

THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

THE SENATE

Wednesday, April 5, 2006

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, April 5, 2006, at 11.15 a.m.

PRESENT

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

Her Honour Senator Dame Patricia SYMMONDS, D.B.E., G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.) (P.G.C.E.), J.P. (Deputy President)

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH, G.C.M., J.P. B.A. (Econ. & Hist.), Dip. Pub. Admin., M.Sc., (Financial Studies) (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Leader of the Senate))

Senator Sir John Stanley GODDARD, K.A., G.C.M., B.Com., F.C.A. LL.D., (Hons.) (U.W.I.)

Senator the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON, S.C.M., B.A. (Spec. Hons.), M.A., LL.M. (Hons.) (U.W.I.), F.L.A. (Gt. Brit.), L.E.C.

Senator R. W. GRANT, B.A. (Econ.), G.Dip., M.A., J.P. (Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport)

Senator the Hon. Miss L. V. EASTMOND, LL.B. (Hons.), LL.M. (Minister of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development)

Senator I. St. C. LINTON

Senator G. P. B. NICHOLLS, B.Sc. (Hons.), LL.B. (Hons.)

Senator Miss P. E. PARRIS, J.P.

Senator G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL

Senator Miss S. C. V. HUSBANDS, B.A. (Hons.)

Senator F. J. STUART, B.A., LL.M.

Senator the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLow, G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.) (Dunelm)

Senator Dr. F. L. CHANDLER, B.Sc. (Hons.), Ph.D.

Senator Sir Allan FIELDS, K.C.M.G.

Senator A. A. BYNOE

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is in Session.

Excuses – Senator Barker, Senator Lowe and Senator Trotman.

ORDER NO. 3 – TRADE ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY AND THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA BILL, 2006

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, we have before us four trade agreements that I would respectfully suggest to Members of the Senate that we should deal with them in one debate even though we have called them as separate Bills. It is perhaps ironic that we are starting with the one dealing with Colombia. I say that because, at this present moment, the Foreign Minister and Minister responsible for Foreign Trade from Colombia is in Barbados and discussions are taking place at the Sandy Lane Hotel. Sir, I was expected to be present but, unfortunately, I cannot be there and here at the same time.

The discussion, which is taking place is with the objective of trying to make sure that the opportunities which this agreement provides for producers in both countries are grasped and that there is in place a mechanism for ensuring that the two countries, Barbados and Colombia, can benefit from the arrangement.

Mr. President, the issue of trade policy is very important and critical to all countries but particularly to

countries such as Barbados. Sir, Barbados is a small open economy, the openness of the economy can be measured by taking the total trade, that is, export of goods and services and imports as a percentage of the Growth Domestic Product and then you get the extent to which the economy is dependent on trade. You will discover when you take that measurement that it is 100 per cent if not more than that so Barbados is totally an open economy. Sir, that has a number of implications for the management of this economy. It means that we must always be vigilant, ensuring that we develop sound trade policies, and at all times manage our affairs well.

11.20 a.m.

Mr. President, the degree of openness means that the country is vulnerable to external shocks. When there are changes in policies, in the larger countries with whom we trade, and on whom we depend for a substantial amount of our imports, that has implications for our domestic situation. When there is a downturn in the demand for world tourism, that has serious implications for us.

Mr. President, it would, therefore, be not a surprise when after the September 11, 2001, attacks we felt the reverberation from that event in our tourism industry and other areas, when for a few days, at least, we were not able to have access to some of the supplies, which we normally expect from the United States of America. That is a problem with vulnerability, resulting from openness. In many respects, what happens in our major trading partners' domain, has serious implications for us.

Mr. President, it means that in that kind of context, we have to pay special attention, at all times to our exports. Not only will these exports, create opportunities by way of income through jobs for our people, but they will help us to earn foreign exchange, that is needed to pay for the substantial amount of imports we depend on as well. We must always make sure that any trade regime we pursue, is one which will facilitate the development of our export industry, while at the same time providing some measure of comfort for our domestic producers.

Sir, when you listen to the proponents of trade liberalisation, that is sweeping the world, you will hear them speak about the benefits of liberalisation and they would say that is the salvation for everyone. They speak about maximisation of welfare gains without reference to people, that is when they are developing the kind of programmes that they want us to follow. Yet, when they have to deal with their own situations, they find reasons to provide huge and enormous subsidies, to sustain their inefficient operations, while at the same time telling us to open up, that is good for us. They say your people will have access to cheaper goods, which we can provide cheaper than you can provide them because we have the wherewithal to do so, we have the resources, we can benefit from scales of economy and,

therefore, the welfare gains will be maximised if we specialise in these things, while you specialise in importing from us these cheaper goods, as if people who do not have income can pay for the goods even if there are cheap. Mr. President, they are unmindful of that aspect, when they proposed that we should follow their strategies.

Sir, in fact, I have a recent case in relation to sugar. They are some persons within the local office of the European Union, who openly repeatedly expressed the view, that Barbados should stop growing sugar cane and import sugar and so on from other countries. Every day, because of that bias, they seek to put in our way obstacles, relative to the adaptation strategy which we have developed.

Sir, I saw in a newspaper a statement, made by a gentleman from the European Union, indicating that Barbados is likely to lose out on \$4 million, if it does not meet the deadline, which is the end of this month. We are going to meet the deadline, in spite of the obstacles which are put in our way, because of the feeling that we should accept a funeral grant and then bury the industry. Our position is, we do not want any funeral grant, because we have nothing to bury.

Sir, I would just wish to advise that gentleman, and others like him, to look at Italy and France, which he knows well, two glaring examples of inefficient agricultural production and manufacturing operations. They are not burying anything in Italy or France, inefficient though they may be, they are propping them up by subsidies. They are not burying their textile industries. In fact, China is able now, to produce all the textiles demanded in Europe. In fact, the demand is so huge for them, that they have had to call China and threatened her, to restrict her exports to their country. That is how they deal with it. They are not closing their operations, because they believe that they need to ensure, that their people continue to earn income and to live a decent life, but they would tell us that we must take a funeral grant, and bury the industry rather than try to transform it.

Sir, as I said, we are going to meet the deadline with the adaptation strategy, but I need to say something for the benefit of the public, since the members of the public are not aware of the discussions. I do not conduct discussions in the newspaper or on the radio, but I need to respond to statements people make.

Mr. President, Barbados, as an African, Caribbean and Pacific country, was requested, like all African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, to provide and submit to the European Union an adaptation strategy document. We proceeded to do so, by engaging consultants to develop the document for us. When we were well on the way with that,

we then heard that they wanted a strategy document that looked at the entire economy, not only agriculture. That is not what was said up front. However, we pressed on with what we were doing. We were then told by the European Union office here that they must hire the consultants, not us. We hired the consultants and paid them. We did not wait for them to pay them, but they said that they should have hired them. We had to let them know that the document is ours. It is our strategy document, not theirs, so, even if they paid the consultants we had to make sure that what is in the document is what we are satisfied with, so we continued with our work.

Mr. President, they then said that they must hire the ones to put in the financial numbers, that we should not put in the numbers. They said we should do the broad framework and they would hire the ones for the financial numbers. They hired them. They were here for the last four weeks and have not done anything yet. On the first day they came to see me, and since then, every day, they have indicated that each day, their instructions are changed by the European Union's office, so they do not know what to do. Mr. President, after four weeks, they have not done anything.
11.30 a.m.

The point though is that in spite of all that, we are going to meet the deadline. But, as I said elsewhere, with or without the EU support, we are proceeding. We are not interested in accepting any funeral grant. We do not have anything to bury. We have a country to run, we have to provide opportunities for our people and we intend to do that, in the same way that other countries do that, so that is a different issue.

Mr. President, the proponents of liberalisation tell you this is the solution to all of your problems. We have made it clear in the WTO, where the negotiations are taking place at an international level, that we are all for free trade, but it must be free trade that is aligned with fair trade. There is a big difference between free trade that is one-sided and free trade that is fair. The playing field is not level, as you know, and the only way that the trade can be fair trade, is if the playing field is level. This means, that peculiar circumstances of countries must be taken into account in the final picture.

I always remember when I first went to Geneva, and I was making the rounds, calling on different Ambassadors who were there before me, and indicating what we expected to obtain by being in Geneva, when I met with the then Ambassador of the EU, a few days after they had announced the EBA, everything but arms initiatives for the LDCs, he asked me this question. Are you one of those who opposed the EBA initiative? I said to him, no, certainly not, that what I am opposed to is that you are taking from the poor to help

the poor, instead of creating additional opportunities for them, so that they could benefit while we continue to benefit. But you are taking from us to provide opportunities for them, and that is what I am opposed to.

He said to me, what he thought would have been comforting. "Don't worry, it would take them decades before they can take advantage of these opportunities. They have too many supply constraints, so they cannot produce."

While he thought that was comforting news for me, it left me very unsettled and it has remained with me up to this day. I realised that here was a group of countries announcing to the world at large that it was saving the least developed countries, by providing market access to them, knowing full well that they would not be able, as he said to me, for decades, to produce to take advantage of the market access that was created on paper, because they did not have the supply capacity. Now, that is the problem that developing countries have to deal with.

As you know, Mr. President, coming out of the Uruguay Round settlement, was a number of issues which the developing countries raised and those issues are still with us before the WTO, even today. They have never been resolved. They were referred to in literature coming out of the WTO, as the implementation issues. They are still before us, 100-plus cases. When I was there and we were preparing to go to Doha, to have discussions, which the then Director General nicknamed the "Doha Development Round". I say nicknamed because of the manner in which he got that name, we were locked in some serious discussions, one afternoon, making no progress at all because we were rejecting some of the proposals put by the developed countries, most strenuously. The Director General then said, "Well, let us call this a development round." Everybody then started to say, "the DDR, the Doha Development Round." We kept asking, Where was the development in it? Up to this day, you have not seen the development in it. You have words in the document talking about the development concerns of the small developing countries and other developing countries should be taken into account, but the issue is to get beyond the words.

Sir, the implementation issues were taken to Doha and were put on the table, as issues that had to be resolved before the developing countries committed themselves further. They were put into three categories. The ones that the developed countries felt could be dealt with now, the ones that they felt needed some further discussion but that they could find solutions for quite easily, and the ones that they considered more difficult. I must tell you that today 2006, no progress has been made in any category. They are still on the table.

What occurred though at Doha was that a group of us, who were putting forward a special case on behalf of small vulnerable economies such as ours, were able to get enshrined in the document, reference to the establishment of a work programme for small economies. This was reiterated recently, I think, at Hong Kong but, up to now, nothing concrete has been accepted, because, while these countries are prepared to talk about free trade, and while these countries, especially a group, such as the EU, when dealing among themselves, know how to respond to the problems of the smaller economies within that arrangement, when it comes to countries like ours, they have difficulty understanding what we mean.

Now, within the EU arrangement, a country like Ireland that is far better endowed than Barbados, as far as natural resources are concerned, and has a per capita income well ahead of Barbados, is regarded as a small country, and has access to special funds within the EU. Then, you would find people in that arrangement telling us in Barbados that they do not know what we mean when we speak about a small, vulnerable country.

In fact, on one occasion when I spoke to a gentleman from the EU, he said that he had just received a lecture in development economics, and he did not know the purpose of it because, as far as he was concerned, he said that Iceland was a small country, and Brussels.

Fortunately, the Internet was available to us as well. I had done my research on Iceland and I was able to show him that even when I took out the glaciers in Iceland, the size of Iceland was several times that of Barbados, even when I added the gullies in Barbados, I could not get beyond 166 square miles. I had then to point out to him, the difference in the structure of the economy, including particularly, the one in Brussels. He was speaking about Belgium.

I had to show him the difference in the structure of the economy because I said to him, if you take Belgium, looking at it from the point of view of tourism, you will notice that there is a difference between what obtains there and what obtains in Barbados. The European Union holds a number of meetings, conferences and seminars throughout the year in different countries, which provide an opportunity for people to travel from one country to another and to spend money and so on. Sir, that is a form of tourism that we do not have access to on that scale to start with.
11.40 a.m.

Mr. President, I then had to show him other things. Sir, in their setting, they know that Ireland is small and that it has access to funding, but they tell us other things. Sir, in spite of the fact that we have been able to get included in the documents, coming out of Hong Kong and Doha, words to deal with the special problems of small vulnerable

economies, the progress in terms of getting concrete matters on the table has been slow.

Mr. President, there are other issues. With respect to the discussions in agriculture, I remember well that when India put on the table the issue of special products, a number of countries, including Barbados, joined with them to support that proposal stating that the developing countries should be able to identify a number of special products which would be excluded from the normal reduction modality. Sir, the developed countries knocked it repeatedly for a prolonged period of time until one day I heard one of them saying that they had some sensitive products which they felt needed some protection.

Mr. President, all along, they did not know what we were talking about when we were saying that we were able to identify a number of special products which would be excluded. Now they suddenly came up with the idea that they should have a list of sensitive products. Mr. President, unlike them, we did not knock it. We said that they can have their sensitive products as long as we have our special products and also have access to the basket which deals with sensitive products as well.

Mr. President, at Hong Kong, it was acknowledged that the developing countries would now have the right to identify a number of special products which would be exempt from the normal reduction modalities. Those modalities are still being worked out but the idea is that that list, however large or small it is, would not be subject to the reduction that the others would be subject to. It was also agreed that the sensitive products, though benefitting from some relief, would still be subject to some reduction and would not have the same benefit as the special products.

Mr. President, as you know, Barbados is the only Caribbean country and one of the few developing countries that had access to the Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSG) coming out of the arrangements at Uruguay, which allowed it to put in place additional tariffs whenever there were import surges that affected the sensitive and special products which we have.

Mr. President, that mechanism is coming to an end, and what is being suggested now is a special safeguard mechanism. We are supporting that proposal on the basis that we would not accept any outcome that is less favourable than the one that we now enjoy under the Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSG). Mr. President, the SSG did not provide the measure of protection which we required when it had to deal with the huge subsidies that were provided by our developed countries partners, but it did provide some measure of support.

Mr. President, we are hopeful that the Special Safeguard Machinery (SSM) would be an improvement on the SSG and that in due course we would be able to benefit from that because we would not give up the SSG for a SSM that is less favourable, we would have to fight to retain that.

