that we would have the traffic congestion earlier unless everybody is assigned a time to leave home. That is the only way we can be guaranteed that there will be no traffic congestion. If everybody decided to leave home at 7 o'clock, then we would get the traffic congestion at 7 or 8 o'clock rather than later.

Mr. President, we need to ask the question why are we having this kind of approach to the matter of traffic at this time? Why is it that the Minister of Transport and Works sees the necessity and urgency to have seat belt legislation on the statute book? Why is it that he cannot see, for example, the need to ensure that the buses are insured and are properly run? Perhaps that would reduce the congestion and people may see the need not to have their own motor car on the road. But we are not sure that the insurance on the buses would be paid on time.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Mr. President, on a point of order. The comments being made by the speaker are referenced to administrative responsibilities that fall within the ambit of a Chief Executive Officer or a General

Manager. I do not believe that any Minister of this Government has the responsibility of paying any insurance on any vehicles belonging to this Government.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please proceed.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the Minister of Transport and Works has exercised his authority in deciding which insurance company the buses will be insured with...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean, I am not sure if that is relevant to what is before us.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the seat belt legislation is being introduced in this country because it is perceived that we are having some form of difficulty in respect to injuries sustained by persons on the road because of the lack of seat belts. Part of the problem arises because of the increased number of vehicles that we have on our roads today. One of the reasons why we have such a large demand for persons to have their private vehicles is because of a poor transport system.

I am saying, Mr. President, if the Government was able to have a public transport system which deals adequately with the commuting of persons whether it be for work or leisure in this country, then we would not have the great demand for a number of private vehicles on the road.

We have also, Mr. President, the situation with the use of the seat belts in the public service vehicles of the ZR's and mini-buses. I think the legislation speaks to the passengers in the front seats of these vehicles which have to have these seat belts.

However, to get back to the point of not only the seat belts in these vehicles but the behaviour and practices of these same operators, we have had cases of these operators consuming alcohol while driving the vehicles. We have had cases of them engaging in practices which endanger the lives of the passengers they carry which would not save anyone should there be a serious accident.

Mr. President, in summary, what I am saying is that we appreciate the need for persons to exercise safety while travelling in vehicles. Therefore, the seat belt could be of some assistance.

We have a situation also with older vehicles which do not come equipped with seat belts. I understand that there will be some period given for persons to fit these vehicles with seat belts. However, there are some of them which do not even have the basic anchorage for the fitting of these seat belts. We not only have to look at the need for

persons to have seat belts, but there must be some specification on the type and quality of the seat belt which the person should have. These things must be in the legislation and must be monitored and policed, because a person could very well go down the road with a rope strapped across his shoulder and say that he or she has a seat belt on.

Sir, whereas these concerns are being raised, they must be policed because there is no end to the amount of legislation we have on the statute book which is not policed. Some persons do not pay the necessary attention to what is there. Mr. President, persons must be mindful that a seat belt does not prevent an accident but a seat belt can help to reduce injury. If you are reckless, you can cause an accident which no seat belt in the world will save you or save another person who might die as a result of your recklessness and negligence on the road.

Whereas I support the legislation, I say there are many other issues that we need to pay attention to, particularly with respect to the way in which we manage our transportation in this country, and how we manage the maintenance of our roads. We need not only to do the work, but it must be done in such a way that will cause the least disruption in the country at this time.

12.20 p.m.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: I have a little concern about the level of the fines in relation to other parts of the Road Traffic Act. I believe if you were driving around at night without any lights, which would be extremely dangerous to other people, you would not get fined this heavily so that we should revamp that at the same time that we are doing this.

Secondly, I see here that the driver of a tractor has to wear a seat belt. The fact is that the time when a seat belt helps is when you are travelling fairly fast and somebody else is travelling fairly fast and there is a collision. Tractors generally travel very slowly. They are not made to travel fast and some of them also have a roll bar. The older models do not have. If you had on a seat belt it may well be more dangerous for you than if you did not have on a seat belt on a tractor. When the tractor rolls over, you should be able to spring yourself clear rather than be pinned beneath the tractor which you would be if you were in a seat with a tractor without a roll bar turning over. This is the kind of thing that bothers me sometimes in drafting this legislation.

When they talk about a motor tractor I am not sure if they are talking about the vehicles that haul containers but this should be separated from agricultural tractors. There should be something in there so that police do not take a tractor driver and bring him up for not wearing a seat belt.

Far better for him if he were forced to wear a helmet. I think that would be a better safety measure.

How are the police going to operate? Where you do not really need a seat belt is in Bridgetown and this is where you are travelling very slowly, or you are stopping and starting, and a policeman can stop you. Where you really need a seat belt is on the highway. What is a policeman standing on the side of the highway seeing you passing at 80 kilometres an hour without any seat belt going to do? Write down your number? It seems to me that it is going to be a little difficult to administer.

The whole question is that we are forcing people to protect themselves. Where do you stop? We enforce this motor cycle helmet law. Okay, that is fair. Now I see in some countries they have helmets for bicycles and knee and elbow guards. Are we going down that line? Where are we going to stop? If you walk around bare foot you get your foot cut. Is it going to be illegal to do that? You have to wear shoes if you go outside because you may damage yourself? Where do we stop this protection of the person? Where do we leave it to them to decide what it is they want to do? For instance, it is legal in some places that you have to provide safety gear for people working in factories or on farms using pesticides.

My personal experience is that it is very difficult to get people in the tropics to wear some of this safety gear which is not designed for the tropics. If you put on some of those masks and get out there in the middle of the field in the sun, you will really be very uncomfortable, but are we going to pass a law that says you have to wear them? The guys do not wear them. They are provided with them and hang them around their necks and they do not wear them. It is a question of where do we draw the line. Thank you.

SENATOR Mrs. J. P. ALLEYNE: Mr. President, I rise in support of this Bill but there are also one or two areas that I have noticed as I have driven along the highway that I just want to highlight. What I have noticed is the blocking of roundabouts on the highway. I do not think it is as much the amount of traffic we have on the highway as it is the lack of commonsense driving. I think if people were to learn to drive more sensibly that it would ease a lot of the congestion we have today. When there is a line going from the roundabout rather than stop and let the traffic that is coming from the left go through, they block up the highway so that it is blocked in two directions rather than easing the traffic and letting the driving go on.

The other area I think somebody alluded to is the lack of manners by the drivers on the highway. I find that if persons were to let out the drivers intermittently from the side streets it would help in the flow of traffic on the highway. To me, it is just a mannerly way of helping to make the traffic flow.

Another issue I have with what is happening on the highway is that you have a maximum range in which you can drive. Whether this is law or not, I do not know, but I believe that you should also have a minimum at which you can drive on the highway because some people drive on the highway so slowly that there is a line of traffic which cannot pass.

The other point that I want to make is about having learner drivers on the ABC Highway. I think that learner drivers should not be on the ABC Highway because you have this long line of traffic and when you find out what is going on there is somebody learning keeping back all the traffic. I, too, want to take issue with the persons driving under the influence of alcohol. I think that it is something that this country needs to move quickly on to get the breathalyser so that you can declare driving under the influence of alcohol as illegal in this island as well.

The other problem I have is that I find that at the pedestrian cross walks you have a long line of traffic, the person has pressed the button and crossed and still minutes after you are waiting for the light to change again. I really do not know how that can be solved but I am saying all of these things.

Aside.

SENATOR Mrs. J. P. ALLEYNE: Yes, but you have a long line of traffic.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please address the Chair!

SENATOR Mrs. J. P. ALLEYNE: Sorry, Mr. President. The point I am making about that is that you have a long line of traffic kept back while some process could be put in place that the traffic can keep moving if there is nobody else waiting to cross.

I believe that we need to have more motor cycle policemen surveying the highway. I think that this would also help in the area of what is happening on the highway. I heard Senator McClean speak about the old vehicles that probably would not be able to change over to seat belts but I recall when we were changing from leaded gasoline to unleaded gasoline it was the same hue and cry about old vehicles not being able to cope, and they coped, and in due time everybody was ready to change over to unleaded gasoline. I really do not think that is going to be a major issue.

Sir, the other point is about persons who throw garbage out of the window. That is another area that we need to deal with. I really do not have much to say on this.

Those are just some issues that I saw as I drove along the highway. I know that there is a hullabaloo now about all this traffic on the highway and I think that even before we begin to get into major ways of dealing with the traffic on the highway that there are some small things that we can systematically work with to ease the traffic. Thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Before Senator Bolden speaks, I should ask Honourable Senators to note that earlier today the Honourable Deputy President was admitted to the Inner Bar as one of Her Majesty's Council and he will hereafter carry the letters Q.C. after his name. I am sure that we will find an opportunity to congratulate Senator Bolden more formally. For the present, we note with pleasure his elevation.

12.30 p.m.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. President, thank you for your kind words.

Mr. President, I am going to deal with the Road Traffic Act and I want it to be clearly understood that I have no problem whatsoever with the wearing of seat belts in vehicles because I know the Press will say that Senator Bolden objects to the seat belt law.

I have had this experience before in the Other Place when we were dealing with public baths. I said rather than put \$80 000 to build a public bath, the people should be allowed to put water in their back-yards, take it out of the \$80 000 and what it did not cover then add it on to the water bill. A reporter wrote in the newspaper that Bolden was opposed to public baths.

I have no objection to the wearing of seat belts in motor-cars but I take grave objections to a lot of things in the current legislation before the Chamber.

Mr. President, I will say again that the public has to understand the working of the Barbados Government where civil servants must advise the Minister about what is right and what is not right. In my own opinion, I feel that Ministers of this Government are not getting correct advice and this is another example of bad advice being given to a Minister.

First, this Bill is no more than a salve. It is like a man with a sore plastered over with Vaseline and alcohol to soothe the pain but the sore is not being cured from its infection. Mr. President, seat belts will only reduce the intensity of accidents but you have to reduce the accidents. You do not work on reducing the intensity of the damage. The Ministry of Public Works is at the root of all our road traffic problems in this country.

Mr. President, I practise law and this morning the Attorney-General said that I am regarded as an expert, but I know a lot more than law. I would have liked to see a Bill dealing with driving instructors rather than a Bill to amend the Road Traffic Act dealing with seat belts. Look at the drivers on our streets today and those of you who have been driving for many years will wonder how those persons ever got a driving licence. I know of a case where a man failed his examination five times at the Licensing Authority. He passed one Friday and by the following Friday he was a driving instructor. What are the standards set for driving instructors in this country? What examination must they pass? What must they know? If you drive on the highway, you will see people under the instruction of the driving instructor and the instructor's foot is up on the dashboard or window, reading a paper, and the poor learner is all over the road thinking what he is doing is right and the Licensing Authority does absolutely nothing about these things. What is the standard that a driver has to achieve before he can pass a driver's licence in this country?

Mr. President, Senator McClean said there are too many cars on our roads because the public transport system is no good. This is not true. One cannot restrict the upward mobility of a nation. I make reference to Georgia in the United States. When Georgia hosted the Olympics, they built many highways but they said they did not want an influx of motorcars nor of the natives in certain cities. They provided a lane that only a bus or passenger car carrying more than one person would use to encourage car pooling. There were hardly any vehicles in that lane because everybody drives their motorcars into Atlanta and to the train station. Pooling is difficult because everybody wants to be independent. No matter what is done with public transport, it is not going to work.

I have submitted 56 recommendations to the Ministry of Transport to relieve the pressure of traffic in this country. One of the things that we need to do in Barbados is to create three-lane roads. It would reduce the number of accidents on two-lane roads and provide a free passage where vehicles can park in one lane and drivers use the middle lane to escape. Sir, the trouble with the Ministry of Transport and Works is that functionaries are making policy statements to the Press every week rather than the Minister to whom policy belongs. I hear that by November we will have parking meters throughout Bridgetown. They also say that we will have breathalysers but if people would only read and research. In England it is now found that breathalysers are incorrect. There are thousands of cases that will have to be brought back up and the conviction squashed.

I used to be the Minister of Transport and Works and I admit that I rewrote the Road Traffic Act but not the regulations. I wrote to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital asking

for their views on alcohol. At that time the doctors were divided down an even line. Half of them said they could not comment on it and the other half said they had to look at the scientific nature of alcoholism and driving before they could determine how the law should be drafted. They were right. If you look at a forensic book on alcohol, you will find that alcohol affects the human being on several grounds. Firstly, it depends on when that person started using alcohol. In the West Indies we start using alcohol from the day after we are born.

12.40 p.m.

Asides

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Secondly, it depends on your body weight. Thirdly it depends on how much you have ingested before you drank the alcohol. Fourthly and most importantly, it depends on the weather condition how alcohol affects you.

In Kuwait there are persons who work in the meteorological offices and they are issued salt tablets or a bottle of alcohol every day which they either must take the salt tablets or drink the alcohol to resist the heat that strikes them. When people in the Caribbean talk about bringing the breathalyser, I made my money in the traffic law and I am waiting for them to come.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: There has been a case in England where a Jamaican was arrested after attending a West Indian party. As you know, in England the police bait West Indian parties and as soon as you come outside they put the breathalyser on you. The police put the breathalyser on the Jamaican and it went up to three point something, it was in excess of the 0.08 limit. They took him to the police station and drew some blood and gave half to their solicitor and the other half the police kept.

He said, I am not drunk. He told the solicitor to let them put him under the scientific test. They tested him. They drew a straight line and told him to walk it and he walked the straight line. They told him to close his eyes and touch his toes and he did that. They told him to close his eyes and stand on one foot and he did it, but they still charged him.

Sir, when he went before the court, the recorder said, I am in a quandary. Here is a man who is drunk in accordance with the law but is not drunk in accordance with science. Are we going to find ourselves in this position in Barbados? There is one man who literally controls the Licensing Authority, a civilian, I can call his name and what he tells them to do ...

Mr. PRESIDENT: No, Senator, you cannot call his name.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: No, Sir, I said that I can call his name but I never said that I would, Sir.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: I would not do that, Sir. I am guided by you.

Whatever he says, you will find the Licensing Authority doing. I have asked myself, what research has gone into this Bill to show how many fatal accidents or how many serious accidents we have had that could have been avoided if the occupants of the vehicles were wearing seat belts, and the answer will be none.