I am mentioning these developments, Mr. President, because I want to explain what is the objective of the Government in seeking to put in place bilateral or regional trade agreements, such as the ones we have before us and the ones we are contemplating for the future. Mr. President, the lead is taken from what happens in the World Trade Organisation. In fact, the Free Trade Area of the Americas and the Economic Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the ACP countries and others are all expected to be World Trade Organisation plus, which means that the level of ambition is expected to be higher in those agreements than in the World Trade Organisation. In other words, countries would seek through those other arrangements to get greater benefits than they get in the World Trade Organisation.

Mr. President, I believe that is one of the reasons the Free Trade Area of the Americas has stalled. I feel that countries like Brazil and others who have raised objections to the number of proposals in agriculture in the Free Trade Area of the Americas, are waiting until those issues are settled in the World Trade Organisation so that they know exactly what they are getting there before they commit themselves to things outside of the international regime.

Mr. President, coming out of Hong Kong are a number of decisions that we in Barbados need to take into our thinking so that we understand the challenges we have to deal with. It was decided that all trade distorting domestic support would be reduced in three bands. The countries with the highest level of support would be in the top band, and it would be expected that they would be cut the hardest. Countries with support lower than that would be in the second band, and then the developing countries would be in the third band because they would be the ones that would expect to get better treatment in terms of the extent of the reduction. That is what is going to happen.

Mr. President, you would know that Barbados was never in the top band. We never had the resources to provide any new support. Sir, even if we did had resources, the small amount of trade that we do in terms of exports is so insignificant that we could not distort anything in the world setting. Our share of trade taken in that context, unless it has changed since I left Geneva, when I was there, used to be 0.001, if I excluded services, and when I included services it would move from 0.001 to 0.003. Mr. President, that was considered so insignificant that whenever we were

discussing share of trade, Barbados was shown on the table with all zeros.

11.50 a.m.

Therefore, even if we had the resources to provide used subsidies to our manufacturers and farmers, with that percentage of trade, we could not have distorted any world trading.

Mr. President, the very people who are preaching deliberalisation, are the very people who are distorting it but the agreement was that we would expect changes to be made, on the basis of these categories and the application of the appropriate formula to the categories, to bring about the reduction. There was also an issue between the European Union and the United States of America, where they have concluded that by 2013, they would eliminate all export subsidies. We now have to wait until then, to see if that would happen.

Mr. President, this is where it gets closer to home. They said that they had to develop disciplines for state trading enterprises, that were involved in exports. That came about because whenever Australia spoke about the used subsidies the European Union provided, especially in the area of sugar, the European Union would point to the manner in which their state trading enterprises operated, in order to facilitate export. Sir, that is how that got here but we have to watch it and make sure that the disciplines that are developed, are not such that would affect us, as far as our state trading enterprise is concerned, as it operates differently. Sir, we would have to make our case on that.

Mr. President, they raised the issue of disciplines, to deal with export credits, and this is where it comes home. Export credits guarantee our insurance programmes. As you know, we have a number of programmes, which are managed by the Central Bank of Barbados, which, in some cases, facilitate exports by our manufacturers and in others, facilitate exports by other producers. They are now talking about developing disciplines that would deal with those, so we now have to make sure that we keep abreast in the discussions, so that any disciplines, which would come out of those discussions, would not damage our situation.

Mr. President, as I said, there is the Special Safeguard Machinery (SSM), which they are working on. Sir, those are the significant issues, in relation to agriculture. We have to remember the most significant is the agreement that the developing countries would now be able to identify a number of special products, which are to be determined. Sir, that is to be discussed but it is significant that they have accepted that proposal.

Mr. President, they then moved onto market access for non-agricultural products. Here too, the objective is

market access, by the Developed Countries, to all markets. Sir, there is a proposal on the table that, at some time, all tariffs should be brought to zero. That is a proposal that we have to watch because that would mean, at some that our revenue from import duties would fall. Therefore, it is a question of how it would be done, not only in terms of a time-frame but also the size of the reduction, within that time frame.

Mr. President, in that chapter, there is provision that would allow the developing countries to identify the areas of interest to them, that are existing in the markets of the developed countries. There is also a provision that would identify a number of tariffs lines, which they would want excluded from the normal reduction modality. Sir, there is some hope in this process and Barbados, working in collaboration with CARICOM countries, would continue to make its position known. We will try, as far as possible, to secure an outcome that would give us some comfort and would allow our producers to be involved.

Mr. President, what is important for us to note is the fact that because of our small size, we are not going to be able to compete with anyone on the basis of scale. Therefore, the question of achieving economies of scale will not arise for us because our operations are too small. In fact, I remember participating in a discussion about a service negotiations and making out a case for special arrangement for our small service providers.

Mr. President, while doing so, I had great difficulty in convincing my colleagues that there was such a problem existing, until I quoted some information to show them what was the annual turnover for our largest construction company. I told them that I was not making a case for that company because in our scheme of things, we call that a large company. Fortunately, the gentleman who was chairing the meeting, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, recognised what I was saying because when I quoted the numbers, he remembered there were what was called small companies of that size and that I was not making a case for them, but that the companies I was speaking for, would be minuscule within the scheme of things.

Mr. President, in the services discussion coming out of Hong Kong, they have accepted that they would pay some attention to the issues raised by small countries. They also indicated they would focus on developmental issues. Sir, the problem would be, in what way would they focus on developmental issues because of the fact that the issue of preference is very much under discussion and the kind of liberalisation that is being promoted does not contemplate preferential arrangement. In fact, even in the Regional Trading Agreements, there is the case of reciprocity, and so the question of preferences is very much being discussed.

Sir, they did agree they would look at aid for trade. They established a committee, of which Barbados is now a member, to come up with recommendations on how that matter should be addressed. Barbados continues to put the case for the Small Vulnerable Economies (SVEs). Barbados is ably assisted by Mauritius and we hope, in due course, that matter would be given some credit.

Mr. President, another issue coming out of Hong Kong relates to trade facilitation, that was one of the four Singapore issues that was raised at the Doha Rounds, which eventually made it through to this stage. There are a number of matters that are now being discussed with the hope of having clarification of the various articles. We will await that outcome. Sir, what I would say is that trade facilitation done in a particular manner, is in the interest of everyone.
12.00 noon

We need to ensure that there are not any provisions in that arrangement that would suit the developed countries while working against us. Their approach to trade facilitation must of necessity be different from ours in some respect but that is a matter that is far from conclusion, so I will not prejudge any outcome.

Mr. President, in addition to the issues being discussed in the WTO, Barbados is engaged in discussion with the European Union on what is now to be reciprocal arrangements. These are to take over under the Contonou Agreement from the LOMÉ arrangements and on that matter I need to say something. I heard someone from the European Union's office some time ago making a statement on the radio that the European Union has done the ACP countries a great favour by paying them a price for sugar that is in excess of the world market price. The person actually calculated the amount of money to show the extent to which the European Union has contributed to the ACP countries and done them this great favour.

Mr. President, familiarity with world history is a wonderful thing and everyday I give thanks that I have some familiarity with it. Sir, I recall that when LOMÉ was brought into effect that the World Market price at that time exceeded the price that the European Union paid the ACP countries – I have the numbers to show the gentleman whenever he wishes to see them – but the ACP countries took the deal on the basis that they were entering into a long-term arrangement which, according to the agreement, had no end.

Mr. President, over time, the developed countries, through various measures, succeeded in depressing commodity prices so that all the developing countries which were producing those commodities like coffee, sugar, bananas and so on, eventually found that the World

Market price was down. Sir, the moment that happened and the preferential price exceeded that, people started counting the favours they were doing for the ACP countries. Certainly, they have forgotten, if they knew, that when the arrangement was started that the World Market price was in excess of the price they paid the ACP countries but it suited them at that time to enter that arrangement. This is the problem which I have with people who up to this day still have the colonial mentality and who believe that in this age that we can settle issues on the basis of that old colonial, plantation mentality.

Mr. President, I want to repeat that Barbados is a small country. We are not going to be able to compete with anybody in the international arena on the basis of scale. Therefore, it means that in order to make our way, we have to deal with issues of productivity, making use of technology and so forth. Sir, unlike what people feel, productivity is not confined to the workers. People feel that whenever you speak about increasing productivity that workers have to be doubled and that they have to fall over each other. They ignore the absence of anything coming from the managers and they do not put on them any responsibility for ensuring that the organisation is so equipped with the technology needed, that the workers are trained and prepared and that they as managers make their input into the whole process because everybody in the organisation has to contribute to productivity. Sir, unless we do that, we are not going to be able to survive in this competitive age.

Mr. President, when you look at the issues related to competitiveness, you ask how a small country like ours without any abundance in resources is going to become competitive. Sir, we have to use the technology, except we train our workers so that all of us involved in the process can make our contribution towards the increase in productivity. Sir, there is no other way to do it for a small developing country like ours. We have better understand that and the sooner we understand that, the better it is for all of us.

Mr. President, the discussion between the European Union and Barbados are to be reciprocal, the outcome of any discussion is to be an agreement that is reciprocal. It is no longer a one-way street where we have preferential access because they are talking about reciprocity. Therefore, it means, that in due course, we will have to identify the opportunities that exists and that we can make much of it.

Sir, it is important because for the longest time, we in this region had access to the Canadian market under the CARIBCAN arrangements and we had the United States of America market under CBI and some under GSP. When you check, you will notice that over the years that very few countries, if any, took advantage of those arrangements. In fact, I remember well, whenever we spoke in Geneva about

the issue to do with bananas, the Australians used to laugh and tell us that we should stop talking because we never used the CARICAN or CBI arrangements to export anything but that we are now quarrelling for preferences about bananas. Sir, it did not measure up but they said these things. The truth is that they had no interest in whether we had access to any preferential arrangements or not because they helped blocked the issue to do with sugar but they were right in saying that we had never used the opportunity.

Mr. President, when I check from time to time on the exports of Barbados under those two arrangements, I was embarrassed because we never used them. The Government made sure that the arrangements were put in place, but our producers never used them. I am raising this point because unless our producers take advantages of the opportunities presented by these four agreements before us, the same thing will happen again.

Mr. President, you know that some of the agreements before us, which I will mention in due course, that some are partial scope, some of them are full trade agreements and that one of them is not reciprocal. The one with Colombia of a partial scope, that is, it is limited to certain areas of activities, so it is not a full trade arrangement but is reciprocal which means that while our people will have opportunities to export into Colombia within that range of items, that theirs will have opportunity to export here as well so that it is not a one-sided arrangement.

Mr. President, the one with a DDR is a full trade agreement and covers everything. There are still some discussions taking place on issues to do with rules of origins. Sir, while the Government can create the environment for us by negotiating these agreements by putting in place the incentives and other support systems like financing and so on... it is for the producers, all those people who have these brilliant business ideas, to seek to implement them. If the existing incentive regimes and support systems are not considered adequate, they are to make their case and identify where they would need additional support, but we will expect them to look for the opportunities. At the end of the day it is not the Government, that is going to be out there looking to develop the business opportunities. We are willing to work with the producers to assist them in whatever way possible, but it is for them to take advantage of it.

12.10 p.m.

Mr. President, I am satisfied that if they take advantage of the various opportunities, created for them to be engaged in trade, it would be beneficial for themselves and the country, remembering that I said at the beginning, that in this context where we are so heavily dependent on trade, we have always to make sure that our exports

continue to grow, and that we do not rely entirely on imports. If we do that, while we may have access to some cheap goods, it would still mean that our human resources and other resources in many respect will be idle, and the level of our growth and development will not be what we would require it to be.

Mr. President, the Government is seeking through its trade policy, generally, but most specifically now through arrangements, bilateral and regional trade agreements, with countries in the hemisphere, to broaden the opportunity.

Sir, before I close, I will mention one aspect of these agreements, in the international context. There are a number of countries that oppose bilateral arrangements, or regional trade agreements. In fact, there is a committee in the World Trade Organisation that is charged with the responsibility of examining such agreements, to determine if they result in a diversion of trade.

Mr. President, when you check the facts, you will discover that a number of the developed countries, have entered into a large number of such agreements, with developing countries, and other developed countries as well. Our view has always been that agreements such as these do not divert trade, but they provide us with a stepping stone, to gradually develop our ability to become integrated into the wider system. There is no evidence to show, that there is any significant diversion, if there is a diversion at all of trade.

Sir, they bring that up because they have the view, that if you enter arrangements, such as these, with other countries; they like to raise it in relation to cheaper goods they could provide, that you from importing these cheaper things from them, and you to buy from the other countries that trade... that you may be in arrangement with, which may be producing at a higher cost than yours. There is no evidence to show that is the case. However, when it suits them to do it, they do it.

Sir, we have to stop allowing those people to set the agenda for us. Sir, you are part of the international scenario and you have to operate within that, but that does not mean, that you are not to make sure, that you take all the opportunities available and use them to our advantage.

Mr. President, with those comments, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Stuart.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, there is very little that is controversial about the series of Bills before this Chamber, in that they seek to formalise the establishment of

trade and technical cooperation agreements with Spanish-speaking countries in this hemisphere. Barbados has, from the dawn of its settlement, been caught up, I would say, in the web of international trade. Sir, from about the 1640s/1650s, when sugar was introduced into Barbados, thanks to Dutch and later English investment, Barbados was required to participate in international trading arrangements, trading arrangements that included trade in sugar and molasses, which it was producing for the most part, and, of course, trade in labour, which really had to do with the importation of slaves from the African continent. This was part of a regional set up in those days.

Sir, because Barbados was a colony, its trading relationships were determined by the metropolitan power, in our case the United Kingdom. Sir, the countries with which we traded in those early years, these arrangements remained in place for about 300 years, those countries were naturally and necessarily friends or other colonies of our colonial masters, and for that reason Barbados had a strong trading relationship with Canada, which was a British colony, until the passage of the British North American Act, 1867; I think it was, and of course, with colonies on the continent, the thirteen colonies that had broken away from the United Kingdom and declared their independence. Sir, before the breaking away, Barbados' trading relationship with what is now known as the United States of America was established as well. Those relationships have remained in place virtually to this day. What we are here doing today is basically trying to break that stranglehold, which was set for us so many years ago.

Sir, it was of the nature of our trade that, because of the size of the island and the paucity of its resource endowment and the dictate of the metropolitan power, we exported to Britain, Canada and the colonies on the North American continent raw materials, sugar and molasses.
12.20 p.m.

Sir, it was written into the order of things that we would import from those colonies, where possible, finished goods, manufactured goods, and all of this took place within the straitjacket for a while, of a series of Navigation Acts, which restricted us to even the very vessels in which we were supposed to export our produce and, of course, the countries to which we could export.

Therefore, discussing trade is nothing new to Barbados. We have been at this from virtually the dawn of our history. Sir, one of the tragedies of our history and the history of colonies like ours, even those that came to colonial status, by the route of a different language, because the countries in South America were no different. They were tied to their metropolitan power, Spain, in the same way that we were tied to our metropolitan power, England.

One of the tragedies is that we were not allowed to develop our manufacturing sectors at the kind of speed and with the kind of determination that was evident in those countries, which were called the developed countries of that period and, of course, the sole super power of that period, the United Kingdom. Spain and France, of course, enjoyed very powerful status in those long gone days as well.

Therefore, if one looks at sugar, for example, we exported raw sugar and molasses to England, and we imported finished products from that mother country because of the colonial arrangement. We were fed the idea, that the very rationale for the existence of trade was that, where other people could produce what we needed at a cheaper cost than we were capable of producing it, then we should limit ourselves to what we could produce efficiently, and import what they could produce more efficiently.

The most cursory reading of Adam Smith's inquiry into the causes of the wealth of Nations, will disclose his zeroing in on this issue and, basically, identifying trade as one of the primary vehicles for the creation of wealth in a nation.

Right down to the 20th Century, therefore, we found ourselves in this trading straitjacket, as it were. After World War II, because of the changes that have taken place in the world as a result of that war, there were some slight modifications to Barbados' trading relationships.

For example, we were still allowed to export sugar to England, but we did so under what was labeled at that time, "A Commonwealth Sugar Agreement 1951", which allowed Barbadian sugar, access to England at preferential prices. Of course, that arrangement remained in place and was phased out sometime in the early 1970s, as Britain contemplated its entry into the European Common Market, as a result of its accession to the Treaty of Rome.

The Commonwealth Sugar Agreement, therefore, guaranteed Barbados a reasonable price for its sugar, and we were therefore protected by those preferential arrangements. We still continued exporting to Canada and to the United States of America, although there were ebbs and flows, surges and recessions, in those trading relationships.

When the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement was phased out in the early 1970s, 1972/73, that agreement was succeeded by what became familiarly known as the LOMÉ Conventions. A number of those Conventions were signed, which established a relationship between countries like Barbados and the European Economic community, the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries entered into a new kind of relationship with the European Economic community.

Sir, LOMÉ continued until that too, spent itself and we are now under a regime called, The Cotonou Agreement, which is now governing our relationship with the European Union.

Sir, whatever the labels that are attached to these trading relationships, the truth is that the nature of these relationships, never really changed qualitatively, for the greater part of Barbadian history. In many respects those relationships were deepened, or attempts were made to deepen them over the passage of time, but the trading partners remained basically the same for the better part of our country's history.

Therefore, when one hears about CARIBCAN, for example, the trading relationship between Caribbean countries and Canada, which came into effect in 1986, that is only a deepening of the relationship between these islands and Canada. It does not change the trading partners at all, because we have been bequeathed these partners, over all of our history.

When President Reagan, at an OAS Meeting in 1982 announced the CBI, guaranteeing Caribbean islands access of the American market, again, that was just a deepening of a relationship that had a very long history. These were all Cold War relationships. They all sprung up during the period of what was known as the Cold War, after 1945.

The question that countries like Barbados had to ask is whether we could remain trapped in this kind of straitjacket, or we should venture out and establish new trading relationships with other countries. This question is being answered in the affirmative, by the Bills at present before this Chamber.

All of our trading relationships, for the better part of our history were vertical relationships, a kind of relationship between inferior and superior partners, in terms of economic clout and resource endowment. It has been part of the design of the larger countries of the world, the former colonial powers, to frustrate trading relationships that were horizontal, that is, what is now called south to south trade as distinct from north-south trade. We have had to try to break out of this kind of strait-jacket, and today we are discussing trading relationships with countries like Cuba, Costa Rico, the Dominican Republic and Columbia.
12.30 p.m.

Mr. President, in my view, this is a positive development because countries at our stage of development needs to integrate themselves more into countries that can better understand what they are going through and are prepared to forge more egalitarian relationships with a country like Barbados.

Mr. President, I think it was the foresight of the Democratic Labour Party in Government as long ago as 1972 at Chaguaramas, that the relationship that Barbados has with Cuba today exist at all. Barbados was one of four countries in 1972 at Chaguaramas, that defied those who would have wished otherwise, particularly the United States of America, and established diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Mr. President, the furore that was generated over that particular initiative is still fresh in my mind because the Government of the day was accused by the then Opposition of trying to convert Barbados into a communist country and the Government of the day found itself having to defend the decision to establish diplomatic relations with Cuba at that time.

Sir, 13 years later, the Democratic Labour Party, in Opposition this time, came under very heavy attack in Barbados for agreeing to participate, through its then leader, in a conference on debt relief that was being held in Havana. In fact, I think Barbados chaired certain parts of that conference. Again, in 1985, we were accused of trying to convert Barbados into a communist country. We were being told that in that regard and for those reasons that the Democratic Labour Party should be resisted.

Mr. President, in 1993, when this country hosted an international conference on the sustainability of Small Island Developing States, the SIDS Conference, the President of Cuba came to Barbados and the then Foreign Minister, Mr. Branford Taïtt, was caught by a photographer in an embrace with the Cuban President and in the 1994 election campaign that became an issue: Was the Democratic Labour Party, if re-elected to office, going to convert Barbados into a communist country? Mr. President, we have had a long run of this.

Mr. President, I am pleased that today the Government has had the scales removed from its eyes and that Cuba is now seen as a positive partner in Caribbean development.

Asides.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: I can always tell when the Other Side is experiencing pain, you hear the shouts.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Hardly shouts, Senator.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: I should say the whimpers, Sir.

Asides.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, I am pleased that given my Party's history in its relationship with Cuba, that Barbados is deepening its relationship with a country, which is really an essential part of this Caribbean family.

The example set by Cuba is one that we can emulate in many respects. I agree with George Lamming when he said that although the Cuban revolution was fought by the Cuban people alone, it was not won for the Cuban people alone, but that there are aspects of Cuba's development, which beckon and invite emulation because of the sturdiness of the Cuban people and their resourcefulness in the face of all the difficulties which they have experienced ever since 1959, but particularly after the Missile Crisis of the early 1960s.

In that regard, I think that I would have wasted this opportunity if I did not say that it is now a waste of time really for the embargo imposed by the United States of America, which at present still hampers Cuba's development, to be still in place because the economic development of Cuba is being seriously undermined and slowed by the existence of that embargo.

Mr. President, I have not seen the book myself but I was reading in the local press recently that former President Jimmy Carter, also made this point in a recent book, that the time for this embargo is long past and that a country like Cuba should be given the opportunity to develop and to really flap its wings with more comfort than is at present the case.

Mr. President, Cuba's health sector is a fine example for countries in this region. It is an education as to how a country with scarce resources can mobilise its human capital to achieve great objectives without compromising the country's dignity.

Mr. President, so far as the other relationships are concerned, Costa Rico, the Dominican Republic and Colombia, I agree with the Leader of Government Business that in some cases some of these agreements are only partial in scope. However, they represent, in my view, a step in the right direction.

Sir, I am not in any way suggesting that because we are moving in this direction in terms of opening new trading windows with countries in South America that we need to give up any of the traditional trading partnerships which we have had and which we have forged over a long number of years. This diversification of our trading relationships can only help to strengthen Barbados and to develop it at a much faster rate.

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development made the point that it really does not matter how many trading agreements you sign or what trading agreements you enter into, but that ultimately the challenge is for your producers to see these opportunities and to pounce upon them with all the vigour at their command.
12.40 p.m.

Mr. President, it is axiomatic nowadays, when one talks about CARIBCAN and the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), that our producers never 'stepped up to the plate' in terms of taking an opportunity, which have existed under both the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) and CARIBCAN. It is, therefore, hoped that our producers would see these opportunities being opened up for them and would move swiftly, to take full advantage of them. Of course, Government cannot leave it to the producers to know about this. I think there has to be a closer liaison between Government and those who produce for exports, so that there could be better talk and they could have explained to them, what opportunities exist and how best they could maximise the use of those opportunities.

Mr. President, I think in Barbados we tend to assume quite a lot but this country does not have an export culture, certainly not to the same extent that it has an import culture. Therefore, while we do not have to be lectured on how to import, we certainly have to be talked and lectured on how to export and how to take advantage of export opportunities. The link between export opportunities and the earning of foreign exchange is too familiar for it to require any emphasis or repetition from me. Therefore, having regard to the fact that the Government has been complaining, in recent times, of a serious current account problem, the hour for serious consideration of increasing our exports is upon us. Therefore, we must move swiftly in that direction.

The initiative taken by the Government recently to set up an export promotion agency, to push the issue of exports, must be made to dovetail with the opportunities being created for export. In addition, our producers must be encouraged to take the fullest possible advantage of these new export facilities.

Mr. President, there is nothing controversial about the Bills before this Honourable Chamber. What they do is to seek to diversify Barbados' trading outlook and to help Barbados to wrestle itself out of the historical straitjacket, into which it was placed, and to look around it, in a region which we have ignored for the better part of our history.

Sir, the barrier posed by language is perhaps one of the explanations for our having ignored it but I think we are conquering those fears now and are recognising how much we, from our part of the world, have in common with the countries of Latin America. I really hope that we would see, over the next few years, a deepening of these relationships and a full exploitation of the opportunities which are being created for our export sectors.

Mr. President, in conclusion, I would like to assure this Government — if it is assurance the Government needs — that the Democratic Labour Party stands fully behind it, in terms of trying to push the export sectors. We acknowledge

that the earning for foreign exchange for this economy is a matter of extreme urgency. Therefore, I do not think that the economy faces any threat which would be larger than that of stimulating our productive sectors and accelerating the earning of foreign exchange for this economy.

Mr. President, it has been my unapologetic contention that the foreign reserves, which we have, have really been secured out of real estate speculations and borrowing. We have not been earning foreign exchange, as a result of anything productive going on in Barbados.

Sir, when the Government boasts about the state of the economy, this is a fact that needs to be taken into account. Therefore, Government cannot be forever borrowing. There are no more State's assets which we can afford to sell off to strengthen the foreign reserves. The challenge facing us now as a country, is production for exports. Sir, the fact that Government is broadening the scope of opportunities for export, is commendable but there is much follow-up work to be done, to create a genuine export culture in Barbados, on the basis of which our producers could take full advantage of the opportunities which the Government is creating.

Mr. President, the specific Bill before this Honourable Chamber qualifies for the support of the Opposition and, of course, the other Bills of a similar kind, similarly qualify.

Sir, with those few word, I am obliged to you.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended, to resume at 1.55 p.m.

The question that the Honourable Senate do now suspend until 1.55 p.m., was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Senate accordingly.
12.47 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed. Senator Eastmond.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to lend my support to this Bill which is before us having to do with a trade agreement between the Caribbean Community and the Government of the Republic of Colombia. Mr. President, even though this matter, as agreed by the Speaker on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party, is not a controversial matter, I believe that the matters of trade are so critical to our continued development in Barbados that I thought it

worthwhile to make a few comments and to add my voice to the dialogue on this particular issue.

Mr. President, I say that the trade agreements are important largely within the context of the fact that all of the international agreements which we enter into in future are going to be extremely important to what we do in our domestic market. I am not sure that this message comes across clearly to every Barbadian because there are a number of issues. For example, we know that many of the changes that member states of CARICOM are making with respect to their bananas and sugar industries have to do with the arrangements between the African, Caribbean and Pacific states and the European Union. Certainly, those changes have impacted directly on the lives of ordinary people within CARICOM. Therefore, it is important for us to engage in this debate even though this piece of legislation before us is not one that is considered to be controversial.

Mr. President, many argue and I believe they are correct that trade agreements do not actually create any more trade. There are countries that would argue that prior to WTO that they never enter into many trade agreements at all and that it did not impact the level of trade in which they were involved. This may be true but the trade agreements are very much facilitating in nature. What is almost revolutionary about the WTO agreement is that for the first time, at the level of international law, you actually now have a framework within which there is now a great deal more certainty as far as trade relations go.

We are discussing bilateral agreements and I will also discuss the Colombian Agreement, the agreements with the Dominican Republic, the Republic of Cuba and the Republic of Costa Rico. The bilateral agreement exists within the framework of the WTO Agreements and that regime that has been put in place to cover trade amongst practically all countries in the world. I do not know if The Bahamas has acceded as yet but I know that China has signed on.

Mr. President, for the first time, we have greater certainty and we now have international decisions being made on the basis of existing guidelines and rules which have been reduced to legal agreements. Sir, this was not the case before because even though we had GATT, which is the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs, which is to be distinguished from GATS, the General Agreement on Trade and Services, which we talk about more frequently, much of what went on was informal. They never, as had been expected, established an international trade organisation and one had expected that to come out of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs.

Mr. President, we now have a formal procedure. It is a great advancement because in terms of our international economic activities, traditionally, there has not been much

law that one could turn to in order to settle disputes. This is why even though we have made great progress at the domestic level where law is concerned, where international law is concerned, there is still very much a feeling that one is operating in the Wild West. Therefore, the most powerful countries are the ones which are able to exert their wishes.

Mr. President, one may argue that within the context of WTO that and these international trade agreements that the powerful countries still do this but I believe that whole regime is work in progress. The fact of the matter is that before there was very little recourse. I believe that at the core of many of these trade agreements that the real important aspect has to do with the dispute resolution mechanism. You will find that all the agreements, including the one before us that they all have dispute settlement mechanisms. This is one of the key components of the World Trade Organisation agreement, that there is an agreement to settle dispute.

Mr. President, it is interesting because it was recognised in the past that many trade disputes eventually evolved into trade wars where individual countries suffered, companies suffered and ultimately individuals suffered because trade disputes could not be resolved in a timely fashion. The World Trade Organisation has put a great effort on ensuring that disputes are solved in as speedy a fashion as possible, and certainly in a much shorter time frame than before because, before, they could a decade to solve disputes. Now we have seen matters go before the World Trade Organisation, and they have been settled within a relatively short space of time. That is because they have set out specific guidelines, which articulate the specific steps that you must take and the time frame within which you must take those steps in order to reach a conclusion on the particular dispute.
2.00 p.m.

Mr. President, that particular approach is one that perhaps individuals who come from a common law tradition do not quite understand. We are more familiar with making applications, having them dragged out for as long as the two parties would wish to have them dragged out, and not really following strict time lines.