The same question is about the breathalyser. To those who do not know, the British Government has just imported marijuana from the United States to carry out tests on drivers under the influence of drugs. The result was shocking. The results showed that people who took the drug were more capable than those who did not take it. You have to do your research and find out things.

Sir, when we start to look at this Bill...

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Ask your Embassy in England and they will send you the facts and they will tell you.

The Bill says that the Barbados National Standards Institution will approve certain seat belts. Where does it set out in the legislation the principle on what will be approved? It does not say that and I do not see it.

Another thing about this Bill is, if you look at the Road Traffic Act of Ontario, New York, or Georgia, which I have researched, they have made exceptions for people of certain sizes. We have some big people in Barbados today. If one of those people get into a car and the seat belt does not fit, it means automatically, you are condemning these people from riding in vehicles in Barbados.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: If they are big fat, mostly women, who get into a car and the seat belt does not fit, you are condemning those persons from driving in motor vehicles.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: On a point of order, Mr. President. I believe that the comment the Honourable Member is making is referencing obesity and it is not exclusive to the female sex, Sir. I would wish that he withdraw those statements and make his comments gender sensitive. Thank you.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. President, I said that it is mostly women. I did not say, not men. There are some big men as well too. The Bill does not provide for that. The Bill says "the belt must support the top and lower portions". In most jurisdictions if you cannot wear a top seat belt, you wear a lower seat belt. We must look at it carefully.

As Senator Laurie said, certain portions of the Bill include a tractor and in other portions it excludes the tractor. Where are we going? Which end are we going to follow?

I heard Senator McClean complain about a beer company sponsoring the motor rally. There is nothing wrong with a beer company or any company sponsoring a motor rally. There is nothing wrong with a tobacco company sponsoring a function. What is wrong is what we instill in our children and in our people. If the Licensing Authority – Do you know something? We have a lot of double standards in this society, Sir.

I believe about two years ago the Honourable George Payne sought to remove all the Testers in the Licensing Department and the NUPW kicked hell. They said that cannot happen.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I would prefer you to withdraw the word.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: I withdraw the word. The N.U.P.W objected and paraded. I say that until you bring standards for driving instructors, to begin with, until you set written standards for testing officers...

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

Certain remarks made by His Honour Senator C. L. BOLDEN were ordered expunged from the record by Mr. PRESIDENT.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: We must have standards. You can reduce the number of accidents on our roads by first insisting on certain standards which must be achieved by any person who is going to hold himself out as a driving instructor.

Another thing is, a person goes in for a test today and he will hear when he gets back, you have failed. The Driving Inspector gets out of the vehicle and leaves. The learner asks, "how did I fail" and he or she gets no answer. You must create a testing sheet and the Tester must mark on each section of what is required if the person has failed or passed and that person must get a copy of that when the testing is over.

I am saying that there are numerous Testing Officers at the Licensing Authority who do not know the Road Traffic Act of Barbados. I have had, at least in the last six months, three cases where Testing Officers have failed learner drivers. When they came to me and I wrote the Licensing Authority pointing out that the Testing Officers were wrong and the students were right, they had to give the students the licences.

Sir, the most blaring case was when a police prosecutor, who prosecutes in court every day, went for a test. When he was coming down Martindales Road, turned right onto the road at the back of the hospital and the Testing Officer failed him. He said to me, "I am prosecuting people in court every day for breach of the Road Traffic Act and I am now being failed for doing what is right". The Testing Officer had the gumption to say, "I say so and it is so". 12.50 p.m.

Sir, this Bill, as it stands, will not help the situation, it will not cure the problem and we have several problems. I heard a term being bandied about, "defensive driving". I have been searching all the law books I know for the longest time and cannot find out what is defensive driving. I heard several people from the Licensing Authority got on the air and talked about a course in defensive driving. What is defensive driving?

What the Licensing Authority has to look at is how they are going to control, as some Senator said, the speeding on the Highways at night, and even during the day now, there is, literally, car racing on our streets.

Senator Alleyne spoke about traffic being held up at a pedestrian crossing. One of the recommendations I sent to the Government is that all our traffic lights should be controlled by the pad system, that is, if a vehicle keeps hitting a pad, the light remains green in that way. The moment a few seconds elapse, and nothing strikes that pad, the traffic is allowed to flow.

Sir, we cannot get any improvement in that section until we improve the staff because if you drive around Barbados, you will find that at every junction, the road indications differ. We are supposed to be a country of visitors, tourism, but the tourist cannot rely on anything he sees in our roads.

When you come to one junction, the mark says one thing. When you come to another junction, it says something else. When you come to the Highway, take the ABC Highway, the ABC Highway has marks on it that do not appear in the Road Traffic Act or the Road Traffic Regulations, so what is it?

You have a junction, just below the Pine Hill Dairy, St. Barnabas, how many policemen have come and said to me, "Mr. Bolden, what do we do with this?" And I have said in here before, the Licensing Authority and the MTW go out and mark the roads, in my view, not in accordance with any known facts of law but they expect the police then to control traffic with markings that are confused. Sir, we have to look at the whole Ministry and the personnel who are advising the Minister. No Minister of Government is expected to be an expert in a particular field and we must not blame the Government and the Minister. We must put the blame where it belongs, straight in the laps of those who are employed to advise the Ministers.

Sir, I will give you another example. About one and a half years to two years ago, they went to the bus stand beside Bethel Methodist Church (Bethel) and said that the buses which park there must not park there any longer and Monday morning, officers from the Licensing Authority and Police Officers, including Inspectors were there to move the buses.

I was called in and I said to one officer, "You cannot move these buses because their permits say this is where they park and this is from whence they move. If they move from here, the police are going to report them for being off-route."

He goes back to his office, this is about 11.00 o'clock that day, and by 6.00 o'clock in the evening, they were driving around to every mini bus owner, handing them a new permit, during the night. So the mini bus owners end up with two permits, one for the bus stand at Bethel and one for the River Road Bus Stand. Then, they went and pushed down the office and blocked the area beside Bethel.

Sir, the Prime Minister was called in and when he went to the River Road Bus Stand, he said, "This place is not fit for human beings." Do you know what the functionaries of the Government said, "We do not have any money, we will do it when we feel like." Would you believe that those mini buses and ZR vans are still operating from under a tree out by Bethel and paying the same licence fees as when they had the facilities?

Mr. PRESIDENT: With or without seat belts?

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Without seat belts.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The point I am making is simply that you should come back to seat belts.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: I am coming back to the seat belts, Sir. All of this will pass through here but ask them what facilities have they got for checking seat belts because, we have, in Barbados, cars which date back to the 1970s that the body design was not such to carry seat belts. What will happen is, you are going to say that by this Bill, you must retire those vehicles, or you must strip them and find ways and means of putting in seat belts. That is why I said earlier that even the Barbados National Standards Institution has not set out any standards for fixing seat belts in vehicles. Therefore, we are passing legislation which, in my view, is going to create a lot of disharmony.

Sir, another point is this, while I do not want to join Senator McClean, I would like to know what is going to be the cost of this exercise between now and October. I would like to be able to inform this Chamber, but I cannot, who have all these seat belts in Barbados waiting to be installed, that is the question I would like to ask. If I knew, I would inform the Chamber but I do not know, Sir, because between now and September – June, July, August, September – I would like to know if the Ministry carried out any investigations of how many vehicles would have to be equipped with seat belts to meet this deadline of 30th September, 2001.

I figure, Sir, even the Transport Board will be saddled with a cost that it must pass on down the line to meet this deadline within the next few months. How many buses would they have to pull off the road to get this thing in position between now and 30 September, 2001?

Mr. President, that is my contribution.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.05 p.m.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 2.05 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
1.00 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you for this opportunity, Mr. President, to add a few comments to the matter under discussion. I listened carefully to what other Honourable Senators had to say, particularly to Senator McClean when he spoke about the congestion and so on

the roads, but I think it is about time we well remember that there is always a price for progress and once we want to be able to improve the road safety, improve the transport system and improve whatever system there is, there will be some inconveniences. Some will be minor, some will be major but we will have to learn to put up with it if we are to get what is good that comes at the end of it and, therefore, we must not look at it in that respect.

It bothers me, Mr. President, when in almost everything that has to be done, many Barbadians have to always criticize. They will find a million ways why one thing cannot be done rather than look at it in a positive way and see how it can be done, and I have a tremendous difficulty with that.

We hear of the inconveniences when the straps for the seat belt go across the body and we hear all kinds of stupid, simple arguments why seat belts should not be worn but it amazes me how Barbadians can leave this shore and go to other countries, particularly England, Canada and the United States of America, where they are mandated to wear the seat belt. They are not told or reminded by the drivers of the cars to put their seat belt on, that is a condition, and I wonder how do they get it done in other countries but they do not want to do it here. I do agree that the seat belt will assist in preventing people from perhaps receiving serious injuries.

There are other issues to do with the Road Traffic laws that must be looked at as a matter of urgency but it is unfortunate when people keep 'nitpicking' rather than doing the right thing. You would appreciate, Mr. President, that over the last 15 years the traffic on the roads has increased by about 30 per cent. If we are going to be having more vehicles on the road and more pedestrians on certain roads, then we need to put systems in place to ensure that the motorists are safer because as a little girl, I never saw pedestrian crossings and as far as I can remember I never saw so many signs on the street to tell people which way to go and which not to but if we are looking at codes that are international then we must do things that are international to bring us on stream with what is happening and ensure that the travelling public is safe. Therefore, I think we must, in every instance when it comes to situations such as this legislation, try to comply with it as far as possible so that at the end of the day there can be safety.

Mr. President, on December 22, 2000, my son, a nephew and a niece were at Holborn Circle and an old man ran the red light from the opposite direction and they were, what we would call, "catspraddled". Good luck for them, there were only minor injuries as a result but if they were not wearing the seat belts I can assure you they would have

been in "duck's city" because I am sure that with the jolting forward they would have flown through the window. As we see in most instances people are thrown from the vehicle and it is the blow and then perhaps the overturning of the vehicle on them that helps to lead to death.

I think it is important that we do not just say it is a seat belt for seat belt purposes but it is a seat belt to ensure that the occupants of the car are getting a better opportunity to be saved from the impact of the danger that will come in as a result of not being secured at all.

We have had deaths on the road within the last two years, sometimes three at a time and as far as I am aware it did not seem to me as though any of those occupants were wearing seat belts not that I am saying that the impact would have caused any of them to still be alive but they were not wearing seat belts and I really support the call for Barbadians to buckle up.

I associate myself with the sentiments expressed by other Honourable Senators when it comes to talking about courtesy and I call to mind the three Cs: the driver or the motorist must have a conscience; that seems to be lacking among many of our people, they must have courtesy and good common sense.

I was involved in an accident only day before yesterday because the other motorist on the other side of the street did not use courtesy nor common sense and it has caused him to spend some money to repair the car I was driving. It was a very simplistic, stupid action in that he could not wait and because of his impatience it led to the damage of the vehicle I was driving. I think it is important that we look back again at courtesy on the road and comply with the instruction or the regulations when it comes to the traffic lights. Too many people are running red lights and that is also another cause of concern.

The speed limit that we drive at in most instances is also another cause for concern. People are passing in front of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) at 80 kilometres an hour which is really not in keeping with the speed limit for the City. I have always learned that the speed limit within the City area is totally different and is lower than anywhere else in the country, and it is unfortunate that people want to be able to travel at very fast speeds in the City area.

Mr. President, I want to retract a little to support some of the things that were said by the Honourable Senator Bolden when it comes to training the learner drivers. I think a bit more consideration must be paid to those persons who are actually teaching them to drive. They must be people who are responsible, mature and who understand the road systems and are willing to comply with the regulations that are set out.

We know that serious injury can lead to loss of productivity. There are many people who are involved in accidents. They may not have been wearing their seat belts or they may not have been doing the things that are quite right, or they might have been quite right but another motorist was not and as a result they have to be away from their workplace for many hours. Sometimes they are at the workplace but because the chair might not be adequate they cannot produce and it leads to a number of other unfortunate acts that would help to impact on the productivity of the country.

We know of the high cost of insurance now as a result of the large claims that are fed into the insurance system as a result of injuries. I am not saying that all of them are as a result of not wearing the seat belt but I am indicating that perhaps if the seat belt is worn with a bit more frequency it might help to eliminate some of the high costs.

We know, Sir, of the very heavy cost that the National Insurance Office has to pay out every year as a result of that. We know of the high cost for health care in the health institutions. We know of the trauma that families and individuals, as well as their families and friends endure when they go to see the condition that many of their loved ones are in during that period of injury and suffering.

Mr. President, I think the whole exercise calls for more education for the public. People want to know why should they wear a seat belt and I think that answer should be given not just by a Minister saying it or by the Chief Technical Officer saying it but the Ministry of Public Works and Transport has to come up with some kind of television programme as well as some kind of programme in writing where the members of the population are educated as to the need for seat belts and the importance of driving with safety.

The enforcement of the law is very important and I support those calls from other Honourable Senators who have cited other areas of the Traffic Regulations that need to be upgraded or need to be implemented in this system. The enforcement should be by the police officers as well as those officers from the Licensing Authority. I see them in their uniforms and I know that they have the latitude to do it but I expect them to be able to deal with those aspects of the law and ensure that all motorists and others using the road comply with the specific law.

Mr. President, I want to touch on some of the areas that have me extremely confused and I would like for the Honourable Minister in his bold way to start to examine some of those areas that are lacking which I consider to be very important and also have some amendments brought to this Honourable Chamber particularly to do with persons on the road now who are not bothering to renew their road tax or renew their vehicle insurance. There are too many

vehicles on the road without valid road tax and we know the dangers that it will cause if an individual gets involved in an accident and the person's road tax is not paid.

Some of them are driving with number plates that are not in existence and we know it. Some of them have a piece of card which is used as number plates and some of them have garage numbers; that bothers me. So those are some of the things that I really would like to see being corrected that would help to bring back common sense to the whole exercise of traffic and traffic regulations in Barbados.