Sir, one of the things that the World Trade Organisation wished to ensure, was that these strict guidelines were followed. You will find that the gambling case that went before the World Trade Organisation, which the country of Antigua brought before the World Trade Organisation, that matter was resolved within a relatively short period of time. Certainly, within two or three years, we were able to come to a complete resolution on that particular matter. I should add, without going into any details of the case, that the Government of Antigua won that case.

Mr. President, even though the system is not perfect, I think that the Antigua gambling case shows us that in terms of our trade arrangements, we are much better off, I believe, to have a legal mechanism for dispute settlement, where small States can also approach the court and say that their rights are being infringed, under the particular agreement. That particular agreement, would be the General Agreement on Trade and Services with respect to those gambling services being provided from Antigua. I think that shows that the process, even though not perfect, is one that we must commend to ourselves as small States.

Sir, I think that it is important to get a good concept in one's mind, as to what these bilateral trade agreements are about. Therefore, I would wish to extend the discussion about putting them in the appropriate context. For us to understand that we have the overarching World Trade Organisation agreements, and then for us within CARICOM, the most important agreement for us, and the agreement in which we give most preferences or concessions or which we allow special treatment would be the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas.

Mr. President, it is important to put all of these things in context, because they all deal with trade; they all purport to deal with economic cooperation and development. If you look at it from the perspective of the preferences and allowances, that we are prepared to give other States, if we start with the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, our CARICOM neighbours, we would recognise that the best treatment possible is allocated to our CARICOM neighbours. Sir, as far as the bilateral agreements are concerned, it is only then at that level, that we make concessions as well, but there are not as great as at the CARICOM level.

Mr. President, we were in the process of negotiating the Free Trade Area of the Americas, where we will also make certain concessions to countries within the hemisphere. I believe that with the Free Trade Area of the Americas, we will remember that those agreements apply to all of the countries within the hemisphere, North American, South American, Central America and the Caribbean, except for Cuba. Of course, you could imagine who objected to Cuba, participating in those discussions.

Sir, within the context of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, concessions would be allowed there as well but not as great as what we give under the bilateral arrangement, and not as great as what we give to our CARICOM neighbours. Of course, the fewest concessions would be given, at the World Trade Organisation level, because that would be giving concessions and preferences to the world. That is the structure.

Mr. President, within these agreements, if we get a good understanding of what is involved, I would say that

essentially they deal with the liberalisation of your market. Depending on the agreement that you have, because some of these agreements are only partial agreements, and some are full agreements and are referred to as Free Trade Agreements. The one with the Dominican Republic is referred to as a Free Trade Agreement.

Mr. President, they deal essentially, with allowing goods and services, to come into your market and through reciprocity, allowing your goods and services to go into the foreign markets. Within these agreements, you will find that there are certain goods that are identified for duty-free access. There are certain goods that are allowed access over a period of time where the tariff, the duties that are charged by foreign countries would be reduced over time. This is why they talked about phased liberalisation.

Mr. President, most countries do not agree to fully open up their markets, in any area all at once. Most countries do it in a very gradual way. That is what has also occurred under these agreements. The agreements would allow for that, and would also say, that goods and services coming into your country, or your goods and services going into the country that you have the agreement with, for example Colombia, those goods or services, would be given the best treatment possible. That is why they talk about Most Favoured Nation treatment.

Sir, if you are thinking carefully you will remember that we are members of the World Trade Organisation, we have agreed to the Most Favoured Nation treatment, at the World Trade Organisation level, yet we give special treatment to CARICOM, under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, and Colombia, under the bilateral agreements. This is because, within the World Trade Organisation, there is actually an exception to the most favoured nation treatment for regional agreements and customs unions. That is the reason for that.

Sir, the argument is, if you are engaged in a process where you are liberalising trade, which is the objective at the World Trade Organisation, if you are doing it in small steps, by starting at your regional level and going to your hemispheric level, there is really no damage being done, because ultimately, it is expected that all of these concessions that you have given at the regional and hemispheric level, that eventually one day, those would also be allowed to the rest of the countries, at the World Trade Organisation level.

Sir, the agreements contain many provisions, and they seek to identify, especially in the bilateral agreements, the areas that would be of greatest importance to the countries that are involved in the agreements. For example, in one of the agreements, the agreement which deals with Cuba, identifies a number of services where we would wish to be

involved in corporations, such as transport, professional services, construction, computer and computer related services. That is what we seek to do.

Sir, also within the bilateral agreements you will see that in some of the agreements, we have actually agreed on specific provisions on areas such as tourism and transportation, which are of importance to us.

Mr. President, I believe we all recognise that these agreements are with countries within the region and especially within the Latin American region. One of our difficulties in trade with these particular countries has to do with transportation. Even though there are close to us, most of us would find that if we want to travel to any of these countries, we tend to have to travel to Miami and then find our way to the South American countries. Traditionally, there has been no great cause to travel, to these countries, simply because of our colonial experience. There are Spanish-speaking countries while we are English-speaking countries. Therefore, our tendency, would be to travel moreso to North America, than to travel to Costa Rica, Cuba, Venezuela or any other country like that. Mr. President, the development of tourism and transportation links, are very important.

2.10 p.m.

The Trade Agreements and these bilateral agreements too, must be seen as some of the tools with which the Government is seeking to facilitate the development of the economy of Barbados. I believe that the Prime Minister in his Economic and Financial Statement, when he reported on how Barbados had done, actually showed that the export of goods from Barbados had increased from \$340 million in 2004 to \$387 million.

It is not actually the case that our exports have not increased. Sir, across the various sectors, including services, the statistics show that our exports have increased. When a country is reaching a stage where the growth of its exports continues in that way, the obvious thing to do, is to start looking for additional markets, so that the growth can continue. These bilateral agreements and Free Trade Agreements that we have entered into, are about finding additional markets for Barbados' goods and services.

Mr. President, I would also like to centre the discussion, in terms of what Barbados is doing about the development of the economy itself. Sometimes we believe that what we are doing in foreign trade is somehow separate from what we do in the other areas. One of the reasons that our focus is on the developed is the development of business for export, which are facilitated through trade agreements like the ones that we have negotiated.

Therefore, when you see an emphasis on two new export agencies set up by the Government, they are to help to facilitate the export of our goods and services, through

these agreements that we have already put in place. The Government has \$10 million for a special technical assistance fund, under the BIDC to help our manufacturers and producers in other areas to retool. They can develop their businesses to such a stage, so that they can enter into the export market, or expand their exportation in order to take advantage of these agreements.

When we see that Government has set up an Innovation fund, this is what all this is working towards: developing our trade, developing our businesses, developing our exports and the utilisation of these agreements.

These particular agreements cannot be seen as stand alone agreement, either. Mr. President, they must be viewed within the context of other agreements that have been entered into by the Government of Barbados. One agreement that we do not usually pay any attention to is the Visa Abolition Agreement.

Barbados has been entering into these agreements for many years. We only really realise that our foreign service officers have been doing any work really, when we want to go to a particular country and we realise that we do not have to have a visa. This is because we have actively sought to enter arrangements with these foreign countries so that we do not have to get a visa, and we can travel more easily within those countries. As I said, we do not pay any attention to that agreement but that is one that helps to facilitate trade.

The second one I would mention is our Double Taxation Agreements. When you look at the Bills that are before us, you see that in several of them, there are specific provisions for the negotiation of Double Taxation Agreements between CARICOM countries and those countries with which we have entered into the agreements.

We do not, at this point in time, have any Double Taxation Agreements between CARICOM and third States. Barbados has entered into Double Taxation Agreements with countries in the hemisphere, including Cuba, Venezuela, Canada and the United States of America. Several of them were negotiated before these agreements were put in place. They are suggesting that we can enter into an agreement between CARICOM and these third states, perhaps, using the CARICOM Double Taxation Agreement. How manageable that would be, is something that is left to be seen, if we ever pursue that particular objective of negotiating a Double Taxation Agreement between CARICOM and those other countries.

With respect to the Trade Agreements, I think there are many fundamental issues that have to be addressed, or should be highlighted, in terms of trade liberalisation.

There tends to be a feeling that once we have entered into an agreement, we have removed all of our rights, in terms of allowing access to certain goods and services, but that is certainly not the case. As I pointed out before, all of these agreements tend to be focusing on liberalisation, on a phased basis. It is not simply that you liberalise and you open up everything and everything can come in.

There are safeguard measures in all of these agreements, which have to do with goods coming into your market and whether or not, those goods cause harm to your domestic market. If you could prove that there is substantial harm to your domestic market, because of the influx of goods or services, there is a facility for one to notify the other country and put in place, as a temporary measure, a mechanism in order to keep out those goods. I must emphasise that it is a temporary measure.

In terms of these agreements, as well, there are certain fundamental principles that we follow in the negotiations. One of those principles has to do with the differences in the levels of development of countries. This is something, Mr. President, that CARICOM has been arguing for a considerable period of time. We would find that, starting with the Treaty of Chaguaramas – and it is very important that it is there – within the Treaty of Chaguaramas itself, we within CARICOM recognise that there are different levels of development within CARICOM.

Therefore, within CARICOM, we make a distinction between the most developed countries and the least developed countries. The most developed countries are Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago. I believe that the process that is engaged in is left to the country to determine itself, whether it is a MDC or a LDC.

Sir, because it is recognised in the Treaty of Chaguaramas, you would find that it also filters up into all of the agreements that we signed. Therefore, in these bilateral agreements that we have engaged in, you will see that there is also a recognition of this concept of different levels of development.

Therefore, feeding up into the Agreements themselves, you would find that there are obligations that the most developed countries have assumed to themselves that they have not negotiated for the LDCs. In some cases, you would find that the MDCs, including Barbados, Jamaica, *et cetera*, have agreed to remove certain tariffs to allow duty-free access and that the LDCs have not agreed to that, or they have given a longer period of time before they enter into those obligations.

This is extremely important because the issue of levels of development and also size of economies is also another

issue that finds its way up into the Free Trade Area of the Americas Agreements. We have had a lot of discussions on this issue of smaller economies. That provision, which has to do with always taking into account the levels of development of countries and the size of economies, is always a burning issue. Therefore, these issues of smaller economies have also found themselves into the dialogue at the World Trade Organisation as well.

2.20 p.m.

Sir, only recently has a concession been allowed. At least in the declaration and in principle, there is some recognition that smaller economies should be allowed certain preferential treatment that other countries would not be allowed. Sir, this concept is one that CARICOM itself have championed for a number of years and which therefore, on further discussion and further refinement, has actually now found a place at the level of the World Trade Organisation.

Mr. President, we would also see that in these agreements there is quite an emphasis on ensuring that there is fair competition and that there are no anti-competitive business practices. Sir, I take those two together because in addition to the framework that Government has provided with respect to these trade agreements in terms of the further development of the country and the preparation of the country for trade liberalisation – I spoke about development of the business sectors – it is also very important to ensure that within Barbados itself that consumers do not suffer at the hands of individuals who might bring goods and indeed services from non-traditional sources into Barbados. Therefore, we would find that in the agreements themselves there is emphasis on fair competition and ensuring that there are no anti-competitive business practices.

Mr. President, in order to ensure that these mechanisms actually work, you would recognise that you do have to have mechanisms in the domestic market. Therefore, a great deal of preparation has been made in order to facilitate trade liberalisation by putting in place a number of pieces of legislation such as the Fair Competition Act, the Consumer Protection Act and the Consumer Guarantees Act, and also the putting in place of institutions to monitor all of these issues such as the Fair Trading Commission, the Office of Public Counsel and the Barbados National Standards Institution. Sir, all of these, the legislation and the institutional framework, are important with respect to trade liberalisation.

Mr. President, I think that it is important to recognise that the agreements, apart from looking at the technical issues such as safeguard mechanisms and most favoured nation treatment, also have provisions in them for the promotion of trade and for joint councils or committees. Sir,

from that point of view, they seek to be very practical in terms of actually promoting trade between the two countries, between CARICOM as a whole and between Colombia and those other countries.

Mr. President, in all of the agreements you would see that there is a Joint Council which is to meet on a regular basis, at least annually, in order to review the utility of the trade agreement. Mr. President, in one or two of them, you would actually see that there is a great emphasis on promotion, in facilitating trade fairs, exhibitions and trips from one country to another.

Mr. President, I make this point because I really wish to emphasise that the agreements are not just meant to be agreements that we signed on a ceremonial occasion and then just put them away, they are actually agreements that are meant to facilitate trade.

Sir, the hope is that business people recognising that we have entered into a relationship with these countries, would actually take the time to explore these countries to see what opportunities there are for us to export into those countries.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, could you please wind up in the next one minute, please.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: Yes, Sir. I notice that, for example, Colombia comes to Barbados with a fairly big exhibition and trade show. Sir, it is not just an exhibition, they actually come here to sell their goods. Sir, Barbadians and people from CARICOM must think about going to these countries to sell their goods as well because these agreements are meant to facilitate trade. Mr. President, sometimes when we say facilitate trade, we do not quite understand that means that it is supposed to facilitate Barbadian businesses selling their goods and services into other markets.

Mr. President, I do believe that these four bilateral agreements are extremely important tools for the future development of Barbados so that Barbados could really begin to take its place more securely in the international community as a country that is not only a consumer of foreign goods but as a country that could actually produce its own goods and services and sell them abroad.

I thank you.

SENATOR G. P. B. NICHOLLS: Mr. President, I rise to lend my support to the Bill under consideration which seeks to establish in Barbadian law, the rights and obligations of the signatories to the Agreement on Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation between CARICOM and Colombia.

Sir, it is to my mind not an insignificant achievement for CARICOM to be engaging in these Economic Cooperation Agreements with our neighbouring countries in the Latin American community, particularly Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Costa Rico as well as Venezuela. I believe it represents a fairly novel response by the Caribbean Community to the challenges of the new external environment that exists today.

The agreements themselves embody the two co-principles that ground the creation of a Caribbean Community in that we are looking to have more functional cooperation and trade policy coordination in relation to our external activities as a region. These were two of the major goals of the 1973 Treaty of Chaguaramas. Sir, we have moved to deepen our own integration effort within the region at the level of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and we are also seeking at the level of CARICOM to negotiate partnering economic arrangements with other countries. I think that is indeed a very laudable achievement.

Sir, it did not slip me that this agreement was executed between CARICOM and the Government of Colombia on July 24, 1994. Indeed, one L. Erskine Sandiford signed the agreement on the behalf of the Caribbean Community along with a representative of the Government of the Republic of Colombia.