I want to take this opportunity, Mr. President, to laud the efforts of the Road Safety Association. For years they have been speaking out and giving support to and advising members of the public to buckle up. In their small way they have been doing that and I think that more agencies within the society need to assist them in this approach. People are saying that in the past they did not have to use a seat belt so why use a seat belt today. That organisation has been telling the public the reason why and showing the importance of wearing the seat belt and the benefits that can be accrued as a result of doing it. So I would like to applaud, if you would allow me to call his name, the leader, Mr. Junior Jordan, and his association for those untiring efforts over the past few years and I would want to encourage them to continue to work at that exercise.

Mr. President, in closing I want to lend my support as well to the Honourable Minister and the staff in the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. I know that the Minister has been working arduously to ensure that systems are put in place to meet the needs of this population. He is doing something that a lot of Ministers not only now but in the past who had a golden opportunity to do it, did not do it. We talked a lot about people not wanting to do things because of losing votes, but for me I am not interested in the votes at all. I am interested in saving lives and ensuring that we have a healthy population free of the injury that may come about as a result of not wearing seat belts. So I want to laud the efforts of that Minister and his staff for bringing forward a piece of legislation that I think is important if we are to continue to ensure that our population is safe and if we are to ensure that when the visitors come here as a tourism oriented society that our visitors are safe. I think that is an honourable effort.

2.15 p.m.

In closing, I want to indicate my support for this piece of legislation and I want to encourage all Barbadians to buckle up in an effort to save some of the injury and some of the hurt and the pain that can come as a result of not complying with the instructions. I lend my support to this particular amendment.

Thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, just like Senator Forde, I rise to lend my fullest support to this measure and in listening to the debate both in this Chamber and outside on this issue I have had cause to observe and tell myself that it is really amazing the number of things that Barbadians have now taken for granted.

I recall very well over the last fifteen years or so there would have been calls for the implementation of a mandatory system of seatbelt wearing, particularly after incidents when there were gruesome accidents, or a number of persons had lost their lives, or been seriously injured or mangled. Now that the time has come where it is being implemented, I find that lots of people are over intellectualizing the whole issue and looking for all kinds of reasons why it should not be done now.

I understand some of that as coming from the traditional and human reaction and resistance to change even though the change might be for their own good. On the other hand, while I understand that, I understand also Senator McClean's attitude which basically sought to treat the implementation of this measure as no big thing, as though it is a casual measure which really did not matter too much to the well-being of society. When one considers the cost in human life, human activity, and the cost in financial terms to individuals and to the society as a result of accidents or death, one can see that it really is a big thing.

I, therefore, lend it my support and I must observe also that where Senator McClean is concerned, and I am sorry he is not here to listen to my response, I was amazed when he said that one reason for the increase in the number of vehicles on the road is the poor public transport system. I think that is really a hard one to buy. What it seems to me is that he is not concerned that a major factor would be the fact that Barbadians are now better off, they have increased incomes, increased disposable incomes and they now have a higher standard of living.

There is no doubt that anywhere in the world the possession of a vehicle is an indicator of the standard of living. When Senator McClean is saying that the reason why there are so many private vehicles on the road is the fact that the transportation system is so poor, to me, he is saying that he does not want the same poor black man that his Party is always thumping their chests about, to possess a vehicle. There is no doubt that the majority of the increase in vehicles on the road has obtained among the "small black man" and the "poor small man".

I also was amazed that he did not repeat his Leader's call for Barbadians to drive bigger cars as a solution to the traffic problem and a solution to the accident problem. That is such a novel and revolutionary idea I would have thought that that should have been his main thesis. I am surprised that he did not even make reference to his Leader's advocacy that the key to the issue of traffic problems in Barbados and to accidents is to drive bigger cars. People who heard it are still trying to work out the logic of it. I, myself am in that group. I must concede that it is a novel idea, one which is worthy of exploration even if only because it is novel.

I am disappointed that Senator Mascoll – sorry, Senator Mascoll, I am sure that you would not be part of that thinking – I am surprised that Senator McClean did not take this golden opportunity to advance and expound on that thesis some more. It really would have captured all of the public's attention that you could have wanted. I thought that he was under the street light rather than under the shadow as I am. He mistook the chandelier for the street light when he stooped to the depth of seeking to make an issue of the fact that the Prime Minister on occasion when traffic is heavy, the policeman will place a flashing blue light on the car and use a siren. The same thing obtains for the Governor-General.

As a matter of fact, there are some minibus owners who resort to putting a flashing blue light on the tower of their vehicles in order to beat traffic to get more fares. If the Senator wants to deny this one privilege to the Prime Minister, I am very disappointed in him, particularly when he comes from a Party who had a policy of not giving privilege to one man but to an elite group in the seventies when we had the energy crisis, when certain elite persons...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Not relevant, Senator.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: I know, Sir. Thank you. That is a fact of history and I would like to remind Senators of the political history of this country. That being out of the way, Sir. I need to say a couple things about this measure.

Government has not seen, in all defence of the Ministry – nobody has ever sought to advocate that this measure would be a cure-all for all the ills of traffic in Barbados, all the ills of vehicular accidents, all the ills of deaths on the highway. This is only part of a measure. It is obvious, Sir, that there are several other issues and measures that will have to be brought into being to seek to alleviate the situation or improve the situation to any large extent, particularly the question of people's attitudes.

There is no doubt in my mind that Barbadians today do not like to wait on anything. There is increased traffic on the road and even congestion on the road caused by the roadworks that are going on all in the name of development of the country and the further improvement of our physical

infrastructure. Therefore a person who would normally leave home at a quarter to eight to get to work at eight-thirty or eight-fifteen would expect to leave home the same quarter to eight in all the traffic.

I am not late for anything because I always plan for the traffic and always leave myself enough time to accommodate the traffic. That is what you do, you plan according to the traffic. I expect to get home in the traffic at six o'clock, six-thirty, different from if I left work at four-thirty o'clock because there is more traffic.

Traffic on the road is very often treated as though it is a Barbadian curse, as though it is an invention of the Barbados Labour Party Government. Heavy traffic is a fact of life in many major cities of the world. As a matter of fact, if there is no traffic you very often feel there is some form of decline that has set in. So do not make it feel as though Barbados is undergoing a curse, a plague of traffic. It is a phenomenon which will have to be managed like other social issues but a fact of life. That is nothing for us to be ashamed about.

Sir, I am an ardent advocate of this measure if only because I believe my life was saved, or at least I was saved from serious injury; and Senator Forde can attest to this. About four years ago in mid-June, probably about this same day when I was quite innocently parked at a roundabout waiting for my chance to get into traffic, I saw a vehicle coming from my right across the road jump the island. It knocked the car in which I was seated about 100 yards up a gap and the doctor said that if I had not been wearing my seat belt I would have tumbled out and would have suffered all kinds of injuries. I really was very lucky. It impacted directly on my driver side. I am convinced that that helped to save me a lot of injury and ever since then I have made it mandatory that anybody who gets into my car, either the front seat or the back seat must put on the seat belt or if not, get out. I am willing to accept the good that this can do.

While welcoming this, Sir, I have reflected on the "complaints" that have attended this measure and I remember very clearly that when it was made mandatory for riders of motorcycles to wear helmets, something to which Senator Laurie referred to, there was also a big hullabaloo about it. People complained that it would make your head hot, make your hair drop out, be uncomfortable and you would be sweaty, and have to buy a lot of shampoo, all kinds of silly things. It became the law and now people accept it as a norm. Sir, we have accepted it and the society is no worst off for it. I suspect the same thing will happen where this is concerned. 2.25 p.m.

Sir, my major concern would be to ensure that the quality of the seat belt is assured and people do not see this as an opportunity to fleece the public by seeking to import

substandard and inferior quality seat belts to sell at exorbitant prices. The law says that they have to meet the specifications of the Barbados National Standards Institution and I trust that this will be seriously implemented and pursued or else it will then be double jeopardy because people would have put their trust in an instrument that is supposed to help protect them, but far from offering protection, they are made vulnerable to injury and at the same time being fleeced of their money.

Sir, it is important that the public examine what is offered to them where cars are concerned. The figures show that as of October last year there were some 100 845 licensed drivers in Barbados with an average of 3 000 new drivers being licensed each year. Sir, that is a tremendous figure for an island with a population of 250 000. In addition, there were 72 805 registered motor vehicles which included some 57 513 motor cars. This is a tremendous stock for the roads of Barbados. These are the kinds of factors that we have had to deal with.

Once upon a time you could take a quiet drive on a Saturday or Sunday evening into the country as a form of relaxation but that is no longer possible because most of the highways are jammed with people on Saturdays and Sunday evenings.

Obviously, it shows that people have places to go, things to do and the disposal income with which to do it. There is no doubt that if money is tight you will only drive when you have to because you have to watch your gas gauge, but since people have more disposable income, that is part of the activity.

Sir, this measure did not come about because some persons in the Ministry of Public Works and Transport sat down and hatched some dastardly plot to deprive Barbadians of their income to make them buy seat belts and impose another measure on them as part of Government's interference into their lives. It came about, Sir, as a result of the traditional experiences and through consultation with the Royal Barbados Police Force and the General Insurance of Barbados who were strong in their views that this measure would improve the safety of pedestrians, drivers and passengers on the road.

Sir, this is not being done in a vacuum. A limited survey in Barbados, conducted on the ABC Highway between April 1996 and January 1998, showed that only 22.9 per cent of the drivers were using seat belts on that section of the highway. There is not a lot of information relating to seat belt usage in Barbados but we have relied on studies done in other societies which have shown that research carried out by the Transport Research Laboratory in the United Kingdom, Victoria Road Safety and Traffic

Authority in Australia, the Insurance Bureau of Canada and the National Highway of Traffic Administration of the United States all have concluded that the wearing of seat belts made a significant contribution to the reduction of road casualties in their respective countries.

Sir, there is no need to reinvent the wheel when people who indulge in activity which is our form of human behaviour already have statistics and data to demonstrate that this is a contributing factor to the reduction of road casualty and minimising injury in these countries.

As a matter of fact, in 29 countries where safety seat belts are mandatory, studies have shown a 25 per cent decline in road traffic death as a result of seat belts being used.

Sir, the facts are there and we do not have to be sadistic to expose hundreds of other Barbadians to these probabilities when other people have shown from their experience what is possible and how it can be avoided.

Sir, I think that is a measure which is long overdue. Therefore, I believe it should be given our fullest support. I know that the Ministry of Housing at this moment in conjunction with the Government Information Service are preparing a very extensive public relations programme to be able to educate Barbadians as to the value, desirability and benefits of this measure.

I look forward to seeing it in years to come being manifest and that the wisdom of it will be shown in reduced injuries on the roads in Barbados.

Sir, I thank you.
2.35 p.m.

Mr. President, we are all Barbadians in here and we are familiar with the road systems in this small island. We are all familiar with the roundabouts. Subconsciously we know how to deal with them if we want to go straight, turn left or right but I pity the visitor to this island. After all, tourism is our number one industry. When the tourists come to the roundabout, they do not have the daily experience that we have in negotiating the roundabouts. It is that general lack of consistency and lack of consistency in signage.

The roundabout at Collymore Rock, where Pine Road and Culloden Road meet should be the model. If I had to advise, and I do not pretend to be any expert on road traffic, if you want to turn left you use the outside lane and if you want to turn right you use the inside lane. When you go further down by the Hospital, a different standard applies. It is that lack of consistency, both in the policy level and the lack of consistency in the signage, as to how they should apply.

Sir, that is not to say whether 'jambusting' is in keeping with existing law or not. I am not a lawyer but I have heard lawyers say that it is not.

Thank you.

SENATOR G. E. N. BROME: Mr. President, I rise in support of this Bill today. I think that this is a very important piece of legislation which is long overdue. I do believe that it should have been introduced many years ago.

I am concerned about little children who sit in cars unprotected. Very often there is no one to take care of them and they sit in the car unsupervised by anyone and they do as they like. They sit in the front seat and in the back seat without any support and they are exposed to danger.

I believe that with the large number of young people that drive on the roads today who do not think, who act carelessly and recklessly, we are at risk using the highway. I do believe that the law should be really enforced and monitored on a regular basis to ensure that people wear their seat belts.

Sir, after a hard day's work, going home at night people are exposed to severe danger. They fall asleep in their car, the car gets into an accident, they become unconscious and die. Perhaps, if they were wearing a seat belt and got a knock on the head while they were asleep, when they awake, they would know that they were in an accident. Very often the neck and back are broken as a result of the accident and they die.

Mr. President, I support this Bill.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, in rising to conclude this debate on the Road Traffic (Amendment) Act, which introduces mandatory wearing of seat belts, I get the sense from the debate that Honourable Senators are generally in favour with the move to make this mandatory in Barbados and also for the provision of child seats in the back of cars for children under four years of age.

I might point out that there were some reservations mentioned and that the Bill does provide for exemptions for members of the public to have a medical examination which, I would assume, could be obtained in the case of those who were excessively obese and for whom it would be impractical for them to have a seat belt attachment. There may be some other considerations of a medical kind that I am not aware of, where members of the public could obtain this exemption.

I do note that this legislation is brought for the protection of the public. While a deadline of October 2001 is articulated for the beginning of compliance, I would call

upon all Barbadians today to start to buckle up. We should not want to wait for legislation to be in place for us to comply with a commonsense measure that is for our own protection and for the protection of those who travel with us.

On a casual observation, as I drive home from work, I note that the statistic that Senator Murray mentioned about the observation on the ABC Highway, is generally accurate in today's world for the traffic that transits Jemmotts Lane, Martindales Road and Belmont Road. I would like to emphasise that seat belts are as valuable to protect you from injury in the City as it is on the highway, and possibly more so in the City. The odds are that you might be involved in an accident in a highly congested location, even though travelling at a slower speed.

Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to remark on some of the criticisms levelled at the road construction programme and the exasperation at the congestion of the traffic. Recently there was a headline in the newspaper which said: "More Pain, Barbadians To Continue Suffering."

In the context of continuing work to improve the St. Lawrence Gap area, the focus was not on the improvement of the St. Lawrence Gap; the focus was not on the improvement of traffic flow; the protection of pedestrians in that area and the lighting of that area which would improve security; the focus was on the immediate inconvenience to the citizenry because of this improvement. I think that we have our priorities wrong.