Sir, I make that point against the background that Senator Stuart in his contribution to this debate was trying to make the point that the Democratic Labour Party has always been committed to this exercise. Sir, there is a difference between talk and action. When these agreements were being signed, nobody in Barbados knew that the Government was undertaking this kind of activity. Just in the same way in which we gave commitments to the World Trade Organisation in 1994, which was established on January 1, 1995, our Parliament and our people were not brought up-to-date with the relationships that we were creating with other people around us.
2.30 p.m.

Mr. President, I am saying that against the background of the fact that when we look at the prescriptions for economic development, what Senator Griffith, in the last debate referred to as the "one-size-fits-all" recipe, that has been used by the multilateral institutions, under the neoliberal paradigm of free trade, this country and many Caribbean countries were not treated to an exhaustive discussion, as to the implications of the new arrangements in which we were entering. Therefore, in this way, I think we have suffered for it.

We are complaining now that we were shut out of the Green Room Negotiations at the level of the World Trade Organisation but at the same time, we have to assess

whether or not free trade is something that we would want to get into, at the level and at the pace at which big countries in the world are asking us to give further commitments. At the same time, we must also reassess the role of the State, in rolling back and allowing free trade and free market philosophy to prevail.

Mr. President, the United States of America is very interested in a Free Trade Area of the Americas. That spate of negotiation seems to have grounded to a rushing halt and the multilateral trading system, at the level of the World Trade Organisation, has seem not to be able to get past the level of Singapore agenda. They tried to convene at the Cancun Rounds and at Doha Rounds and have not been able to realise the so-called development agenda that would benefit the small countries in the world, which were shut out in the initial stage.

Mr. President, what is important is that while the United States of America has not been able to gather the pace and momentum, to get countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela on board, in the creation of a Free Trade Area of the Americas, the bilateral trade arrangements that are not only WTO-compliant but WTO-plus – to the extent that greater commitments would have to be given at the bilateral levels than at the multilateral system – are now being said to be the things that we should look into.

Mr. President, the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica held a conference in July 2004. Sir, the USA trade representative went to that conference and warned the Caribbean countries that we were too slow to begin the process of negotiating individual bilateral trade treaties, with the United States of America. He said that by this time next year, meaning 2005, more than two-thirds of the hemispheric population would have been in a Free Trade Area with the United States of America; that the CARICOM citizens would not be among them; that there is a risk of a two-tiered structure of trade, and that CARICOM countries might not be on the winning end of that equation.

The Jamaica Private Sector Organisation were sounding the clarion call that the United States of America was going to press ahead with its agenda for free trade and economic liberalisation in all of its manifestations, whether it would be liberalising trade, financial services, the movement of capital or the movement of goods and services. Therefore, if we cannot do it at the level of the multilateral trading system, if we cannot do it at the level of the hemisphere, we are going to have to do it at the individual level, with countries within the hemisphere.

Mr. President, this has been the operating principle that has been guiding the international trading system, as of late. All of this is happening at a time when Caribbean countries,

have, ten years before, entered into an arrangement with countries such as Venezuela, Cuba, Costa Rico, Columbia and the Dominican Republic. Sir, I am somewhat concerned that, like many other policymakers, we have to be somewhat skeptical about the neoliberal context, in which the free trade mantra and these models of development, are being accepted as being preemptively norms of international trade.

Mr. President, there are too few alternatives to free trade. We are told that we must open up our markets because that is the only way our domestic manufacturers and people who provide services, can expand the economic horizons. We are told that we must open up our markets to the free flow of foreign capital but at the same time, we have not been able to synthesise a theory to rebut the hegemonic efforts of the North Atlantic community, to get into our own market and to manoeuvre in our own economic space, to exclude true economic development from occurring in the Caribbean.

Sir, to my mind, that is an important consideration because we have to countenance what is going on, meaning the international norms that they are creating but at the same time, we must still stand and say to them that this is not for the benefit of the people of our country and we must halt the pace of liberalisation, which the United States of America is saying that we must swallow.

Mr. President, it is true that while they have been able to hoodwink us into accepting the liberalisation of trade, in relation to trade and services... Senator Griffith made the point about the reluctance to liberalise trade in agriculture. Sir, the Multifibre Agreement, that has been in existence, prohibits the entry of clothing and textile products, from the developing world, into the markets of North Atlantic countries, but they are not looking to liberalising trade, in relation to the subsidies and safeguard mechanisms that protect their domestic farmers. Sir, the Cotton Industry in the United States of America is a classic example.

Sir, a United Nations Development Programme report in 2005, argued that under the World Trade Organisation regime, in the period 1995 to 2004, the 48 Less-Developed Countries in the world, being worse off by \$600 million a year, with the Sub-Sahara Africa being worse off by \$1.2 billion a year. It also argued that 70 per cent of the trade gains of the Uruguay Round went to the developed countries, with the other 30 per cent going to the large and relatively few export-oriented developing countries.

Mr. President, this is the context in which Barbados and other Caribbean countries must face an international environment, where, as I said, the changing dynamics

of this international environment can sometimes have significant impacts on our ability, as a people, to adjust in line with the international trading norms. We have seen what adjustments countries in the Caribbean have had to make, in relation to sugar, the banana industry and the rum industry.

Mr. President, I believe the trade arrangements might become a necessary evil, if we are to be able to navigate successfully within this international trading environment. They could provide greater access for our goods and services. They could also reduce the distortions in international trade, in relation to the subsidies other countries give to their own domestic producers. They could also prevent any dumping of goods on our domestic market, which would be below the prevailing international market prices.

Mr. President, the bilateral treaties also allow for goods to come into Barbados. Therefore, the Government could also expect an increase in revenues, not from customs duties but from the VAT and taxes on incomes, in relation to trade services coming in and tax on businesses. Therefore, in this regard, there is a potential benefit in relation to the earning of revenue that could be generated as a result of the trade arrangements that we negotiate.

Mr. President, as I said, the challenges are the adjustment costs. We have to retrain and to retool our own domestic sectors. We have to be able to determine how we are going to be more productive within the economic environment that we are creating for ourselves. We have to determine the right mix between industrial and agricultural policy that is best suited to the use of our land space. We have to determine how best our people could be best able to exploit the benefits of services, industry and agriculture.
2.40 p.m.

These are the strategic decisions that we should be discussing. I do not think that the debate on this issue in general has been able to come up with enough of the strategic policy decisions that we as a society must make decision on. We must be able to discuss them so that we can plan for a more certain and prosperous future.

Mr. President, the most important thing to know about these trade agreements is that while there are provisions, for example, in the agreement between the Caribbean Community and the Government of the Republic of Colombia, there are articles which deal with trade promotion. Sir, Article 12 and Article 13 deal with trade financing, trade and services, safeguard clauses, unfair trade practices and so forth, these agreements in themselves do not create trade or economic growth. Sir, the mere signing of these agreements do not advance the material welfare of people. Sir, to posture behind the signing of these agreements or having a foreign policy which says that we are

friends of all and satellites of none, at the end of the day, does not make a difference by itself to the material advancement of people.

Mr. President, where economic opportunity exists, the trade agreement will facilitate the development of economic opportunity. Just like a fishing complex cannot bring fish, a free trade agreement cannot produce trade.

Mr. President, it is important to recognise that if we have to allow more and more competition within our domestic market, it will essentially challenge the premise upon which our industrial development was based. I say that because we hear the criticism all the time and we also heard it last week that manufacturing is limping, that all the sectors are limping along and that agriculture is not making a sufficient contribution to the foreign exchange earnings of the country.

Mr. President, why is that? We went into an arrangement in which we allowed foreign competitors to be more easily able to compete within our own domestic markets without providing the necessary comfort level to our domestic producers, without training them or preparing them with the skills to compete. We stripped away all the traditional crutches that our domestic producers had within the last 15 years because we were obligated to do so.

Sir, the IMF had control over the economic policies of Barbados in the early 1990s and they gave prescriptions to open up our markets which was the same thing that they did in Jamaica. One of the good things Barbados can say is that it did not in the mid 1990s liberalise its financial services sector at the level that the IMF was prescribing. They did that in Jamaica and the easy, free flow of hot capital, as they call it, collapsed the Jamaican financial system in the 1990s.

Mr. President, I am making the point that these international trading norms, particularly free trade, the basis upon which this agreement with Colombia, a reciprocal agreement, which has partial scope and only limits the amount of goods we can trade. The good thing about the policy of the Government of the Barbados Labour Party, is that we are going to make sure that we create new beachheads of opportunities for our people.

Mr. President, the Democratic Labour Party would have abolished the Export Promotion Agency in the 1990s as part of the prescription of the IMF. Sir, the IMF gave a one-size-fit-all prescription to every country which said that they would make goods cheaper and that the goods which we did not need to produce, which they could produce cheaper, that they would sell them to our markets and that we would become service economies only.

Mr. President, the Barbados Labour Party has been ensuring that our manufacturing sector is strong even though it did not have the traditional supports that our industry was built on since the 1950s, like when Government bought land and set up industrial facilities to allow manufacturers to rent at nominal rents, low taxes and such supports. Sir, industrial parks were created, exclusive zones and things of that sort but, Sir, all these things are now illegal and have no place within the current international system.

Mr. President, the challenge is whether or not we can continue with the view that our economic viability can be achieved within the framework of protecting our own domestic markets and our own domestic firms in the early stages of development. We agree that we were liberalise within the context of the Caribbean Community. We have done that with CARIFTA; we have done that with CARICOM, the Common External Tariff and now under Caribbean Single Market and Economy but today, we are being told that industry can only be competitive and can only contribute to economic development, if we allow competition within our own domestic space. Sir, that is a fundamental change to the premise upon which our industrial development was based. It is fundamentally different to what was prescribed by Sir Arthur Lewis, when he spoke about the industrialisation of the British West Indies.

Mr. President, this opening up to foreign competition is regardless of size and resource endowment. Sir, that is a fundamental feature of this new environment. Barbados, like all other Caribbean countries, must determine whether or not the pace of liberalisation will allow us to treat the new economic beachheads that are being created for our people so that we can see, not only the Barbados market but the regional market as part of our own external and as an extension of our economic systems. Mr. President, that is very critical because, if the people of the country do not have the mind-set or the psychological attitude that what is being created represents new opportunities for them to extend their business, then we are being defeated before we begin.

Mr. President, we also have to watch another issue. Whether the system will require to be more and more liberal, to give more and more concessions and to open up more and more. It might even negate the necessity for creating formal arrangements within the region that we hold dear like the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. As a result of the propensity and the ability of the Americans to sit down with every individual country in the hemisphere and to create a bilateral trade arrangement that is not only WTO compliant but exceeds the level of commitments required by WTO without our ability to address the essential issues which we are saying are important for our own economic survival.

Mr. President, we risk the prospect of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy being rendered nugatory

because they have said that they are not looking to go into any bilateral trade/free trade areas with the Americans, we have done that with the Latin Americans countries and a select few. They are doing it with everyone and every Latin American country is looking to have a free trade arrangement on a bilateral level with the Americans even the countries which were sponsoring the filler-buster at the WTO so that the Doha Round and the Development Agenda could not proceed.

Mr. President, I am not carrying a 'beef' for the Americans or the Europeans but they said that they were coming to give further concessions in relation to trade and services. It never happened, because Brazil, India, Australia and the large developing industrial countries, were saying that you tricked us the first time around, we will not be discussing anything with you any more, unless you cut back further, we are not making any commitments. The essential point is, if Barbadian manufacturers, for example, soft drinks or beer, wanted to get into Brazil, the environment is as hostile and difficult as it was prior to the creation of the World Trade Organisation, because trade in relation to South/South trade, is not being facilitated under the current arrangements. That is an important consideration for us.
2.50 p.m.

Sir, while we must negotiate at different levels, the level of the sub-region, with our CARICOM partners and bilateral levels, we must contemplate the importance of the wider region and widen our integration efforts. We have created the Association of Caribbean States, in the 1990s and it seems that even with these agreements that we signed, which I have no problem with in principle, we have forgotten that in the 1990s, we created an association, called the Association of Caribbean States, which we have failed to use effectively, to negotiate greater elbow room, to manoeuvre within the context of the international norms, which placed the Caribbean squarely in the middle of a fight, with Europe and the Latin American countries.

Sir, the banana issue was one that we should have gone to the Association of Caribbean States and said that we have a problem with the preference that Europe is giving me for sugar, bananas and rum under the three Protocols, *et cetera*, *et cetera* and to let us negotiate how we are going to deal with this issue, at the level of the region. We did not do that. I am saying that sometimes, when we follow the international norms, without questioning them, even with all good intentions, we can find ourselves duplicating efforts, and not arriving at the best decisions, because we make every decision on the basis of what we have in front of us, and sometimes we forget what we have already established.

I believe that we need to use these agreements to push what is essential for Caribbean development, on the agenda at the bilateral level, so that if the Free Trade Area of the Americas picks up pace, then we can have some consensus on the issues, that are important to us.

Sir, we have not been able to get that as an acceptable trading norm. The Bible exhorts us not to yoke unequal plough animals. There is no way, special and differential treatment and point has been made in this debate, that a country like Barbados, and a country like Brazil could be yoked together, to plough in this field and in this area. We have not been able to convince the international trading institution that special and differential treatment are important.

Mr. President, there is a common preferential tariff being negotiated at the level of the Association of Caribbean States. It provides for a symmetrical reduction, based on differential levels of development among member States. Barbados is a member State of the Association of Caribbean States.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Nicholls, could you please wind up. You have two minutes left.

SENATOR G. P. B. NICHOLLS: Sir, I believe that once this provision, in relation to the common preferential tariff, is accepted at the level of the Association of Caribbean States, we stand in a good position to push special and differential treatment, using that model in Free Trade Area of the Americas, and World Trade Organisation negotiations.

Mr. President, in a speech widely regarded as the soundest description of future and strategic planning in Jamaica, in the late 1990s, by our Prime Minister, on Economic Policy Options, for the Caribbean for the 21st Century, it has been widely published, in many academic journals, and it is being taught at all of the universities in the Caribbean, and the Institute of International Relationship in Trinidad and Tobago. The one point that Prime Minister Arthur made in that speech is that we must not lurch from crisis to crisis. We are good at crisis intervention, but we need to undergo some strategic planning.

Sir, I believe that with the technical assistance, that the Government will continue to give, not only to the manufacturing sector, to make them ISO compliant and the agricultural sector, but we can continue to develop a cadre of service providers, entrepreneurs and manufacturers, if we continue to invest in the development of our people, their ideas and enterprise.