I think that you have to recognise that the construction work that is being done on Belmont Road, Pine Road, Dame Nita Roundabout and up Welches, is one that is improving the infrastructure of our water works, telephone system, electricity supply and the natural gas. We are taking the opportunity to put the infrastructure in a more robust and efficient way as well as widening the roads, preparing adequate sidewalks and resurfacing the roads. It is not just a matter of resurfacing a road.

Sir, this would benefit future generations of Barbadians. Each one of us is used to inconvenience in our own lives to better succeeding generations. We deny ourselves from material things to help succeeding generations. This is only an extension of that denial but we seem to be into self-gratification. We do not seem to understand what suffering is. When I see the word "suffering", I think of Bangladesh and Rwanda, I do not see how it can apply to Barbados.

Mr. President, with those few words, where I am trying to bring the pendulum back to center in perspective of our public affairs, I whole-heartedly support this Bill and I once again urge Barbadians and hope that the media will support

this law for them to buckle up immediately and not wait for the legislation to take effect.

I beg that this Bill be now read a second time.

The question was put and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD, Mr. PRESIDENT left the Chair and the Senate went into Committee on the Bill, SENATOR THE HON. DAME PATRICIA SYMMONDS in the Chair.
2.45 p.m.

COMMITTEE

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD, Madam CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the PRESIDENT, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as The Road Traffic (Amendment) Act, 2001.

ORDER NO. 3 – THE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FUND, 2001

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I rise to move the Second Reading of the Agricultural Development Fund Bill, 2001.

The purposes of this Act are to:

- (I) establish a fund to be known as the Agricultural Development Fund into which various financial resources as are determined by the Minister responsible for Agriculture will be paid; and
- (II) to provide for the application and the resources of the Fund to support projects and programmes that are designed for the improved development of agriculture including sugar production, the cotton industry, livestock production, fisheries and horticulture.

This Act shall be given such fair, large and liberal construction and interpretation as would best ensure the attainment of its purposes.

In section 5 (1) – There is established a Management Committee which shall be responsible for considering, evaluating and approving proposals and projects to be financed by the Fund.

The Schedule has effect with respect to the constitution of the Management Committee and otherwise in relation thereto.

The purposes of the Fund are outlined in paragraph 6, that is, to receive all moneys that:

- (i) are transferred to the Fund from the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited;
 - (ii) are voted by Parliament for the Fund; and
 - (iii) are received from such other sources as the Minister determines;
- (b) To finance projects and programmes that are designed for the improved development of agriculture; and
- (c) To defray the costs incurred in the administration of this Act.
7. The resources of the Fund are
- (a) the revenues that are transferred to the Fund from the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited;
 - (b) the revenue that is received from the imposition of tariffs on food imports and transferred to the Fund from the Consolidated Fund;
 - (c) such money as Parliament may provide for the purpose; and
 - (d) all sums made available to the Fund by way of gift, grant or otherwise.

It is interesting to note that the reports in section 9, provide for the accountability of the Fund. The Accountant of the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited shall prepare quarterly reports of the accounts and economic activity of the Fund and shall deliver those reports to the Minister of Agriculture not later than 21 days following the end of each quarter.

The Minister of Finance shall, as soon as practicable after receiving a report referred to in subsection (1), cause a copy to be laid in both Houses of Parliament.

This, Mr. President, is the reason that we are bringing this to Parliament. We want to codify the operation of the Fund and to make sure that the Fund is properly accounted for.

Mr. President, the creation of the Agricultural Development Fund is aimed at stimulating the agricultural community in Barbados. We recognise that the environment had shifted significantly in recent years. We recognise too that there has to be a shift in the products that we produce and in the methods of marketing of those products.

Though sugar has long been the mainstay of the Barbadian agriculture, it will also continue to play a major role as inter-cropping which will act as a natural herbicide on the land and also prevent the erosion of the land. We also recognise that we have developed new areas of agriculture, such as expanded sheep farming, expanded cattle rearing and a comprehensive dairy industry.

There is also a growth of the production of products which were only produced in a backyard fashion, such as papaya (paw paw). Today, we have several acres of papaya under cultivation in Barbados. It has become a commercial product. There is an expansion of the growth of avocado pears. There is an expansion of the planting of mango trees and there has been a steady expansion in the planting of bananas to meet local consumption.

We have also moved into the area of horticulture and there is a significant production of horticultural products, cut flowers so to speak, and there is a thriving market for green house plants as well.

All of this must be taken into account and we recognise that the methods of farming have to change. We recognise that we have to husband our scarce water resources and maximise the utilisation of those water resources. There will be necessary funding for the development of small reservoirs and efficient irrigation systems that will maximise the output of those reservoirs to as much acreage as possible.

This means a new capital investment in agriculture. We recognise that the market is a dynamic one and it is not static. We had produced sugar for a very long time in this country as a mono-crop. Today, we have to bring about new concepts of agricultural production and to brand the products of that agricultural production to maximise its value.

Mr. President, there is much we can learn from the experience of New Zealand who thought that their agricultural industries would be dissipated because of the advent of economic liberalisation and a loss of protection in their marketplace.
2.55 p.m.

The reality is that it forced the New Zealand farmers to produce more value added products, do a high level of quality butchering of the sheep that they produced and to export quality cuts and brand that item, and the yield to the average New Zealand farmer rose significantly per head of sheep. In other words, the return to the farmers ended up to be two and three times what it was before the protection of their market was removed.

Now, I am sure that there are many farmers in Barbados who are progressive, who have entrepreneurial skills and who have a flair for the development of new products that they themselves produce. Take for instance the guava. The guava tree grows like a weed in Barbados. I have one at home and I have to keep on pulling up and cutting down the little plants that shoot up all over the place. It does not make sense for us to harvest guavas and ship them out of Barbados. We should be producing guava cheese, guava jelly and more exotic concoctions from the guava.

Part and parcel of that marketing is the packaging of it. We have seen examples of this around the Caribbean. Jamaica has been one of those countries that have used packaging to a very effective degree to add value to the product that they are producing. Even the Bay Rum that we see in the Caribbean used to come in an old bottle that was discarded from the rum industry, usually green and it had an old cork on top of it and no seal and that was it. Today, you now get Bay Rum from Dominica in a nicely shaped bottle, a state-of-the-art label, a cap on it that is less impervious to the introduction of air into the product and a seal on that cap. It is a quality product.

I have seen Bay Rum packaged by a company in France where they would be selling the Bay Rum at the equivalent of about US\$30 for six ounces. Now that is an astronomical price but clearly they were selling it. This is what we have to learn here in the Caribbean and here in Barbados and this Fund is developed to support these activities and to ensure that we have a progressive and vigorous move in the agricultural sector.

Now, Mr. President, I am not going to pretend that everything is perfect and I am not going to pretend that all is rosy in the agricultural sector. We recognise that there is much to be done and that there are many efficiencies that we need to develop.

I am no expert in the agricultural field but I do understand marketing and I do understand that if sugar is to survive in Barbados we must change our methods of marketing sugar from a bulk product of raw sugar to be sold *en masse* to a sugar producer or a sugar refiner abroad and to use that sugar and sugar products to produce specialist products some of which we use to produce and no longer do such as the Fancy Molasses and Sling and to produce

well-packaged, well-marketed, consumer size packages of brown Barbados sugar. It is a product that would be in demand all over the world. With our level of production we are basically producing enough to meet our global consumer market rather than a huge refinery market that we used to ship to. So all of these things, Mr. President, I think we need to look at.

In addition to that, we must see how agriculture dovetails into our hospitality industry and farmers can get significant revenue streams from the hospitality industry by arranging tours of their operations. Believe it or not, there are children in city areas who do not know that milk comes from a cow, or that an orange comes from off a tree. It is as simple as that, and we can capitalize on bringing revenue streams into the agricultural sector by integrating some of the hospitality industry activities that we have in Barbados.

Now, there has been some measure of this tried in a spotty manner but I think if we have a drive and bring some expertise and some dedication to bear on this, and put the adequate human resources in place to make it work, that it would benefit agriculture in Barbados.

Let me finally say, Mr. President, that agriculture is extremely important to every country. I have said so before in this Honourable Chamber. I believe that it adds to the ambience of the country and it adds to our spiritual side. It provides green spaces which are tremendously important for the well being of all of us. I think that this Agricultural Development Fund would go a long way to redefining our agricultural sector in Barbados, enhancing its revenue generation and protecting the environment of Barbados not just for us but for succeeding generations.

Mr. President, with that I beg that this Bill be read a second time.
3.05 p.m.

Mr. President, the purpose of this Act as stated is:

- (a) to establish a fund to be known as the Agricultural Development Fund into which financial resources are to be determined by the Minister responsible for Agriculture, and
- (b) to provide for the application of resources of the Fund to support projects and programmes that are designed for the improved development of agriculture including sugar production, cotton industry, livestock production, fisheries and agriculture.

The only things that seem to be excluded are fruit trees and vegetable production. The purposes as stated

appear to be laudable. However, when one considers the fate of other funds that have been created, one wonders whether this will see the light of day or if the persons for whom the Act is intended to help will ever benefit from it. One only has to think of the fund which was created for businesses through the SBA, a fund which after about three or four years of existence, I think only one person has so far benefited from any disbursement from that fund. This is going the same route and...

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, on a point of order. Sir, I think that I need to point out to the Honourable Senator that the reason why that fund has not been utilized to the fullest is through no fault of the system or the Government but it was the failure of the small businesses to bring themselves together to take advantage of this fund. It was there but they could not organize themselves.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No point of order. Senator Murray you will have an opportunity to speak.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, when we create funds which are so cumbersome that persons find it difficult to take advantage of them, then it is better not to create them at all. That has been the situation with respect to the fund for the small businesses and we are going the same route here through the Enterprise Growth Fund where you get tangled in a mesh of bureaucracy which makes it virtually impossible for the small businesses to meet the criteria that are laid down in order to access these funds. Very often the persons that are targeted do not even have the resources in order to make themselves eligible to access these funds. Sir, this Fund may also suffer a similar fate.

Secondly, I think that if we are going to look at the development of agriculture and provide any funds for developmental purposes, we cannot lump sugar production with the other areas of agricultural production. I think that it is a mistake to try to treat the two through the same channel, because you are essentially creating two different types of clientele. One set will be persons with large land holdings and the other set will be small backyard farmers or people with very small plots. Then the question arises, how are you going to breach the criteria that you can satisfy both of these groups? Although we look at the development of sugar production, we cannot create any "Mickey Mouse" fund for the development of sugar in this country. I am not saying that this Fund is necessarily going to be any such fund.

Sir, the point is that if the resources that are required are to bring sugar again to a point where it is of significant benefit to this economy, we will require a very large injection of funds in that area. I would hate to think that the

farmers at the Spring Hall Land Lease and the farmers who are about to get land under the programme of land for the landless, who will hopefully get it one day, will have to compete in the same arena for developmental funds as the persons who are looking for funds for development of the sugar industry. It seems to me, Sir, to be a mistake to have these two lumped together. Maybe we may not have a clear understanding of what agricultural development is all about.

Sir, when we speak of development in sugar, we have to start thinking about diversification within the sugar industry. This is something that people have spoken about for many years. In 1979, I wrote a paper at the university on diversification within the sugar industry.

Aside.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Actually, Mr. President, the present Prime Minister was my tutor and he gave me an "A" for the paper. You can check that and he will confirm that.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please address the Chair.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I have always said that when we look at the sugar cane plant it is such an important plant. It is probably one of the most efficient converters of light to chemical elements. There are so many things we can do with that plant and I believe that the sucrose that is in it should really be the by-product. There is a wide range of products ranging from wood to paper to resins which could be used.

One of the areas which has always provided Barbados a good source of income is alcohol and not purely alcohol for consumption but for industrial purposes. Brazil for many years has been using alcohol as a fuel in vehicles in combination with gasoline or gasohol. Brazilians have gone so far as to use almost 100 per cent alcohol in motor vehicles.

Sir, we have been content merely to produce raw sugar in a situation where we have no control over the price that we will get for the sugar and very often little control over the cost of producing it. Basically where sugar is concerned, Mr. President, we are not very far from what we were doing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We are still producing sugar for the European market and more precisely the British market. Unless we can get out of that bind of simply producing raw sugar for export, we will never really see the true potential of this very important industry.

As the Minister pointed out, we need to get into refining of the sugar. I understand there are persons who have attempted to offer small packages of sugar on the

tourist market. For one reason or another they have had to cease that kind of operation. But again, it is impossible for anybody at this stage to offer Barbados sugar in consumer size packages because it is not available in Barbados. We have got to make some decisions as to exactly where we want to take this industry if we are going to rely solely on producing for a market which, Mr. President, with respect to the trend of the WTO, we are not guaranteed will be there much longer. Soon we will not have a guaranteed market.

At this time rather than bringing a Bill to create this type of fund, we should be spending serious time and money in terms of examining where we are going to take this industry when that guaranteed market is no longer available to us, because the time is quickly approaching when there will be no such guarantee.

Mr. President, the whole matter of sugar production is one that must go way beyond whether you have one factory or whether you have three. In fact, I have recently heard that the thinking now is to have Andrews factory as the single factory and to moth-ball Bulkeley and close down Portvale altogether. One must carefully examine the implications for decisions such as this. The one-factory option is one which many persons who have a genuine interest in the sugar industry believe that would be a mistake. I am not prepared to say whether we should have one factory, two or three, because, as I said, the whole issue goes beyond that.
3.15 p.m.

More important is what are we going to do with the industry in order to make it a viable entity because of the importance not only in terms of economics but, as was pointed out by the Minister, in terms of the aesthetics, the ecological value of the sugar cane plant where soil conservation is concerned and the implications for our tourism product when persons come here whether they are going to see large tracts of unused bush land or what appears from the air to be a well manicured garden. These are the things that we have to take into consideration when we look at the sugar industry.

I do not see how we can lump the sugar industry with development of the other areas of agriculture except in those areas where we are going to be using sugar as part of the rotation in crop diversification. We well know, Sir, that the sugar cane plant is an excellent plant used in this regard. Cotton, for example, is believed to deplete the soil more rapidly than most other plants that we would have. Sugar cane also acts as a good crop for control of weeds. Except for the point of having the sugar cane as part of the rotation in crop diversification, I do not see how we can lump horticulture and things like that in the same bag as the development of the sugar industry.

Within that group, Sir, is Fisheries. I believe that the Government should always step very lightly when they speak of fisheries because it is really a disgraceful situation that exists at this time that after seven years the Government of Barbados still cannot get a fisheries agreement with the Government of Trinidad & Tobago and after seven years our fishermen still cannot go into the territorial waters of Trinidad & Tobago, and even St. Lucia and Grenada without fear of being arrested, in an environment where we are talking about trade liberalization, where we are talking about open markets and a single economy. Right here within our own CARICOM we cannot have mechanisms in place that we can even fish in each other's waters, yet the Japanese can come all the way to the Caribbean Sea and fish at will to the extent that recently I heard a Minister expressing concern about the possibility of over-fishing in the Caribbean.

If there is over-fishing in the Caribbean, Mr. President, it is not by Barbadian or regional fishermen because they do not have the capacity to over-fish in this region. It is the trawlers from Japan that are down here throwing out nets which are two or three miles long and basically raking up everything in their path. That is the danger that fisheries in the Caribbean face, but we have Governments in the region which are into bed with the Japanese with the hope that they will provide developmental aid for those countries, but are excluding their own brothers and sisters in the Caribbean from exploiting the resources of the Caribbean Sea.

The Barbados Government, Mr. President, needs to take a firm stand where this fishing agreement with the Government of Trinidad & Tobago is concerned. Is it that because the persons who are going out there and being arrested are ordinary poor black people that it is not important to do something about this situation? If certain people are on their yachts and they drift into Trinidad & Tobago waters and are arrested, somebody would want to send the army there to bring them out but recently, we had two of our fishermen who had to spend Christmas in prison in Tobago simply because they were trying to fish in the Caribbean Sea. That I do not believe should be allowed to continue much longer and the Barbados Government has got to use whatever means are at their disposal. We cannot sit down and decide that we are going to play by the book and we are going to follow every rule and be the first to jump in and sign every agreement while other people believe that they do not have to do the same thing.

There are fishing boats from Trinidad & Tobago that come into Oistins and buy diesel and food and nobody troubles them, but if a Barbadian fishing boat drifts into Trinidad waters, it ends up in jail. This is something, Mr. President, that has to stop. Even if the Barbados Government goes to the extent of letting Trinidad &

Tobago know that if they want to continue to have BWIA listed as the regional air carrier that the Barbados Government is prepared to withdraw its support and give it to somebody else if the Trinidad & Tobago Government is not prepared to do something about a fishing agreement.

The Trinidad & Tobago Government clearly cares nothing about Barbados and has no respect or any regard for the people and Government of Barbados. That is clear from the attitude that has been adopted with respect to the sale of petroleum products to Barbados. We have had a situation where Trinidad & Tobago is selling petroleum products to Barbados at a higher cost than they are selling to the United States of America.

You talk about CARICOM, the Barbados market is probably one of the best markets that Trinidad & Tobago has for their manufactured goods. Ninety per cent of the goods on supermarket shelves in Barbados come from Trinidad & Tobago. I have the habit of reading labels. There is hardly anything that I would buy that I do not read the labels to see where it is manufactured. There are certain products that I will not buy that are made in Trinidad & Tobago. There is no way that I will buy anything that cannot be cooked from Trinidad & Tobago because I question in some instances the hygienic and sanitary practices of some of the places that manufacture them.

An item as simple as biscuits, I must confess I like whole wheat crackers and I used to go and buy the WIBISCO rather than Bermudez because WIBISCO was made in Barbados. I assumed that it was made in Barbados and one day for some reason I looked at the package and saw 'Made in Trinidad & Tobago for WIBISCO'. Even biscuits now that we used to make in Barbados...

Aside.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: I do not know about Eclipse. I do not pay too much attention to Eclipse. Even the whole wheat crackers are being made in Trinidad & Tobago and Trinidad & Tobago are refusing – it seems to me as though they are disregarding any protest that might be coming from Barbados with respect to the fishing agreement.

In fact, I have not heard any response with respect to the complaint of Barbados about the price of petroleum products. Trinidad & Tobago simply seem to adopt the policy that if you want it, you take it or if you do not want it, lump it. That seems to be the attitude towards Barbados. Barbados cannot continue to be the one that is going to be following all the rules and the people of Barbados are paying the consequences while other people are prepared to free-wheel.

3.25 p.m.

There are also resources off Guyana but when our fishing boats go there they have difficulties, yet we are supposed to be CARICOM brothers. The present Government before they came to office in 1994 found it possible to be critical and said that they could reverse all these things yet after seven years nothing has happened. In fact, it seems as though we are further from our agreement than we ever were and fishermen in Barbados still cannot go out and fish without fear of being arrested.

Mr. President, one has to wonder whether it is because of the kinds of people who are fishermen that we have this approach. Sir, it is a disgrace that fishermen have to be complaining that they cannot get ice. Month after month, fishermen are complaining that they cannot get ice particularly at the time that fishing is at its best, and they have to leave Barbados and go to Grenada to buy ice.

Mr. President, that is absurd. Why should this be happening in a country that boasts of being one of the most developed countries in CARICOM yet they cannot produce ice for their fishermen? Are you going to build fishing harbours and leave them shut up and a fisherman cannot get ice because the place cannot be unlocked because workers are absent with the keys? These nonsensical things are happening and affecting the livelihood of fishermen in this country. People believe that fishermen should be no more advanced than in biblical times when you cast out your nets and wished for the best.

Mr. President, unless the Government is prepared to address issues such as these, this Bill makes no sense. You have at least to remove some of the hindrances which people face when they attempt to get into agriculture or fishing.

Mr. President, one of the problems we face from time to time is that people are always trying to introduce something new. I have seen cases where people went abroad, say there is a market for tamdew melons for instance then the person wants five container loads which is impossible for us to produce here. The crops that we have the capability to produce and sell not only as primary products but we can have value added and go into secondary and tertiary stages of production we tend not to pay too much attention to.

There are certain things that we grow which we know how to grow well. One of those crops, Mr. President, is hot pepper. Wherever you go in the world Barbados pepper sauce has a high reputation. We have more Caribbean people living outside the Caribbean than in the Caribbean and they automatically provide a ready market but Barbados' pepper sauce is sold in the United States, but it is manufactured in Mexico or Costa Rica. This tells you that the name "Barbados Pepper Sauce" has some marketability out there.

Mr. President, there are no hot peppers in Barbados. The farmers who do not have access to irrigation find it extremely difficult to maintain the trees for a long period. Then there is a situation where there is a shortage of peppers so processors cannot get peppers and there is even a shortage of planting material. Mr. President, it is not easy to get the seeds. You may get a few packages from the 4H stores but a farmer who may have the capacity like Senator Laurie, might have difficulty in finding planting material.

Recently an assessment was done of the crops which are most viable to be grown in Barbados. They came up with two crops, hot peppers and pigeon peas. When the farmers decide to plant other crops, they then have a problem with the harvesting and when they can get it harvested, they have a problem with the marketing.
3.35 p.m.

Sir, again it comes back to the point that we are simply looking at selling cotton lint. We have not gone to the stage of taking the produce through to producing a high quality sea island cotton fabric. We are satisfied to sell the lint to someone else who can get value added advantages. We need to take our heads out of the past and look forward with respect to the changing trade conditions. The people in the WTO are not going to be concerned about CARSICOT or anything that has happened with Barbados Sea Island cotton in the past. What they will be concerned with is the fact that we do not have any guaranteed markets and that our economy is now wide open and anything can come in without hindrance.

In this part of the world, we speak of globalisation and open economies and whenever we think of this, we think of things coming in. Whereas in North America, persons are speaking of access to global economies or access to global markets, we are not speaking of access to anything. We are simply thinking of who will be able to bring in the cheapest goods. Whether we should have a Kmart or a PriceSmart or whether you should keep them out. We are concerned about getting cheaper goods for the consumer and we seem to think that is all that is required.

We are also required, Mr. President, to develop our agricultural sector and any other sector in such a way that we could have a viable manufacturing sector coming out of our agricultural sector so that we can carve out a niche. We must identify, precisely, what are the products we would do well with and carve out that niche and brand those products. Anywhere you go and you say Mount Gay Rum, the people who know anything about rum will think of that with respect. Sir, you will talk about Mount Gay Rum like you talk about Blue Mountain Coffee.

Sir, the flying fish that we have here that thousands of Barbadians living overseas will be happy to get, we do not

have any mechanisms in place. Our satisfaction is hearing that flying fish is being sold at \$25 a hundred, the consumer is happy and we get some cheap fish. When the fishing season is over what does the fishermen do? Why can we not take it to the next stage so that we can have the fish processed in such a way so that they can have a longer shelf life and we can then export them to other countries.

Mr. President, unless we can come up with a clear plan of action, what is almost now tantamount to a survival plan, we cannot continue to be like a punching bag in this new trade environment where we are waiting for the next blow. We cannot continue to be like that. We have to be proactive and come up with plans to take our products into those niche markets that are out there. They are there, and if we want to play in the ring as the big boys, because we are ready to sign all these agreements since Barbados cannot be isolated from the rest of the world, we must, therefore, be prepared to have ourselves protected from the blows that can come from the new trading environment.

Mr. President, I would hope that in addition to setting up a fund of this nature, that the Minister of Agriculture would get a clear understanding on where agriculture is suppose to be going. I heard, only today, the point about the functionaries and the advice that is being given to Ministers. If the functionaries are that important then you do not need Ministers.

We must come up with clear plans to have people in positions who understand development, not simply because of a sector, but development of this entire economy, that everything is related to each other and not that one area is trying to develop here and one there, and the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing, which seems to be the case at this point in time in this country. We do not seem to have a clear national survival plan to deal with the new trading environment and the conditions that we have signed onto under the WTO and other agreements.

Mr. President, with those few words, I am saying that if this Bill was one which I felt could do anything substantial for the development of agriculture, I would have given it my wholehearted support. However, I do not believe that it would do much for the development of agriculture and I really cannot support it, Sir.

Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. President, I would like to start by congratulating the Government. I think that this is a very good step and I totally agree with the Leader of Government Business on the necessity for us to do something dramatic in agriculture. What is happening out

there right now is the lack of confidence in the future and a real lowering of the morale among farmers. As you go around the country more and more farmers feel that they are being sidelined and are not of any importance to Government or anyone else. Sir, that whole agricultural base, even the backyard farmer is starting to lose confidence.

This injection of funds, if handled correctly, could be the lifesaver that we need. A few years ago, in spite of the World Trade Organisation, the American sheep farmers were faced with huge competition from New Zealand. They appealed to the President who promptly slapped a 70 per cent tax, highly illegal on the WTO, and gave them \$10 million to make themselves competitive with New Zealand in three years time. Of course, this resulted with New Zealand taking them to court, but it will be three years before all of that is resolved. In the meantime, the American farmers have had a chance to put their house in order. Sir, this is the kind of action we expect to see from our Government.

In looking at the membership, this very important management committee, I see that all of them are going to be appointed by the Minister. We have in Barbados organisations such as The Barbados Agricultural Society, which was established in 1845, The Barbados Sugar Technologists Association, which is more than 60 years old and has a wide membership among professionals. These organisations, I feel, should be on this management committee, we have a precedent for that. In the Sugar Industry Research and Development Committee, the BSTA has a guaranteed seat by an Act of Parliament.

Sir, rather than have all these could-be political appointments made to this committee, I would feel much happier knowing that there were people in there of a professional stature who were going to do this thing, especially the criteria, I feel, should have been part of this Bill, the criteria that says that your project is going to be acceptable or is not going to be acceptable. It is nowhere in here and it would be done by the Minister. One man is going to decide on the criteria and that is a little difficult to accept.

3.35 p.m.

I get very confused about the role of the Enterprise Growth Fund. Now, I understand that it is put there to manage the resources but the Enterprise Growth Fund does not get the resources. Nobody knows where they get this money that they are going to manage because the Fund itself, gets money from the Enterprise Growth Fund. It also gets money from the tariffs. It also gets money from Parliament, and it also gets money from gifts. They do not go through the Enterprise Growth Fund.

Where does the Enterprise Growth Fund get the money? Surely all the money should go to the Enterprise Growth Fund. I presume it went to them so that they could invest it and generally manage it. What are they going to manage? Where does the money to the Enterprise Growth Fund come from because it is not coming from the tariffs? The vast amount of money is going to come from the tariffs, initially anyhow, when the tariffs are high and that goes directly into the Fund and it has nothing to do with the Enterprise Growth Fund. Yet, the accounting of the Fund is done by the Enterprise Growth Fund which does not have control of the money.

To me this is very confusing and you are asking also that this Report is done by the Accountant of the Enterprise Growth Fund and handed to the Ministry of Agriculture. Yet, the Minister of Finance is laying the Report in Parliament. Why would we do this funny thing? Why we do not say that the Report should go to the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Finance and the Chairman of the Committee. I think those are the three people who should get the Report, not give the Report to the Minister of Agriculture.

There is nothing in here that says that the Minister of Agriculture must give the Minister of Finance the Report. Yet, the Minister of Finance is going to lay it in Parliament. It is again, to me, very confusing. I am sure that you all understand it but I do not.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Now, this money for the tariffs, where is it coming from? It is coming from the consumers. You and I, and the man in the street are going to put this money into the Fund. Why I am saying this, on lamb imports alone, which amounts to \$8 million a year and there is a tariff of 40 per cent, so lamb imports alone would put \$3.2 million into this Fund but there is no guarantee that one cent of that will be used to develop the local lamb industry.

In fact, I have applied, on behalf of the sheep farmers, to the Minister of Finance, to get less than 10 per cent of one year's input from the consumers for the support of the sheep industry in Barbados – less than 10 per cent of one year, \$250 000 – and I have been told, no. Yet, the Minister of Finance turned around and gave a \$5 million grant from this Fund (that does not exist) to the sugar industry in October last year. They do not put one cent into this Fund. All the profit that is made on the importation of sugar goes directly to the BADMC, but none of it will go into this Fund. Why?