Mr. President, with those few words, I lend my support to all of the Bills, under consideration in this debate.

I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Husbands.

SENATOR Miss S. C. V. HUSBANDS: Mr. President, I rise to give my support to the Bills before the Senate pertaining to the bilaterals, that CARICOM is entering with our partners in South America and Latin America. I rise, not only to give support, but to share some thoughts on what we are facing, as CARICOM and to look at what are some of the key planks of our strategy, and what would be required for us to deal with this evolving environment, of which we are.

Sir, as the Honourable Minister so ably pointed out this morning, as he spoke about the World Trade Organisation agreements, looked at the requirements governing trade and examined some of the negotiating rounds with regard to the principles on which they are based.

Sir, I think that one of the main factors that came out of this discourse, was the fact that what is happening from the negotiating rounds is that developed countries are looking after their interest, at the expense of smaller nations like ours, and they do not always adhere to the spirit of the rules that they created. So, there is a different application of those rules. Once other rules are developed, they follow one set, they insist that we follow another.

Mr. President, nothing pinpoints it more ably, than remarks made by Errol Court, Antigua’s Minister of Finance, speaking about the internet gambling game. Antigua, as you know, won that particular case against the United States of America, where it was ruled, that the United States of America had violated the World Trade Organisation’s principles in terms of blocking internet gambling, and not honouring their agreement. Apparently, this week, the deadline for the United States of America, to remove that blockage against internet gambling was not adhered to. Yet, the United States of America, put before the World Trade Organisation, the European Union for subsidies in agriculture. Sir, Errol Court pointed out that on one hand, the United States of America was putting somebody in court for not honouring World Trade Organisation agreements, and on the other failing to honour theirs. That is the spirit of the environment, in which we are operating, and in which the mighty, can do what is in their interest, while those who lack, will have to bow to the will of others.

Sir, this creates a tremendous challenge, in terms of the environment in which we have to operate. It is important, that we are able to find efficient mechanisms for our economy and to survive.

Mr. President, sometimes people ask the questions: Why should small places like Barbados and CARICOM,

be a part of the World Trade Organisation. Why do they not stay out? Why do you need to form regional integration agreements? There are different schools of thought about regional integrated agreements. We will get to that in a moment.

Sir, one of the reasons CARICOM has to engage, is because small nations are in part dependent. Small nations like ours with limited size, land space, capital and resources have limited production capacity. It means that it is impossible to produce most of the products we need. That means that we must import, and since you have to import you have to pay. In order to pay you must export. It becomes like a vicious cycle. It creates a tremendous skew in your production capacity. I think it was captured extremely well by C. Y. Thomas... one of the regions most noted economists, who said that arising in large measure from our openness and our narrow export specialisation, small states generally are bias in their growth to produce what they do not consume, and to consume what they do not produce. This could not have been put any better because this is the situation in which countries, like Barbados, find themselves. 3.00 p.m.

It means that export is extremely important for the survival of Barbados. It therefore is important for our being able to offer our citizens the quality of life which they have come to enjoy. Therefore, it is critical that we find some mechanism by which we are going to function in the new environment. We would have heard in some of the last debates the fact that Barbadians have been importing more than ever, and we have actually increased our imports by \$400 million or \$600 million. In order to satisfy that, it is imperative that we boost our export capacity.

Senator Griffith already outlined the difficulties we have with our traditional products like rum and the problems that our CARICOM countries have with bananas. Another difficulty that confronts us, and this was contained in the Report for 2005 from the United Nations, is that what is happening when you look at trade, higher tariffs are being charged against developing countries' goods, versus what developed countries charge other developed countries.

Therefore, if goods are coming from the EU into the United States of America, they attract a very low tariff. But if you have products coming from Thailand, Barbados, Africa, the duty which they experience is often much higher. Now, because their average tariff is going to be lower, when you balance the highs and lows, it is still going to be an overall low tariff. When assessments are being made about countries that are not liberalised and have high tariffs and need to cut their tariffs, *et cetera*, it is not seen that the developed world needs to do cutting, specifically, maybe not in general, but certainly in relation to the kinds of tariffs that they charge our goods, and, by doing that it helps to keep our

goods out of the market. Therefore, it makes it extremely difficult for us to do things like exporting. When they are not able to do that, in terms of using the tariffs to keep us out, they then use the non-technical barriers to trade. This has made it very difficult for domestic businesses to grow in their export, even though they have excellent products.

BICO, for example, imports its basic milk product from Europe, and therefore it has to meet the European specifications, they convert it into ice cream, then find that there is a non-tariff barrier that says they cannot export their BICO Ice Cream back into Europe, because they use technical standards to be able to block that good from getting in. Therefore, they use standards, they use content, they use the process that you use, anything that helps to keep your goods out.

What that presents for us, are these questions. How would small nations find a way to market their goods? How are they going to find areas in which to trade in their services? Therefore, the current economic environment presents a very clear and present danger to small vulnerable states like ours. Here is what that clearly presents. One, because of trade liberalisation and the types of rules governing trade, we now have the removal of our safety nets, the preferential treatment protections, *et cetera*. There is no accommodation within the rules for small vulnerable States.

An excellent example of that is what has happened in relation to our foreign exchange controls, where small sensitive Nations that are dependent on foreign exchange and have very little foreign exchange earning capacity, have stated continuously to the international communities, that, look, we cannot afford to remove capital controls because it is going to cause us to be extremely vulnerable. One bad move, and we could find ourselves in a major problem.

Central Banks have been arguing this for some time, that is, we could find that we are not able to stabilise our foreign exchange, if we liberalise our capital in that way. This was proven in Argentina, where within a week, their entire economy was devastated and found that, for example, they have reached the stage where 80 per cent of their population is below the poverty line. This happened because they had that free movement of capital and the capital was able to exit in one swoop and destroy a country and cause millions of people to fall into starvation.

Sir, where we are at, is that the game is based on who is most efficient will win. What that means is that those who have land size that they could build production capacity, they will win. People who have the capital to invest in production to produce goods, who have the capital to

invest in education to produce people who can deliver services at a high level, they are going to win. The people who have efficient labour, who come to work, who have low absenteeism, and will produce results and are highly skilled, they are going to win. People who have aggressive, well-managed businesses and are willing to take risks, they are going to win. Countries that have access to technology and good research and development capability, very innovative, they are going to win.

When we stack up all those requirements for winning, you can see immediately that CARICOM is at a disadvantage because it lacks the land size, it lacks the capital for investment to produce the goods, it lacks the labour at efficient costs and at high levels of productivity and it lacks the aggressive, well-managed businesses, as well as the technology and research and development.

Therefore, this is the question facing us. How are we going to make it in this new environment? One of the approaches that CARICOM has been using is to look at regional integration agreements, the absolute importance of, at least, finding somewhere in which we can sell our goods and services. CARICOM was our first regional integration agreement. As we look at the CSME, this is going to be extremely important to all of our lives. This is why it is important that we make it work.

The next phase after CARICOM and the CSME, is the Extra Regional Agreements, the bilaterals that we would have with places like Columbia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, *et cetera*. Now, the whole has actually moved into trading blocs because all those countries are now jockeying for positions to secure market space and to secure opportunity for their businesses.

Therefore, the Asian group has come together and they are two billion in numbers. What is interesting to note, however, about the Asian group is that the Australians have managed to get their way into that group to be able to benefit from those two billion plus persons that live there. Australia is beginning to look at an Asian destiny while having a European type connection. Then, you have Europe with four hundred million persons in their trade bloc, the FTAA with eight hundred million persons, Africa with four hundred and fifty million persons and CARICOM with just fourteen million persons.

Sir, even as we seek to come together and try to create some kind of environment for ourselves, we have voices that are constantly telling us that this is not good economics. These are some of the things they are telling us, that north-north trade is good, that when developed countries trade with other developed countries, it is going to create more benefit, more wealth, more welfare, *et cetera*. They tend to engage in what they call, intra-industry trade, where they trade similar goods with each other.

They say that north-south trade is good. This is where they do a lot inter-industry trade. This is where the north provides goods that are technology and research driven, and the south provides labour, intensive low-cost goods, which give them a good match, and they are able to create wealth, benefit and economic growth for each other.

Their point to us is that South-trade does not create anything. It is trade distorting. There are a set of poor countries trading with another set of poor countries and neither of them can create wealth.

This is the challenge we have. What are our options? Where can we go? Who wants to trade with us? Where else are we going to find markets? How else are we going to find opportunities in which to learn how to build production capacity, to learn how to market effectively, and to learn how to be competitive, so that we can begin to think of moving into the wider world. The truth is, if we are not able to make regional agreements work for us, CSME, first and certainly some of the bilaterals that we have on the table this afternoon, we cannot overcome the blockages to trade, there are serious implications for all of us.

For example, business will find that, because they are limited to this narrow market, their production cost is not going to allow them to produce a good that is able to compete with another good. All that will happen is that as the ACP/EU Agreement is finalised and trade starts to happen with European goods coming into the CARICOM market, you will find that our domestic producers are not going to be able to retain even the little domestic market which they have, because cheaper goods are flowing into the region.
3.10 p.m.

Mr. President, it is anticipated that the ACP/EU Agreement can create some sort of trade diversion in the region of billions of dollars, and so businesses in the region would have a real problem and so as a result many of them would close and go out of business.

Another implication comes from labour. Labour in the CARICOM region has been accustomed to a certain level of comfort, they have been accustomed to a particular standard, they are accustomed working at a particular pace and they have developed certain habits and certain cultures within their work organisations that have suited how they like to operate. Unfortunately, that kind of position is going to be seriously threatened by trade liberalisation simply because as businesses disappear, labour would not have the opportunity to work and therefore poverty could be our lot because we would not be able to earn and create revenue or foreign exchange, and so all of our citizens would then suffer because it would become very difficult to provide all the services that our citizens are accustomed to.

Mr. President, the question is what do we do? Regional integration agreements is one factor that we have looked at in CARICOM as a way forward for us. Sir, what are the benefits of entering regional integration arrangements apart from the foreign exchange earnings? Sir, while some of the economists 'pooh-pooh' the south-south trade, there are benefits to be derived for our nations, for our businesses and for our people. One of the things it does is to present us with a larger market so that we can build the economies of scales. That is why the formation of regional businesses is going to be very important.

Mr. President, this is one of the reasons the Barbados Government would have pursued that policy of taking the Barbados National Bank and giving the domestic market an opportunity to buy shares in it as well as to give the Barbados National Bank the opportunity to find a regional partner, because it would be swallowed up in the tide of liberalisation should we have to open our banking services. The Barbados National Bank simply could not be competitive against those large external banks if it remains solely in Barbados, so its partner would have to be a regional partner to help it to grow very quickly. The same thing would be what would be in the works in terms of the Insurance Corporation of Barbados and Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation.

Mr. President, the other thing that the regional integration movement helped with is to provide another benefit in relation to the breaking of monopolies, which Barbadians have already experienced. With the advent of Digicel into our market, Barbadians are now enjoying lower operation prices for their cell phone usage. This has been a tremendous benefit to the average citizen. As a matter of fact, according to the United Nations Index, Barbados now enjoys a level of 50 per cent of its population actually using cell phones and that we actually have a cell phone usage higher than the country of Canada. Sir, a lot of that came as a result of the advent of Digicel into our market, which has helped to break monopolies and lower prices and consumers are able to gain more.

Mr. President, another monopoly that it would break is that it can create opportunities for new distributors. In small markets like CARICOM you often have one or two businesses that control a lot of the products that consumers purchase. Sir, because of that near monopolistic position, they are able to determine the price and therefore do not always have to pass on the benefits to the consumer. Secondly, they are able, because of their monopoly position, to shut out other distributors from coming into the market who would be able to give more competitive pricing. Sir, it presents tremendous opportunities where you have monopolies or oligopolies controlling product lines.

Sir, when you have a regional integration trade treaty, you are able to source new products and new distributors can get an opportunity to jump in on those lines. Mr. President, I really want to encourage people who have that kind of orientation, that these agreements would provide the opportunities to source goods that perhaps they would not have been able to represent in our market.

Mr. President, it also forces greater efficiencies in domestic businesses, if they do not go broke because that is a very real concern. Sir, because of the small size of our domestic market, it is possible that a lot of our companies could go broke in a trade liberalised environment and therefore creating a regional space in which to compete where you may be competing with businesses that are not quite as huge as some of the huge global companies it provides an opportunity for businesses not to go broke.

Mr. President, it also encourages foreign direct investment. One of the things that I am really sorry about is that the Free Trade Area of the Americas never got the opportunity to truly take off in the way that it was intended. The political pressures within the United States of America made it imperative for the United States of America to hustle and get a Free Trade Area of the Americas formed within a specific time before the last election. Sir, with the time drawing near and not being able to create it, they just went ahead and did a whole set of bilaterals in order to do as much as they could should they happen to lose the election. The end result was that the Free Trade Area of the Americas never materialised.

Mr. President, if we could have been part of a Free Trade Area of the Americas – and we would have to see if it would ever materialise – it would have provided a wonderful position for us, for the reason that some people who may not have entrance into the South American market, to be able to take advantage of that \$800 million market, may find the Caribbean an attractive place to locate certain types of plants and certain types of production. This would certainly be attractive to places like Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname or Belize, all of which could benefit tremendously from that type of investment.

Mr. President, an example of that kind of benefit has certainly been exhibited recently in terms of South America. China just recently invested, or is about to invest, \$36 billion into South America with special emphasis on Brazil. Mr. President, the Chinese are looking not only to the Brazilian market but also to have an entrance into any relationship Brazil and those other countries may have with North America to find other ways in which to set up businesses that they could export. For example, if you look at textiles, the Americans are blocking the textiles from coming in, but if you have a trade agreement that leaves

the door open for textiles with South America, and you have a Chinese firm manufacturing down in South America producing the same textiles, here is a door that they could enter if that were to happen.

Mr. President, we are going to see a lot of movement in terms of foreign direct investments as a way to overcome barriers. Sir, it would be really good for us in CARICOM if it were to do the same for us because it could create jobs and bring capital into the region.

Mr. President, one of the disadvantages is that imports can kill local productions. We had to do a study on the cost of protection in the milk industry here in Barbados and our research causes us to have to look at the dairy farmers, how much they produce in a given year, what crisis they were obtaining and the differential in price that they offer depending on what the milk was used for. Mr. President, the argument that people were constantly trying to push on us was that it is in Barbados' interest to dismantle the milk industry and simply import the milk because it is just cheaper.