There is a great amount of money there because that sugar is landing here at approximately BDS\$600 per tonne

and it is being sold for BDS\$1 700 per tonne and all of that profit does not go into this Fund for the Ministry of Agriculture, no, no, no, that must not be attached to that. That has to go separately to the BADMC for what reason? What is the connection between the BADMC and the sugar industry? None. These are the things that are very strange to me. I am just a farmer, I guess.

The other aspect is that I am not sure if the Fund says exactly who is going to disburse the funds. Is it disbursed by the Enterprise Growth Fund, is it disbursed by the Minister of Agriculture? It does not mention disbursement at all.

Finally, I would say that after that very nice statement on the policy of agriculture and so on, I guess I will have to do a little bit of lobbying on the Prime Minister to see if I can get the Leader of the House up to Graeme Hall.

Thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS: Mr. President, first of all I wish to commend the Government and the Ministry of Agriculture for this Bill. It shows, obviously, the recognition of the importance of the agricultural sector to the economy, to the generating of foreign exchange and providing employment.

This Fund is going to deal too, with planning and this is very important. There is obviously a recognition too that there is a link between agriculture and tourism and there will be a series of national consultations.

Already there have been discussions with the Ministry of Education in the area of hospitality studies. I think that was mentioned already and there is also the question of finding a way to persuade people that they must eat what they produce. That is something that I know, especially during the war years, was emphasized and during that time, we had to eat what we produced.

Nowadays, of course, our tastes have become more sophisticated and there is the question now of finding attractive foods, other than local ones, and, therefore, something has to be done in that area. Opportunities are there, the Minister of Agriculture realises that and that there is a future but there are some problems. As the Honourable Leader of the Senate pointed out, this sector is not perfect but there are opportunities and there has been progress in areas, as he mentioned, such as papayas and other areas.

I wish, however, and I think one can understand this, to look at it also from the point of view of attitude. I do not think there is any longer a feeling that to be involved in agriculture is something demeaning. I do not think that, but there is still a feeling that the profession is not as highly regarded as other professions such as engineering, medicine

and law, and the returns are not always as high, although there has been some success and some great returns in that area.

I looked at the statistics at St. Augustine University and I found that at the moment there are only 284 students there, 120 males and 162 females and only 16 from Barbados. The majority of those are men and this is not very satisfactory. In fact, I would say it is very unsatisfactory that from 450 students some years ago, there are about 284. It has declined. The Government is not to be blamed for this. I think that educational institutions will have to do more to encourage students to realise the importance of agriculture and, as I said before, it is important to the economy and to our progress.

There is a link between tourism and agriculture and this must be more fully developed and the Ministry of Agriculture realises this. For instance, the supply of fresh produce to hotels and restaurants, I think that needs to be developed and that is an area where farmers could do well. Every year, there are young people applying for courses in agriculture at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and they must be encouraged because it is patent that there are a lot of young people who still wish to farm.
3.55 p.m.

So we have to try to get people to focus on the forms of agricultural supplies that are good not only for the local people but for tourists, and to produce produce that are of high quality and fresh. Therefore, I think that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is really looking ahead and making plans to see, not only in the area of foodstuff, but say in the cotton area, that something is done about the trademark issue which has existed for some time.

There has been a task force established to look at cotton and the black belly sheep. I am surprised that Senator Laurie did not mention that but that is an indigenous industry which the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development realises that we must find means of moving it forward because there is a great future in that, and there are other food crops like sweet potatoes and yams which we can also look at for export.

So that on the whole, to me, Mr. President, the future looks rosy, not bleak, provided we recognise that there are some problems which can be solved. As I have said, this Bill will go quite far in helping to see that the industry thrives and increases.

With those few words, I wish to say that I heartedly support the Bill.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Mr. President, I think it is in order for a special effort to be made to ensure that agriculture does not die. Therefore, the establishment of a Fund for this purpose could be considered at least a noble idea.

I have, however, to share some of the reservations of Senator Laurie about some aspects of this Bill. The Bill, except in one area, deals exclusively with the Fund. The Bill provides that the Fund should be administered and managed by the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited, which is a company presumably, since it seems to have a limited liability status and, therefore, it is not directly under the control of any of the agencies of Government as such.

In what way can the Fund be accessed? This is not clear. So how can it be accessed? What the Bill says in clause 5 is that:

"There is established a Management Committee which shall be responsible for considering, evaluating and approving proposals and projects..." and

In clause 11; "The Minister may make regulations

- (i) for the establishing of criteria for determining the projects and programmes that are to benefit from the Fund; and
- (ii) generally for the proper administration of this Act."

The Committee seems to have not a lot to do. It seems to be a fairly routine sort of Committee and one wonders if it was absolutely necessary to have it provided for in this legislation with a Schedule on how it should operate, providing it with a secretary, ensuring that it meets once a month and, therefore, introducing into the whole order of things another bureaucratic layer.

If the Minister has, under clause 11, the authority to make regulations for determining the criteria for projects and programmes and for proper administration of the Act, is it really necessary to make a provision for this Management Committee which has no more to do than to apply those criteria to specific applications? That seems to me to be an overload of administrative provision for what is not a very big function for this Committee.

The other point which I have some reservation about is this. When I look at the finances that are put into this Fund, I see that this Fund is controlled by another Fund. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development must receive a financial report from the – not from the Agricultural Fund, that report would not say how many

people have got access to it and what are the types of things in it – Accountant of the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited which he shall prepare quarterly. Normally, the Minister who is responsible for a subject is the one who should lay in Parliament the reports that have been sent to him. It seems to me that to introduce the Minister of Finance here in circumstances where he might not have access to the report for a long time is another administrative burden in this case. 4.05 p.m.

I would hope that we look at this again. If the Enterprise Growth Fund is to make the reports, it should make the reports to the executive Ministry and the executive Minister should lay those reports in Parliament. This is most unusual and I was hoping that it was a slip.

Those two points are what I am concerned about. I am concerned that you have a whole big committee to do something for which the Minister would have given all the guidelines by provision of clause 11 to the Central Committee with seal and secretary and payments for the members of the Committee and officers to service them for a function that seems not to be deserving of such an overload.

The second point is the question of reporting which I find reporting only in relation to the Fund and no other aspect of the operations but just in relationship to the accounts and economic activity of the Fund. Those two points I leave for the consideration of the Chamber if it so desires to look at them a little further.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. President, I rise to support this important piece of legislation because it sensitizes the people of Barbados to the fact that this Government is taking agriculture very seriously. Indeed, Sir, this Government has taken agriculture seriously in its several years of operation because one of the first things that we did on returning to office in 1994 was to remove the onerous taxes that the last DLP administration had put on the agricultural and manufacturing sector. I think that was in October 1994, one month after we came to office. We signalled to the people of Barbados that we intend to have agriculture, not on the back burner as the Dems had put it, but rather in the forefront of economic activity and economic thinking. That is one thing that we have to get clear.

This is another step in the process towards having the people of Barbados realise that agriculture is not a dying activity, nor will it be allowed to die, but at the same time, we have to come to grips with the reality that the sort of support structure that governments have put there to help agriculture because of the new reality of the world order they are not going to be there anymore. Hence, we have to look at a paradigm shift in the way how we encourage and finance agricultural activity in this island of ours.

The days of protectionism, thank God, are coming to an end. I say, thank God, because I am one who does not fear globalization nor the world trade order. I see it not as a hurdle but as a challenge to which we as a country must rise. I do not see it in doom and gloom terms as some commentators would have us believe. I see it as a chance where developing countries, if they get their act together, can see opportunities where others see hurdles and realise that they can use their voice.

Do not forget the developing countries have a lot of voice which they probably do not use because they are not organised in that way but they have a lot of voice. They have important votes in the major organisations. In the past, when they wanted to, they have used that voice in a strong way. I am convinced that the collective votes in the developing countries can ensure that all the advantages do not go to the developed world.

It means, Mr. President, that we have to put our agriculture in a position where we can take advantage of what God has given us, which is the climate, and do not seek to engage in those activities for which we have no advantage. Our agriculture now must become competitive, and there are crops and activities for which Barbados has a clear advantage. It is up to us to identify those crops and make sure that we produce those crops and use what advantages there are in world trade, and there are crops for which we have an advantage.

Two of these crops are mentioned here in this Bill, one is the cotton industry and the other one is livestock production, especially noting that some of the best lamb in the world is produced right here in Barbados. We do not get enough of it. We cannot treat it as an ordinary commodity but as a branded product. Not only black belly sheep but our cotton is among the best in the world. People are clamouring for our cotton but there is virtually none.

Mr. President, in order then for us to take advantage of these opportunities, we have to make sure that the thinking of people in agriculture is revolutionised and also that the financing is there so that when they want to move away from traditional crops for which there is no advantage, they can have access to money. Money makes the world turn and that is true in agricultural activity too. That is why this Government in its wisdom has taken the revolutionary step to ensure that there is a pool of funds which can be used to position this country that it can take advantage of those things which I mentioned before. That is why the Agricultural Development Fund Bill is here before us this afternoon.

This Government believes that as we make the shift money must not be seen as an obstacle. The money must be there for us to make that shift. We are not going to take the

money, which is the people's money, and give it away to finance those projects which are not commercial. We cannot afford to have money in non-viable projects because, as mentioned before, we are not allowed to use barriers to prevent imports from coming in. Anytime that we go into a venture we have to make sure that it can stand the competitive test of time. That is why this Fund has to be managed — it is the people's money — in a professional way. That is why Government has said that it is not going to set up a new body to manage this Fund. We already have a body called the Enterprise Growth Fund which is in the business of managing these types of projects.

Sir, we know from our experience that loan management, whether it be a commercial bank or a development type institution, is a specialist activity. The ensuring that the projects remain on course, the ensuring that the commitments and the expectations that are in the project are being realised from time to time is a specialist activity and that is where the Enterprise Growth Fund comes in, and that is why it was given that mandate in the first place.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. President, on a point of order. I think the Senator is misleading the Chamber. He is saying that the Enterprise Growth Fund is going to manage the Fund but the Act does not say where they are getting the funds. It says very clearly that the Enterprise Growth Fund would pass over the funds to the Fund which will be managed by the Management Committee.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. President, Section 4 of the Bill says that the revenue of the Fund shall be administered and managed by the Enterprise Growth Fund. Section 5 lays out the role of the Management Committee. The Enterprise Growth Fund is not in a position to know the agriculture of the project, to put it in that way. They would not understand whether or not from an agricultural point of view this project is viable. That is where the Management Committee comes in. They are going to have agricultural specialists on that Management Committee. We want to make sure that people from the Ministry are there, from the Agricultural Management Company, people from BARNUFO, the fisher folks' organisation are there. This Management Committee is going to be made up of people who know and understand agriculture so that when a project comes, it comes to the Management Committee where, according to the law, they evaluate this project and say if it is worthy of support. That is the end of their responsibility in that matter. Then, the Enterprise Growth Fund takes over. The Enterprise Growth Fund approves a loan for \$100 000 or whatever, disburses it and reports on the activity.

4.15 p.m.

The Enterprise Growth Fund does not select the project. The project is selected by the Management Committee but the money is paid through the Enterprise Growth Fund who manages the relationship between the money and the farmer and makes sure the reports are given on time. The actual management of the Fund is done by the Enterprise Growth Fund but the selection of the project and approval for the Fund is the responsibility of the Management Committee. The Enterprise Growth Fund disburses the fund and manages it to make sure the objectives are met and that financial and other targets are met and maintained. Sir, the distinction is clear and there is a reason why the Government sought to do it that way.

Sir, in terms of reporting, the Accountant of the Enterprise Growth Fund, the body managing the Fund reports every quarter to the Minister of Agriculture on every project that is being financed by the Fund and the general condition of the project.

The Minister of Finance has responsibility for the Fund because the Enterprise Growth Fund comes under the Ministry of Finance. The laying of the report has to be done by the Minister responsible for the Fund hence, the Minister of Finance. The lines of responsibility are clear because the Enterprise Growth Fund comes under the Ministry of Finance and the Minister of Finance must be the one who reports on the activities of his organisation. The Minister of Agriculture cannot report on the Enterprise Growth Fund because it is not his statutory or constitutional responsibility even though the project is an agricultural project and unlike what happened in other administrations, we are going to make a distinction between the management of the Fund and the selection and monitoring of projects.

Sir, accountability is the important point because we have experience in this country where loans were given in good faith and because of whatever, the portfolio goes bad. Sir, it is the people's money so the question of accountability must be foremost in our mind. Anytime we lend money we have to be sure that the money is being properly spent. We have many instances in this country where you lend money for one activity and it is used to finance studies in Europe and other places.

We have to make sure that any entity that we go into must be commercially viable, that is important. It must be viable so that in a few years that proposal must be making money. If it is not going to make money, then it should not be financed. Sir, it is my contention that this project will do a lot for agriculture.

Sir, what about the revolutionary scheme of land for the landless which Government has just launched and some people are already taking advantage of this fact. Sir, they

must be serious farmers because it is a serious activity. There are a few serious farmers that have already started to take advantage of this land for the landless scheme.

This scheme will help in developing rural communities. This Fund will help in the development of rural Barbados because one thing that concerns me is that the population drift from the rural areas has put tremendous strain on our urban centres. It has resulted in the degradation of the Scotland District and we might have to consider measures to reverse the trend. This is very important because the land down there is very fertile and in times past it was the virtual bread basket of this country.

Mr. President, all the figures indicate to me that there has been an upsurge in agricultural activity in the past few years because the GDP on non-sugar agriculture has gone up significantly in the past few years. My own contention is that we underestimated the value of agriculture to our economy. We have this mistaken view that the only agriculture is sugar so once sugar is down agriculture is down.

Mr. President, I know a lot of people in my village who have done very well off half or a quarter acre of land and they have built lovely homes from growing produce around the house. While it may seem as though there is some depression in the agricultural sector, when we take a close look at it, we see that this country has done well from agriculture. A lot of people are educated today as a result of agriculture activity. I know as a boy going to Harrison College, I picked beans and dug carrots before going to school and it made me a better man today.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, I am not alone in this. I am sure that others in here can attest to the fact that agriculture has made us the men and women we are today. Sir, I do not underestimate the value of the agricultural sector and that is why I commend this Government for making sure that initiatives are taken so that this sector is given the importance that it deserves.

We can argue about the Bill but, in the final analysis, the objective of this Bill is to help maintain the agricultural sector and make sure that it occupies an important part in the psyche of the Barbadian. This Government that I have the honour to represent has taken bold steps to ensure that the agricultural sector is viable. I have no difficulty whatsoever in commending this Bill to this Honourable Chamber and ask, Sir, that it be given favourable consideration.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.
4.25 p.m.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Mr. President, I rise to support the Bill, but like Senator Laurie and Senator Collymore, I have some reservations about the management of this Fund.

Section 2 (b) talks about the purposes of this Bill are to prove to the application of the resources for the Fund to support projects and programmes, *et cetera*. Until Senator Barker spoke, I was not sure whether that support was going to be by way of grants or loans. There is no reference in this Bill. What Senator Barker has said, I think, is that loans are obviously being contemplated. Senator Barker goes on to say that the revenue of the Fund should be administered by the Enterprise Growth Fund. I take that to mean the Agricultural Development Fund should be managed by the Enterprise Growth Fund and that this Management Committee should be established. That Management Committee is in effect performing the role of a board of directors, although it is not so designated. It is there to be responsible for considering, evaluating and approving proposals and projects to be financed by the Fund. Having made the decision, the Enterprise Growth Fund takes over and manages those projects that have been funded based on the decisions of the Management Committee.

Is the Enterprise Growth Fund geared to perform that function? I am talking about the management of the projects that have been funded because that is going to involve experience and it is going to involve constant monitoring. Are the funds going for the purpose for which the decisions were taken?

I remember many years ago, when I was involved with CADEC, we approved a project in Trinidad, an irrigation scheme. When the project was inspected, the fellows had taken the money and bought new cars. That is a simple illustration. The funds should be applied for the purpose for which they were intended and for which they were approved. Sir, that is just the monitoring of it. Once you get into agriculture, you are getting into extension services.

Does the Enterprise Growth Fund have that capability or do they plan to source that capability? Although we think of agriculture as not being very sophisticated, there would be a need for proper accounting records, proper budgeting and marketing of whatever products they produce. All of that is necessary so that the Enterprise Growth Fund can monitor the progress of the projects. Let us not kid ourselves that all will be profitable. This is a development fund and by definition it is high risk. All the projects, with the best goodwill in the world, will not be profitable.

There is often mismanagement, again beyond the control of management. The Enterprise Growth Fund has to be able to monitor it to see that those people who are involved are doing their best, getting all the support that

they need and that they are accounting for what they are doing, otherwise the loans that are made to the project will not be serviced and the principal repayments will fall into arrears and that can happen very quickly.

While I support this Fund completely, I am just sending a word of caution that passing legislation is one thing, making a decision to disburse funds is probably the easiest part, where acid testing comes in managing the projects that have been approved by the management committee and then the management of the Enterprise Growth Fund is truly effective. I support the Bill.

Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, this Bill strikes me as one that seeks to give the Enterprise Growth Fund an opportunity to do some more work. I suspect that since its formation that Fund has not done very much to assist business across Barbados. In fact, up until recent time there was only one enterprise in Barbados that could boast of assistance from the Enterprise Growth Fund.

It appears as if there is not much that the Enterprise Growth Fund is doing at this present time, neither is it being staffed to do the kind of work that it was established to do. The expertise certainly does not lie there in terms of the breadth of knowledge that is required even in manufacturing. Unless there is a substantial change in the structure of the organisation, that expertise will not be available to assist in managing the agricultural sector.

Sir, with the seven-man committee that is being established, I do not know what kind of expertise would be brought to the table. It has not been revealed what the Committee would be like but, again, that is not going to assist the agricultural sector considerably, whether or not the Committee happens to be a good one. Unlike the Securities Commission, the agricultural sector is hands-on and the quality of members on the Committee, in the case of the Securities Commission, would make a substantial difference because you are basically talking about investing resources that are surplus resources.

In the case of this Fund, you are talking about making decisions how you can get the agricultural sector to move more and how it can be developed. While you can sit at committee level and make all kinds of decisions, at the end of the day it is going to be a question of, are they really any major opportunities out there in the agricultural sector that would allow entrepreneurs to want to become involved at the level that is required, that is, a level that is way beyond the existing level now.

4.35 p.m.

The two Committees are completely different in nature. The expertise that you bring which can allow you to make proper decisions to invest surplus funds is an expertise that is completely different from one in which you are talking about, how do I reinvigorate the agricultural sector, which is really, as I said, a far more technical, hands-on kind of approach that is required, so this is not the same thing.

Let me delve into the Fund. Where is the Fund's revenue going to come from? The Government took quite a while to introduce something called "a bound rate", and this is the major source of revenue. It says here in section:

"7. (b) the revenue that is received from the imposition of tariffs on food imports and transferred to the Fund from the Consolidated Fund";

Now, without it being said, this imposition of a tariff would have to be the bound rate that was charged or imposed in the year April 2000, I think, is when we did that. No one is quite sure what the level of revenue would be from this source. The only thing that is really known about it is that it was improperly implemented, in the first instance, and then there was supposed to be a revisiting of the way it was implemented, especially as it affected the tourism sector.

To date, I am not so sure what has happened with regards to how the bound rate was reduced, and/or removed, adjusted, or whatever. I am not so sure because we are never in the know when it relates to these kinds of issues. I just want to explain that it took the Government six years to implement the bound rate. Our agreement with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) was signed as far back as 1994/1995, and as far back as then, the bound rate was calculated, that is, to offer tariff protection to those goods or items that would have been submitted to the WTO for protection at that point.

Those figures that were calculated in 1994/1995, were in fact, calculated on the basis of 1987 import data. So you can see that it took the Government thirteen (13) years to implement the bound rate, or 13 years after the data which was used to compile the information on the bound rate. So it was not surprising then, that in some instances, it proved to be inadequate, in others, it proved to be burdensome. It was burdensome because it was introduced on some food items that were, in fact, more used in the tourism sector than would have been used by the local population so they further hurt the tourism sector.

The poultry industry in Barbados was the one that suffered greatest, following the year April 2000 measures. And how did that happen? Because it was eventually

recognised that the bound rates charged on imported chicken were, in fact, inadequate to protect the local industry. This is, as I said, because those rates were based on data from as far back as the late 1980s.

What happened then is that under WTO provisions, the Government was able to allow a public sector agency to become the sole importer of chicken or certain chicken parts, so as to ease the so-called pressure resulting from the bound rate which did not prove to be prohibited on the poultry industry.

Now, by the time the Government had reached that position, the poultry industry was on its way down and we saw the closure of the plant in Greenidges, St. Lucy and we saw the closure of other outlets across Barbados, to the extent now that we really only have one poultry plant in Barbados. I mean we really only have one and it is because of a \$3 million investment that was made last year to increase what they called, the production of birds, from \$13 000 per day to a capacity of \$28 000 per day and this is the Chickmont Foods Limited that now has that capacity.

Let me explain. When I say there is only one, I am looking ahead. I am saying that if you have two or three, over time they will have to merge and do something in order to survive the future. I am not interested in the actual numbers, I am looking at the overall impact on the industry. The reality is that prior to that we had approximately 500 contract growers in Barbados. These are the small fellows who Robert's Manufacturing Company Limited would give chicks to. They would provide the feed, the fellows would raise them and then they would go back into the system.

In fact, over the last year or so, we have lost half of the 500 contract growers that we had in Barbados and this is because of the pressure that has been brought to bear on the poultry industry over the last two to three years. So that while it is not a question of pointing fingers and looking to blame I am suggesting that if the Government had taken this whole issue of the bound rate more seriously and be more concerned with the impact of trade liberalisation at an earlier stage, that it would not have waited until the year 2000 to introduce the bound rates which were there lying in somebody's Ministry for the last five to six years. So that uncertainty as whether to implement or not to implement, not giving the industry a fair understanding of the environment which would confront them, has dealt them a fairly difficult blow.

Could you look at the alternative situation in which those rates could have been introduced as early as 1995/1996, giving the industry an earlier period within which to make the adjustment? Also, giving the industry the understanding that this is the future environment, perhaps

Chickmont Foods Limited or Super Poultry Farms, whichever it is, it does not matter, would have made that investment earlier in order to deal with the pending competition.

I am saying that the way in which WTO is working, by the year 2004, we will have to see even more pressure on the various sectors in agriculture, whether it is livestock, whether it is in the cotton industry, but overall, the agricultural sector is going to face a fairly harsh future. I am still suggesting that if a sector could make that kind of investment now, we can imagine what could have happened if they had made the investment four or five years earlier, in order to cope and deal and to make the adjustment to the competition which has confronted, particularly, the poultry industry.

In fact, outside of the manufacturing sector, the poultry industry in Barbados is the best example of the negative impact of trade liberalisation on a sector in Barbados. I do not get caught up with details and names, I am concerned about analysing the industry because I do not care who survives. I do not care if John Brown survives, if Peter Smith survives, if he is black, if he is white, it does not matter to me. I am interested in the overall industry or the sector but I do not get and micro-manage or be concerned with who... because I have said in this Chamber already that a dollar has no class, colour or creed, and when it gets in the hand of individuals, individuals act accordingly. So it does not matter and I do not get trapped with racial tensions and issues in this country because I am not interested in them – full stop.

4.45 p.m.

My analysis of the poultry industry does not have to do with whether or not I am calling the right name, Chickmont or Super Chicks. I am not interested in that. I am saying that we took five years to introduce the bound rate and I am saying that as a result of that when it was introduced it was proven to be inadequate.

I am saying that the response by Government was just to allow the Barbados Agricultural Management Company Limited to become the sole importer which is provided for under the World Trade Organisation rulings. If you are suffering even after the implementation or the introduction of a rate that proves not to be prohibited, you are allowed to establish a public sector agency that could become the sole importer. There is nothing wrong with that. But that is just a delayed tactic. The future would not be about a permanent public sector agency doing that kind of work. That is not what the future is about, and we need to start looking ahead and dealing with the future.

There is no doubt that we can continue though to have a poultry industry that can survive on the basis of the product itself. Everyone likes fresh meat. Everyone likes the fact that you can control the sanitary level under which it is produced.

So there are certain local factors that would cause Barbadians to continue to be competitive within the poultry industry but what happens is that Government needs to play the facilitating role and I am not sure that Government has taken this new environment seriously enough.

I have written about it *ad nauseam* that perhaps what we have done is that we have not been sure how to respond to globalisation and free trade and how to tell the public what are the implications of this new environment because we have been running away from the reality of globalisation. That is similar to what we are seeking to do now in terms of trying to restrict or stop K-Mart from coming here but allowing in PriceSmart.

Now, that cannot work because we know under CARICOM Protocol II that franchises are allowed entry within CARICOM and they are even permitted more so under the World Trade Organisation rulings and, therefore, they cannot be prevented. So what I am saying to you is that we should not discuss PriceSmart and K-Mart but let us understand that the new environment is one in which we have to compete and we have to compete at that global level. So it is not a question of whether or not we are going to restrict one as opposed to the other. It needs to be understood among the public that there is not much we can do.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Yes, you can present that because that is your politics. To say, listen, hey, instead of allowing this market to be flooded we are going to set up a committee and that committee is going to look after whether or not we can give proper advice to the Prime Minister who ultimately has the final say. That is good politics because it appears as if you are saying, hey, you know I am governor, so I am here to control so that nobody comes in from outside and destroy your means. That is good but you know all along that there is not much we can do to prevent the entry under the same Protocols in CARICOM and under the World Trade Organisation that you have signed. That is first class politics...

Certain remarks made by Senator Mascoll were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. President.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Let me then say that what I would have loved to see and this would be the first time that I will be saying it is what has been, in fact, the level of revenue derived from the bound rate. It would be interesting to note the level of revenue because it can say lots of other things about the competition from external sources but again we are not given that kind of information on the Other Side.

If you seek to get what really is the level of the Value Added Tax on food in Barbados you do not get that. Nobody gives you that information. What was said when the Value Added Tax was implemented was that to give a zero-rating on all foods in Barbados it would have cost the Government \$35 million at the time. Now, that was a remarkable figure to put in the public domain. That was said by the Prime Minister in the 1997 Value Added Tax debate. Now, if you could believe that the collection on Value Added Tax on food could only be \$35 million in Barbados then you could believe anything because food in itself constitutes, according to the retail price index, almost 40 per cent of the total consumption of the average Barbadian household and that is the reason why food could not be zero-rated in the first place because it represented too large a chunk of the overall expenditure of the average Barbadian. Therefore, if it was zero-rated, could you imagine what the rate would be? For the Prime Minister to say that it would have cost him \$35 million was a remarkable twist of figures. I tried my best in the debate but it was useless because who cares, who believes, it does not matter because you can get away with whatever you want to get away with once you are large and in charge.

Now, Mr. President, the major value of sugar to Barbados is to keep the environment going so that you can keep the top soil. That is why it is unfortunate to hear again when the so-called GDP growth occurred in the first quarter that it was led by sugar – it was said that the GDP growth was led by sugar and tourism – knowing fully well that sugar output this year would have been much lower than it was last year and sugar would continue to have difficulty.

It is known within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development that the time for sugar is coming. What can you replace it with? We are not so sure what you can replace it with. It has environmental value but you cannot continue to be involved in an area of economic activity or financial activity where the cost of production far exceeds the revenue that you derive from it and then you have to make a decision whether or not you are willing to subsidize it and at what cost should you subsidize it. So sugar is close to dying.

Non-sugar agriculture has hope or had hope mainly in livestock. I am not so sure about the production of cotton, carrots and these other things. I suspect what we should be encouraging is to ask people to use the lands around them to grow their own vegetables and things and put some marigolds or 'Stinking Missy' in between them to keep the bugs away from the cabbage in particular.