Mr. President, as we did the analysis on the cost of protection, what we concluded really was not true, that Barbados did not have a great deal to gain in terms of welfare benefits to the consumers by dismantling its milk industry and that it did not have a lot to gain in terms of those imports but it would lose a company that had the opportunity not only to do milk but was diversified into other areas which are more profitable. Mr. President, what was amazing about that particular paper is that we got a really good grade for it, but it went fully against the philosophy of the economists of the time. They had argued strongly with us that we should not take the position, but we were able to prove it.

Mr. President, when you have a lot of imports coming through trade liberalisation, it can kill your domestic production. That is why you have to select very carefully if you could create your own treaty in which you do not have to liberalise everything, which is the case with the treaties that are in front of us, where you could identify what are some of the areas you want to do your trade in *et cetera*. It gives you an opportunity to protect what you need to protect and only put on the table what you think you have the possibility of competing in.

Mr. President, another disadvantage is that it tends to reduce Government revenue and so taxation is impacted because as your import duties are removed, Government then loses that revenue. Sir, most CARICOM countries are very, very import-tax dependent. That forms a lot of Government revenue. That is what Government uses to build roads and schools and to provide health care and other things for its citizens.

3.20 p.m.

Mr. President, this has been the challenge which Government has been facing, which is how are we going to replace that revenue, but the foresight of the Barbados Labour Party, has caused it to put in place the VAT regime, which is a tax to help offset the impact of having to make adjustments to import duties and income tax, in order to be compliant, at the level of the World Trade Organisation.

Sir, the VAT surplus has been benefiting Barbados tremendously. In the early years, it has produced more than \$340 million in one year and has grown to more than \$700 million, in 2005. This means that we are successfully making the transition in the economy, in terms of being able to comply, while, at the same time, balancing the economy, so that we can still maintain our social services, though we would be receiving less from our duties.

Mr. President, there are a number of challenges to maximising the types of bilaterals that we have been looking at. One of those challenges is how does one get one's businesses, which tend to be passive, to understand the absolute importance of getting up and moving and taking advantage of that trade treaty. It is going to require a higher level of aggression, than is now being shown by the bulk of Barbadian businesses.

Mr. President, I want to congratulate the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Despite putting the treaty in place, they have not rested there. Even as we speak, they are completing a meeting between the Columbian and Barbadian officials, along with Barbadian businesses, both large and small. They are looking at how Barbadian and Columbian businesses could work together, in order to maximise what this treaty means. What they are doing, is creating the environment, to stimulate the trade activity around the Columbian agreement. It is now going to remain for businesses to see how they could benefit.

Mr. President, one of the challenges that businesses speak about, in terms of making use of these bilaterals, is the need for marketing intelligence. Many people in Barbados start up businesses, without doing adequate market research. Barbadians are accustomed doing that but being a protective market, we would make mistakes, a few losses and after a while we would gain a footing and would eventually start to make money. Unfortunately, in this new competitive environment, businesses cannot afford to make those types of mistakes. We cannot afford to make those types of mistakes in shipping goods to Columbia. Therefore, it becomes very important that market intelligence becomes a normal way of operating.

Sir, in such circumstances, only a few companies can afford to do that market research capability. The WIBISCO Biscuit Company, for example, does a great deal of work in direct market research. It has done a lot of work in Latin

America and has accumulated some extremely related market intelligence, that would become important for other businesses.

Mr. President, therefore, in order to help some of the smaller businesses in Barbados that want to take advantage of any of these treaties, we are going to have to put support mechanisms in place, to increase research capabilities, so that we would know what are the opportunities and where some of our partners are located. Therefore, collaboration in market research is going to be vital.

Mr. President, transport is another major problem. In this regard, a number of studies have been done by a Mr. Allan Wynters. One of the things identified is that transport is a major problem for small island states, and that it is actually cheaper to ship goods from Europe to the United States of America, than it is to ship goods from Miami to Barbados. This is one area that we have to solve. Another difficulty is that of language barrier.

Mr. President, we are going to have to do something about helping our people to become bilingual. Sir, I want to congratulate the University of the West Indies, which has now included Spanish as a part of its Master's Degree programme. Whether it is international trade or international management, Spanish is now required.

Sir, what has been put in place in relation to those things? Mr. President, one of the things that I think is important, as a part of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, is the formation of the Regional Development Fund and more importantly, the Regional Stock Exchange. The Regional Stock Exchange is one of the ways in which we are going to keep more domestic capital at home and allow us to invest in our regional businesses. Therefore, businesses have to begin to take advantage of it.

Mr. President, there is another change that is also going to be extremely necessary. Sir, not only does business have to change, but workers also have to change. This is where we have to move our customer service quality up. Sir, recent studies by the National Initiative on Service Excellence, have shown that reports from the Central Bank of Barbados, have demonstrated that productivity between Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, is way higher than that of Barbados. Sir, that is a very embarrassing statistic, at which we have to look.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you have one minute left.

SENATOR Miss S. C. V. HUSBANDS: Mr. President, one of the things that is going to be important for our workers, in adjusting to this new environment, is that not

only must they retool and change their performance but workers can no longer rely on job security or wage increases, as a way to take care of their lives. Workers are going to have to bite at both ends of the cherry, not only to get a wage but they have to start and begin to invest. They need to become shareholders. They need to understand that if they are going to benefit. If they are going to ride with any tide that comes in the economy, they are going to have to move to the top end and become owners of capital as well.

Mr. President, with these few words, I want to commend the Barbados Government, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for the tremendous work that has been put in the negotiation and formation of the bilateral treaties. I want to encourage businesses that these are opportunities, which would call for a change, but I say to them to take heart and make that transition for indeed, we need to grow our economy and to safeguard our future.

Mr. President, I am obliged to you.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, in bringing this debate to a close, I wish to express my gratitude to the Honourable Senators who have spoken.

Mr. President, it is good to see we have all agreed that we need to focus our attention on the development of our export industries, so as to protect our country from the external shocks, to which it is vulnerable because of its small size and its high degree of openness.

Mr. President, I would wish to say that Government is fully aware of the need to go in that direction and that it will continue to work through its institutions, such as the Barbados Export Inc., the recently established Export Development Agency, along with the stakeholders, to provide support mechanisms, to enable them to take advantage of whatever opportunities exist, as a result of these treaties.

Mr. President, we recognise there are some difficulties, particularly in relation to the hemisphere, for example, the language issue, which is not an unsurmountable task, as the Venezuelan Institute offers courses in Spanish. The Barbados Community College also has a Language Laboratory. Therefore, it is in everyone's interest to become involved in these courses and to learn the language, so that as we interact with people in the hemisphere, we can do so with ease.

Mr. President, when I used to go to meetings in relation to the Free Trade Area of the Americas, I was always a little embarrassed, to see that although I had done a number of Spanish courses at the Venezuelan Institute and elsewhere, I was often reluctant to speak Spanish, for

fear of saying the wrong things, while, on the other hand, the Latinos were never reluctant to speak their bad English. That is a fault of English-speaking people. They are always hesitant to speak and seem to think that as they cannot speak another language with the same ease as they do English, that they should not do it. On the other hand, there are others, whose native tongue is not English, who have no difficulty in expressing themselves and allowing themselves to be corrected. In fact, my experience has taught me that is how we learn.

Mr. President, the issue of the language barrier is not an unsurmountable one. The one that is going to pose the most difficulty, to which Senator Husbands has referred, is that of transportation.
3.30 p.m.

Sir, transportation is a big issue even now because we have come up in this world in a way where it was always easy to get in touch with the metropol and the developed countries but it was never easy to move around ourselves and this is a difficulty which we have to overcome.

Mr. President, in spite of that, I am sure that with the appropriate support mechanisms which the Government will continue to put in place, that we can take advantage of any opportunities which are coming our way through these treaties. I would encourage the business community to identify any of the difficulties which they may encounter so that the Government can work out what additional support it can supply to assist them because it is in our interest to make the most of the opportunity.

Mr. President, I want to say that in the case of agriculture, we have already identified the number of areas of co-operation that we believe should be pursued between ourselves and Colombia and the other countries but we have gone beyond by bringing this Bill here for consideration. We have done a similar thing with respect to Brazil and in the coming months we will pursue those opportunities to see how best we can gain from being involved in discussion and dialogue with those countries.

We are also at the moment getting valuable assistance from the UK through an organisation call OTF whose representatives are presently on the island having discussions with us to develop our business plans for the transformation of the sugar industry. While some people are threatening to close one door, the Lord is opening another door. Sir, that is really the secret of life.

Mr. President, we are pressing on with our efforts to improve the agricultural sector to modernise it so as to allow our farmers to have the opportunity to make a decent life.

Mr. President, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the SENATE resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 – 4 were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Trade, Economic and Technical Co-operation (Agreement between the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Government of the Republic of Colombia), Act, 2006.

ORDER NO. 4 – FREE TRADE AREA (AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING THE FREE TRADE AREA BETWEEN THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM) AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC) BILL, 2006

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the SENATE resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 – 4 were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as Free Trade Area (Agreement establishing the Free Trade Area between the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Dominican Republic) Act, 2006.
3.40 p.m.

ORDER NO. 5 – TRADE AND ECONOMIC CO-
OPERATION (AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE
CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)
AND THE REPUBLIC OF
CUBA) BILL, 2006

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

COMMITTEE

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Mr. PRESIDENT left the Chair and the Senate went into Committee on the Bill, HER HONOUR SENATOR Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS in the Chair.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 4 were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported to HIS HONOUR Mr. 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. E. R. GRIFFITH the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Trade and Economic Co-operation (Agreement between the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Government of the Republic of Cuba) Act, 2006

ORDER NO. 6 – THE FREE TRADE AREA (AGREE-
MENT ESTABLISHING THE FREE TRADE AREA
BETWEEN THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY
(CARICOM) AND THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF COSTA
RICA) BILL, 2006

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

COMMITTEE

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Mr. PRESIDENT left the Chair and the Senate went into Committee on the Bill, HER HONOUR SENATOR Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS in the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 4 were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported to HIS HONOUR Mr. 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. E. R. GRIFFITH the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Trade and Economic Co-operation (Agreement between the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Government of the Republic of Cuba) Act, 2006.

ORDER NO. 6 – SECOND READING OF THE FREE
TRADE AREA (AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING
THE FREE TRADE AREA BETWEEN THE
CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY AND THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF COSTA RICA) BILL, 2006

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

COMMITTEE

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Mr. PRESIDENT left the Chair and the SENATE went into Committee on the Bill, HER HONOUR SENATOR Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS in the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 4 were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported to HIS HONOUR Mr. 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. E. R. GRIFFITH the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Free Trade Area Between The Caribbean Community and The Government of the Republic of Costa Rica Act, 2006.

ORDER NO. 7 – SECOND READING OF THE
NATIONAL INSURANCE AND SOCIAL
SECURITY (AMENDMENT AND
VALIDATION) BILL, 2006

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, in this case we have two Bills which are related. The first one deals with amendments to the Social Security Act and the second one deals with amendments to the Severance Payments Act. The amendments to the Severance Payments Act are the results of certain amendments which are being made to the National Insurance Act. I would respectfully suggest that we should have one debate to take care of both issues.

The proposed amendments to the legislation before us, the National Insurance and Social Security Act came as a result of the work of a committee, which was established a few years ago, to carry out a review of the existing legislation to identify areas, where it was felt that there was need for some updating of the legislation, and at the same time to correct a few anomalies, that exist in the system and, finally, to propose the validation of action, which had been taken by decisions by the Minister of Finance, in his Economic Statements where he made certain adjustments to the payment of certain benefits from the Scheme.
3.50 p.m.

I will go through those proposed changes for the benefit of the Members. The first one has to do with the Barbados Water Authority. You will notice that this Bill will amend the National Insurance and Social Security Act, Chapter 47, to exempt the employees of the Barbados Water Authority from the requirement to pay contributions, in respect of sickness benefits and unemployment benefits, under the Act.

This situation came about, Mr. President, as a result of the fact that the Barbados Water Authority, in its earlier days, was a Government department. The employees of that department, paid the rates, which are applicable to all Government employees. As you know, Government employees, when they are sick, as long as the leave is certified, they get their usual pay, during that period of the certified leave, so that they do not pay the portion of the National Insurance contribution, which covers sickness benefits, nor do they pay the portion which covers unemployment benefits. Sir, persons in the private sector are required to pay those benefits, because they do not enjoy the same benefits as the Government departments, when it comes to sickness and unemployment.

Therefore, when the Barbados Water Authority became a corporation, the workers who entered employment thereafter it became a corporation, found themselves paying the same rates as the private sector, even though they did not benefit from the National Insurance Department, because as

employees of the Corporation, they continued to be treated the same as the others. Sir, that naturally led to a bit of disquiet among the workers, that one group of the workers paid the lower rate and the other group paid the higher rate. The National Insurance Department is seeking through this amendment, to require all of them to pay the lower rate and that is how this amendment arises. It is really nothing beyond that, just correcting an anomaly.

While I am speaking on the matters pertaining to the National Insurance Department, Mr. President, I wish to make reference to statements which occurred in the Auditor-General's Report and, to which persons referred when we were having discussions on the Estimates. It has to do with that section of the Auditor General's Report, which states that the accounts of the National Insurance Department have not been audited for about five years.

Let me say upfront that is a fact but there is more to it than meets the eye. When I joined the staff of the Audit Department in 1968, I found in place a practice then, which still exists today. Sir, that is, that the Audit Department has members of staff assigned to two Government departments on a daily basis, the Treasury and the National Insurance Department. Those persons go to work every day at those two departments. Whereas, audits are done at the other Government departments at the end of the year, in the case of those two departments, audits are done on a daily basis.

There is nowhere in the private sector, that I know of, where audits are done on a daily basis. There is nowhere else in the public sector that I know of, where audits are done on a daily basis. The point I am making is this. If the Auditor General's Department has staff working at the National Insurance Department on a daily basis, and the members of that staff have access to all of the records, including the computer system of the National Insurance Department – and I know that they are functioning – at the end of the year, there ought to be no surprises.

Therefore, while it may appear that there is something strange happening at the National Insurance Department, when you read in the Auditor General's Report, and the Auditor General provides no explanation beyond just saying that the audits have not been done for five years, one is likely to be alarm, unless one knows the system. I am just cautioning Members and reassuring them that there is no need for any alarm.