I have that knowledge. I have been planting vegetables in recent times now that I changed my status. I am involved in vegetable production on a very small scale.

So that those kinds of things you can promote but to expect that we can compete effectively in carrots or beets production when you are going to allow the market to be opened is really a false expectation.

Now, in the area of fisheries even the ice boats seem to be suffering. The ice boats seem to be quitting on us because only earlier this week one decided that it may well take its final sink in the Careenage. Again, I do not know how much we can expect out of fisheries or fishing. We need a major thrust in fishing. When the nine Protocols were assigned to the CARICOM arrangement only last year, there should have been a protocol on fishing and not just trade and services. One wonders what really goes through the head of members in CARICOM, because here is a resource like the sea and the only thing that links CARICOM is the sea. So members sit down for hours, weeks, months and you sign all kinds of protocols, and such a vital area as the sea is never given consideration.

4.55 p.m.

We had no right, Mr. President, being involved in any discussion with Trinidad on a bilateral basis about fishing. That should be something which should be resolved within CARICOM because we come together and seek to exploit and explore the marine resources around the Caribbean. The resources are rich and plentiful and we need to have the investment up front to be able to do so. We cannot do that as separate entities within CARICOM. Why should Japanese come all down here to the Caribbean to fish when they can possibly go and fish off the Caribbean Sea or Atlantic? There is also a mass of sea between here and Africa. We are seeing that we cannot even put together a protocol which will allow us to utilize the marine resources within CARICOM, but we talk about trade and establishing business and other things. That was a major shortcoming of the CARICOM Agreement.

Sir, unless we increase our capacity to fish, there is not much we can do even in that area although, at the small micro-level, I am aware that the fishermen do very well. They do make money at that level but somehow we have not been able to translate that ability to make a living out of fishing from an industry that we can really boast about, and it is there sitting and waiting to be exploited. I do not know what we are doing.

Horticulture – Certainly, this is where Barbados should put our emphasis and Barbados has not been doing this because there is high value added in this area. Again, we have not really zeroed in on how we have got to utilize this area of economic activity and exploit it. Whatever this Committee does, it is not going to be in a position where it will be managing the financial resource to get a rate of return

to satisfy whoever. This Committee is providing a financial service to an industry that is struggling amidst all of the competition that will come within CARICOM itself and outside of CARICOM.

Already we have been importing broccoli and lettuce from Jamaica and Trinidad. We are here pretending while the business people are planning and manoeuvring and doing all kinds of things to facilitate what has to be done in this new environment. It is similar to what is happening at the business level where companies are setting up their accounting and managerial departments in Trinidad. They are doing it and we are pretending that it is not happening. By the time we recognize the reality, we will be too far gone. So that is what is happening.

Business people make decisions according to the dollar value. They do not make any decisions to please any government. Money is the name of the game and that is why I say money has no colour. It may have a location at a particular point in time. That is why around election time you may push money somewhere in order to help you out as a businessman.

Sir, when you are making decisions about investment, you concern yourself with a proper rate of return. This may be related or similar to what has happened in the car industry. A blind man, and this is a blind man figuratively, could have seen that Internet would have allowed competition within the car industry. When you see the people building the Galaxy building and other big places and trying to prevent the small man from bringing cars in from the Internet and trying to get the Government to do all kinds of things, they are the ones to blame and not the Government. It was easy to see that sooner rather than later the use of the Internet would permit one to go and bring in a nice Mazda 929 BDS\$49 000 and pay \$18 000 in tax, reconditioned, you better believe it. I do not need any reconditioned car. I do not have to worry about that.

Sir, the businessmen could have anticipated part of the difficulties they are now experiencing. Again, you see what is happening. BS&T is now trying to buy up everything they see. They are trying to buy here. They are trying to buy there, but it is not really related to any major interest or rate of return on investment. I am now calling it the economics of blockage.

Just check the fast food places. There is one here and there is one there. If you can stop your competitor from establishing one, then you are okay because you can make a loss here and recover there. So that is business and it is the economics of blockage which is a new concept, so you block your competitor. BS&T now is engaging in the economics of blockage. You block your competitor and you buy out Modern Living.

Unfortunately, Sir, within the agricultural sector, there cannot be any blockage because land space is what you require still until they have greater technology to grow vegetables and the like. This sector remains special and very vulnerable and has to be in many ways protected, but there is only so far you can go in protecting agriculture. It is time enough that we accept that we will never be the food basket of the Caribbean. What we should do in fact, therefore, is to shift and utilize the resources consistent with what we have in the Development Plan. Again, we are forgetting about the Development Plan that was banded about only two or three years ago. That is why I wonder who is managing Barbados because all of a sudden we are hearing about all kinds of things being done.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Mascoll, you are out of time. Please conclude.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Out of time, Sir? Anyway, I can end on that.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, I only have a minor intervention to make on this issue just because I would like to do my bit to reassure those Members who are concerned and have shown some anxiety regarding the functions of the Management Committee. Like Senator Collymore said, it represents a different approach because again, in the history of Barbados, agriculture is having to make an adjustment. This is not the first time that agriculture has had to adjust to changing international circumstances. If I recall much of my economic history of the Caribbean, in the past Barbados would have grown such crops as tobacco, arrowroot and various other things. Because of changes in economic circumstances in the world, it shifted to sugar and sugar has sustained for a long time.
5.05 p.m.

Therefore, I think we have to see this as part and parcel of another adjustment and, because of the special circumstances, because a lot of these circumstances are being impelled by the WTO and trade liberalization and those kinds of measures that the traditional approach cannot be undertaken. Therefore, the whole setup of this Fund is a non-traditional way of coping in order to provide the kind of support that agriculture will need in order to re-finance it, re-adjust it and resuscitate it.

Senator Mascoll spoke about the blue ribbon membership of the Securities Exchange Commission and I would like to think that as regards the composition of the Committee, given the skills that the membership will bring to the evaluation of the projects under this Fund, that it represents also in a way if not blue-ribbon at least a well qualified cadre of people who will help to manage this

measure. As Senator Barker said, it is going to be peopled by persons who are familiar with and have expertise in agriculture. For example, there will be a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Barbados Agricultural Management Company, the Sugar Growers and Factories, the Sea Island Cotton Project, the Barbados National Union of Fisherfolk Organisation better known as BARNUFO, the Enterprise Growth Fund itself and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.

Each representative is being chosen on the basis of his or her experience in evaluation of projects and venture proposals and therefore they together will represent the collective will and wisdom that will be able to screen carefully and recommend each proposal on its own merit. Therefore, I want to assure members that this is not being done willy-nilly. The only reason it has not been done in the traditional manner is because we are into non-traditional times and therefore we have to look at novel and different ways of handling the situation. I think it is also important to understand that EGF is not here to rescue failing enterprises. It is not going to be a slush fund into which people can dip.

We remember that in the past support was given to persons in a way that tended to subsidize and give grants which created an atmosphere of dependency. This is not supposed to be so. Each fund is going to be evaluated on its own financial viability and sustainability and will be assessed in regard to its immediate and future impact on the agricultural production in a very positive way. Therefore, I think that once this is understood, the composition and the role of the Committee in this new setup will better be appreciated.

In a way, the Enterprise Growth Fund is going to be playing a major role in helping us to reposition agriculture in response to all that is happening in the world and that really is its major role. That is why the funding will come from the very same forces that have brought about its creation, excess of the bound rates. That is the kind of broad context in which it will operate and therefore we, in Government, feel that this is a timely measure and a well-thought out measure which should lead to the resuscitation of the agricultural sector, not just sugar but agriculture in its broadest context. We approach it in a holistic comprehensive manner and we think that this will help to do the job.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I beg that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD, the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, SENATOR THE HON. DAME PATRICIA SYMMONDS in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 11 inclusive were called and passed.

The Schedule to the Bill was called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD, Madam CHAIRMAN reported to HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Agricultural Development Fund Act, 2001. 5.15 p.m.

SPEECH ON THE ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I move that this Honourable Senate do now adjourn *sine die*.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to speak on the motion for the adjournment of the Senate. Earlier today, Mr. President, you gave your judgement which I dare not question on a Resolution which was brought before this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. President, whereas I accept your ruling I must nonetheless state my concerns. I believe that the public of Barbados still remains concerned about the state of our major health facility in this country.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, I hate to interrupt you. Perhaps I should just set the guidelines. You are speaking on the Adjournment which is really the Resolution before us so I will restrict your time to fifteen minutes.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: I recall in the 1994 Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party they pledged to Barbadians to ensure safety in the workplace.

Government has always boasted that their Manifesto was a social contract. I therefore, find it difficult to understand how on one hand they see their Manifesto as a social contract but here we have an opportunity for them to prove to the people of this country that they are sincere with

respect to safety in the workplace but are refusing to debate a matter which is obviously of great concern to health care workers and to people of this country.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, the matter of refusing to debate, I am not quite sure exactly what you are saying. I just wish to be sure you are not reflecting on the Chair in terms of any decision made in this Chamber.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: My apology, Mr. President. I withdraw that comment.

Sir, I am disappointed that we do not have the opportunity to discuss such an important issue in this August Chamber to highlight the problems which exist at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, I have already ruled on that matter and I will not entertain any discussion on that ruling.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, it seems as though there is nothing that I can say which will deal with the matter which sought to introduce this Resolution to this Chamber. Suffice it to say, I am sure that your views are not reflected in any of the Asides that I am hearing but I would like to say successive Governments of this country have always recognised that safety in the workplace is of great importance and I hope at the appropriate time we will get the opportunity to discuss a Resolution which would call on the Minister of Housing to outline to this Honourable Chamber and all Barbadians what plans he has for remedying the problems of security at our major health institution and that the Minister will find it possible to meet with the health care workers of this country to discuss what grievances and concerns they may have and that some action will be taken to address these grievances.

I also hope that at some future time we will be able to discuss the possibility of the Minister taking the necessary steps to make sure that the workers at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital are able to work in a safe environment and that the confidence of the people of Barbados could be restored in this institution.

Sir, I accept your ruling on the matter but I sincerely hope that at some later time we will have an opportunity to discuss this very important issue.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I will permit a response to that since the question of administrative responsibility of a Minister of the Crown has been raised. I will give the Minister fifteen minutes to respond.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, the recent incident that took place at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was one that was an internal matter and

happened within the precincts of the treatment area of the hospital. Therefore, it is something that took place that could not be prevented by any external security system whatsoever. It is the only incident that I know of this year at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

We have instituted an investigation into this matter. I think it has been blown significantly out of proportion. Unfortunately, there have been calls for the introduction of a metal detection system to prevent reoccurrences of incidents like this. No metal detection system, no security screen or any amount of fencing could have prevented this incident. I do not want to expand on the precise incident that took place because it is a matter of patient confidentiality which we must observe and it is also under investigation by the management of the institution.

I have also had dealings with the representatives of the workers of the hospital from time to time and this Government has had numerous interactions with the worker's representatives regarding safety and health in the workplace throughout many Ministries and not just the Ministry of Health. I want again to remind the Honourable Member that no system is foolproof and that nothing is perfect. I think that making wild statements about this issue....

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is saying that there were wild statements made. I think that should be withdrawn.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Member please, withdraw the remark.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I withdraw the remark. Mr. President, on a wider scale, we are in the design phases of improving the physical structures of the hospital which include a very

enhanced security system for the public and staff alike. The Honourable Senator will see this over the next couple of months and it will be evident over the next couple of months.

I thank you.
5.25 p.m.

QUESTIONS

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD:

To ask the Leader of the Senate:

1. (a) Will the Minister state whether Government would institute measures to remedy the many accounting errors and financial reporting deficiencies highlighted in the Auditor General's Report for the financial year 2000?
- (b) Will the Minister also state what will be done to enforce the compliance with the Financial Administration and Audit Act in the light of the Auditor General's Report for the financial year 2000?

Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I now move that this sitting be adjourned *sine die*.

The question that the Senate do now adjourn sine die was put to the Senate and agreed to, and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Sitting accordingly.

5.30 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, June 13, 2001, at 11.20 a.m.

MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY
THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Mr. PRESIDENT 1

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC
IMPORTANCE

Mr. PRESIDENT 2

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 2 – ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT)
BILL, 2001 2

Senator the Hon. P. C. Goddard, 2, 19; Senator the Rev. L. W. B. Rock, 3; Senator Miss J. C. Odle, 4, 5; Senator LeR. H. McClean, 6, 8; Senator C. K. Laurie, 9; Senator Mrs. J. P. Alleyne, 9; His Honour Senator C. L. Bolden, 10, 11; Senator Miss C. Y. Forde, 14; Senator the Hon. G. S. H. Murray, 16; Senator G. E. N. Brome, 19.

ORDER NO. 3 – AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FUND BILL, 2001 20

Senator the Hon. P. C. Goddard, 20, 36; Senator LeR. H. McClean, 22, 24; Senator C. K. Laurie, 26; Senator the Hon. Dame Patricia Symmonds,

27; Senator B. R. Collymore, 28; Senator T. E. Barker, 29; Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard, 31; Senator C. A. Mascoll, 32, 34; Senator the Hon. G. S. H. Murray, 36.

SPEECH ON THE ADJOURNMENT

Senator the Hon. P. C. Goddard, 37; Senator LeR. H. McClean, 37; Mr. President, 37.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

Senator Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD 38

SUSPENSION 14

ADJOURNMENT (reverted) 38

Senator the Hon. P. C. Goddard, 38.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ALLEYNE, Senator Mrs. J. P.
BARKER, Senator T. E.
BOLDEN, His Honour Senator C. L.
BROME, Senator G. E. N.
COLLYMORE, Senator B. R.
FORDE, Senator Miss C. Y.
GODDARD, Senator Sir John Stanley
GODDARD, Senator the Hon. P. C.
GOLLOP, His Honour Senator Sir Fred
LAURIE, Senator C. K.
MASCOLL, Senator C. A.
McCLEAN, Senator LeR. H.
MURRAY, Senator the Hon. G. S. H.
ODLE, Senator Miss J. C.
ROCK, Senator Rev. L. W. B.
SYMMONDS, Senator the Hon. Dame Patricia