What took place, however, was that there was a dispute between the Auditor General and the National Insurance Department about the cash in hand, the balance, at the end of 1999. It took them from then until late 2005 to come to an agreement on the figure. This having taken place, prevented the audit from the subsequent years from being done.

If you have not yet verified the balance at the end of 1999, do not mind that you would have been doing your daily audits and you are quite satisfied that everything is taking place, you cannot conclude the paper work for the subsequent years, without coming to an agreement on the balance at the end of 1999.

I have been assured by the Auditor General and the Director of National Insurance that the matter has been resolved and the work is now in progress, the preparation of the schedules dealing with the cash on hand for the following years and that, in the not too distant future, that would be resolved. This was the issue.

The problem you get, Mr. President, is that in the Auditor General's Report, statements are made, which are correct. No explanations are given though, from the Department's side. It is an issue that I raised, when I was Director of Finance in the Department of Economic Affairs to the then Auditor General. I made the point that the system was a little bias against the departments, in that, regardless of what explanation they gave the Auditor, there was no mention of it in the Report, even though the Audit Department would have it on their record.

The Report having therefore been published, will always have that statement in it, and nobody will ever know what was the explanation. I am happy to say that the present Auditor General has taken that to heart and, in future, you are likely to see explanations offered, so that you can see what is the audit position at that point and you can see the explanation, then, it would give you a better picture.

I am not alarmed because I know the system. I have worked in it for years and from many sides. But people who have not had the benefit of that experience, will not know it, and life being what it is, people tend to become very suspicious and skeptical about things. Therefore, it is in everybody's interest that where there are differences of opinion on issues, the explanation supplied by the department is given in the report, at that point in time, so that somebody could subsequently ask what is really the latest position on it.

I thought I would give that explanation so that members of the public who had heard those queries, would be rest assured that the Scheme is audited on a daily basis and that, while I would not say it is impossible, it is highly unlikely that with this type of system in place, any surprises would appear within the Scheme. We consider it too important a Scheme to allow any doubt to arise about its integrity.
4.00 p.m.

Mr. President, the other matters came out of the Report which was done by Members of the Committee. I believe

Senator Newton served on that committee so she would be familiar with the issues which gave rise to these changes.

In Section 11 of the Bill before us, which relates to Section 38 of the principal Act, there is a proposal that penalties be put in place for persons who obstruct the National Insurance officers in the execution of their duties.

There is also a very important change at the new Section 14 (a) that I would like everybody to take note of. The National Insurance Department over the years has suffered at the hands of a number of people who were charged with the responsibility of collecting contributions but who in some cases did not pay over those contributions to the Department. While there was reference to it in the sense that any outstanding monies could be charged against the assets of companies and so on, there were no penalties.

This new Section 14 (a) deals with the case of owners of fishing vessels and owners of Public Service Vehicles. Mr. President, you know how that system works in that the operator may be a different person from the owner. The operator may go and employ people. What this new Section 14 (a) is doing is putting the onus on the owner of the vessel or the vehicle.

Mr. President, Section 18 of the Bill before us deals with persons collecting money and not paying it over to the National Insurance Department. In Section 18 (3) there are now fines as well as terms of imprisonment or both for employers who deduct or attempt to deduct the employees' contributions from the employees' wages and not pay them over to the National Insurance Office. Mr. President, if the cases arise in the future, the Magistrate would now not have any difficulty in imposing fines or imprisonment as he or she may determine. That was not provided for before.

Mr. President, I know the problems that the National Insurance Office, the Inland Revenue Department, the Customs Department and the Land Tax Department have from time to time, which go beyond the situation like the one described here. Sir, I am sure that the National Insurance Office at some point in time would have to deal with it. I know that the Inland Revenue Department had to deal with it.

Mr. President, there are persons who set up shell companies and when you try to move against them you discover that they are just a shell, no assets or anything like that. There are people who close down a company owing these departments money and then they start up another one next door carrying on the same business and so on. Sir, the other departments have found a way of dealing with it. So I am sure that the National Insurance Office would have to deal with it if they have not already dealt with it.

Mr. President, the amendment here is not about that. The amendment here is about the cases where people deduct money and fail to pay it over, and the appropriate fines have now been put in place through these amendments to deal with that situation. Mr. President, I hope that would soon become a thing of the past for the National Insurance Office and that the persons who collect the money would pay it over so that there would be no difficulty with the workers obtaining their benefits.

Mr. President, some changes are mentioned in Section 8 of the Bill before us which relate to Section 21 of the principal Act. These changes have to do with invalidity benefits and maternity grants. There are a number of scenarios that they have identified, where they feel now that maternity benefits should be paid, and at the same time the grant has been increased to \$850.

Mr. President, coming out of these changes, there were a number of changes made through regulations which are not before us at the moment because those regulations have been dealt with in the normal way. The major issues then are the ones to do with the invalidity benefit under Section 8, the maternity grant under Section 8, the new Sections 14 (a), 18 1(b) and 18(3) and then Section 11, which deals with the obstruction of persons.

As you would recall, Mr. President, there were some changes some time ago as a result of the pension reform efforts to make sure that the scheme did not find itself under the same kind of pressure that schemes in the United Kingdom and elsewhere are now under as the population live longer.

Mr. President, we have an ageing society and therefore the persons who are working to contribute to the Scheme are becoming fewer and fewer. An increase was made to the contributions but then an adjustment was made to the retirement age so that persons could remain in the workforce longer. Those who choose to do so could delay their benefits from the scheme so that the scheme could remain in a viable position.

Mr. President, as a result of those changes to the retirement age, it is necessary to make the appropriate changes to the Severance Payments Act so that the retirement age would be the same under both Acts. That is the major issue with the changes to the Severance Payments Act. There is also a change to that Act so that everything is brought on the same basis as the National Insurance Act.

Mr. President, the changes to the Severance Payments Act, are as a result of the changes that took place sometime ago to the National Insurance Act with respect to the retirement age. In essence, those are the changes before us

with the reasons these changes should take place. There are not, in my view, anything controversial, it is just a question of updating the scheme.

Mr. President, I am told that work is continuing on the review of the Severance Payments legislation and that in the not too distant future further changes would come. The only changes here now are to bring the Act in line with respect to the retirement age, with the ages identified in the National Insurance Act.

Mr. President, on that basis, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, as the Honourable Leader of Government Business has indicated there is not much by way of controversy in the amendments before the Senate. The amendments result from the recommendations of a committee, which was set up to review the legislation. I think that Senator Griffith has quite adequately explained the amendments before us.
4.10 p.m.

Mr. President, I am particularly interested in Clause No. 8 of the Bill, the amendment to Section 21. Sir, Clause No. 8 (a) (1), which deletes paragraph (d) of the principal Act and substitutes a new paragraph (d).

Mr. President, I am interested in this because sometime ago in this Honourable Chamber, I drew attention to the fact that, in my view, a most unhealthy practice had developed in the National Insurance Department, where workers who had been put on invalidity benefits, in accordance with the definition of invalidity benefit, as contained in the Act, which the definition was a periodical payment, which is paid to an insured person, who is permanently incapable of work.

Mr. President, these workers were declared permanently incapable of work and over a period of time, were receiving invalidity benefits because they had been written-off, for all practical purposes, as members of the workforce. Sir, there is now a situation where suddenly these people have started receiving letters from the department, telling them first that they had to go and see doctors, and then invariably they were told they were going to be taken off the invalidity benefit scheme.

Mr. President, I have argued a few of these cases before. I have argued that if a man is declared to be permanently incapable of work, one cannot be seen to resile from that position by revoking the benefits which he was receiving, on someone's representation. After all, declaring a man permanently incapable of work, would result from advice given to the department by a doctor or by a panel of doctors. Sir, all of this began to happen, I believe, at a time when the fund seemed to be under pressure and was trying to reduce the amount of benefits it had to pay out.

I believe that the definition of an invalidity benefit has now been revised, to take account of those occurrences. It now says it is a payment or periodical payment, to an insured person, who is incapable of work as a result of specific disease or bodily or mental disablement, which is likely to remain permanent. That makes a world of difference legally because you are no longer declaring the person permanently incapable of work but is now leaving the door open, to review the situation, over a period of time, so that there will always remain the possibility of the benefits being discontinued.

Mr. President, in the situation that exists as of now, prior to the passing of this Bill, a number of workers would have relied on the department's representation, would have given up their jobs and would have, therefore, put themselves and their families at a disadvantage. Therefore, I am very glad to see this situation is being corrected, so that workers would not be disadvantaged by the wording of Section 21, insofar as it relates to invalidity benefits.

Mr. President, the other area of interest, also under Clause 8 of the Bill, relates to maternity grants and the definition of the word "spouse." Sir, this word "spouse" reoccurs in various areas of the law. It can be found in the Succession Act, where, I think, it is defined as the single man and a single woman cohabiting continuously for a period of five years, immediately preceding the date of the death of either. Therefore, the condition under the Succession Act, which must be satisfied, is that both persons must be single and must be cohabiting for a continuous period of five years immediately preceding the death of either.

Mr. President, under the Family Law Act, the word "spouse" occurs. Under that Act, both persons do not have to be single persons. The Family Law Act takes account of the fact that a man could be happily married, or could appear to be happily married, but could be conducting a fairly steady relationship outside the marriage and attracts to himself, not only rights but obligations. Furthermore, that man is not allowed to disavow those obligations, when he is being called to account on the ground that the lady could not be his spouse because he would have already been a married man. The Family Courts have adopted a more elastic approach to the definition of "spouse" than the Succession Act.

Mr. President, what marries the Family Law legislation and the Succession Act legislation, is the fact that they both rely on a period of five years. This legislation moves from the five-year period and in respect of the woman, requires that she be a single woman, living with a single man, in the same household, for a period of not less than two years, prior to the date of the birth of a child. In the case of the man, he must be a single man, living with a single woman, in the same household, for a period of not less than one year.

Therefore, this legislation constitutes a marked departure from what the Succession Act and the Family Law Act have been trying to do, with respect to the definition of the word "spouse."

Mr. President, I suspect, therefore, that it is entirely possible, that led on by the receipts of benefits under this legislation, where only a one-year or two-year cohabitation is required, having been declared a "spouse" under this legislation, persons might be encouraged to approach the courts in the event of broken relationships, claiming they are "spouses" and were already declared so, under the National Insurance Act, only for them to collide with the Family Law Act and have their hopes dashed, their expectations ruined.

Mr. President, I think there is going to have to be some education and enlightenment, as far as this departure is concerned but I can see why the period is shorter, having regard to the nature of the issues being dealt with by the legislation, where the interest of a child is involved and the payment of maternity grant becomes an issue.

Mr. President, so far as the amendments to the Severance Payments Act is concerned, it is noted that the schedule is being amended and the definition of pensionable age is being amended, to take account of changes to the retirement age in Barbados.
4.20 p.m.

Sir, by January 1, 2018, a short 12 years from now, the pensionable age will be 67 years. This discussion has been around for some time. I am aware that it is still causing a lot of anxiety and I see on the national television, from time to time, some snippets that attempt to educate the public on these coming events.

Mr. President, in Barbados we are lucky because, I think that in France and in other parts of Europe, these changes to the pensionable age actually drew people on to the streets in angry protest. Sir, as recently as last Sunday, a BBC discussion programme "Dateline London" was discussing the anger being felt in the population that pensionable age is being increased to take account of the fact that our fertility rates have dropped, that people are now living longer and that fewer persons are going to be available to work for those who would need social security.

Mr. President, the Tenth Actuarial Report, which summarises the situation as at December 31, 1999, makes the point at page one in the Summary of the Review that in 1999, there were 5.75 persons of working age for each person age 65 and over. This ratio is projected to drop

to 2.11 by the year 2039 and to 1.82 by the year 2059. When allowance is made for the fact that not all people of working ages contribute to the Fund, the ratio of contributors to contributory and non-contributory pensioners shows a similar progression but at a different level to that for pure demographic factors. Sir, in 1999, the ratio was 3.33 but is expected to drop to 1.06 by the year 2059.

Mr. President, with people living longer and our fertility rates slowing, there will be fewer people around to work for and to contribute to the Fund and to guarantee the sustainability of our Social Security payments, our social safety net, as it is called sometimes. These amendments are absolutely necessary and I would like to urge the Government to continue its programme of sustained public education on these issues so that the trauma which people are capable of experiencing when they discover that they are not going to get their pensions at age 65 could be minimised and a smooth transition from what is to what is to be, could be guaranteed.

Mr. President, I am obliged to you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Newton.

SENATOR THE HON. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. President, I rise to support the amendment to the National Insurance and Social Security Act, Cap. 47 which is before us today. In particular, I wish to address the section which seeks to give effect to recommendations made in the Report of a Committee established to review the National Insurance and Social Security legislation, that was the main Act and the myriad pieces of subsidiary legislation which would have been passed under the Act.

Mr. President, I was a member of that Committee. We sat between 1998 and 1999 and I long wondered what happened to the suggestions that we made. Therefore, I am very happy to see that most of the recommendations to the main Act, the National Insurance and Social Security Act have been provided for in this legislation today.

Mr. President, the first with which I would like to deal, Senator Griffith explains the provisions clearly but I would like to add a few words here. The Committee was of the view that sanctions should be imposed by employers, who deducted National Insurance contributions for employees and fail to pay them over and I believe at that time there were a considerable amount of persons in that position. I am not sure what was done by National Insurance to reduce the list but, at the time, we thought that urgent and drastic action was needed and, therefore, we recommended that the fines and imprisonment, as you see in the legislation here today, be provided for individuals, who fail to pay over National Insurance contributions and that corporation be fined up to \$5 000. Sir, I do not know what has happened since but we

would hope now that more stringent provisions are made into law, that delinquent employers come forward and make good their payments.

Mr. President, I would like next to refer to Clause 8 of the Bill, which provides for invalidity benefits. The Committee had considered that the present Section 21(d) of the Act was not specific enough in determining who was permanently and capable of work and recommended the amendment to which Senator Stuart just spoke to include the qualification of being incapable of work as a result of a specific disease or bodily or mental disablement, which was likely to remain permanent. Mr. President, what has been happening is, that under the current legislation many people were declared invalids, given invalidity benefits and then were found to have taken up other sources of employment on a full time basis. In fact, there was a story that caused a great amount of merriment of one gentleman, who was supposed to be an invalid and when the National Insurance officer went to look for him, he was pouring concrete, building a house and so on, things which clearly, he ought not to be able to do. Sir, he made all sorts of excuses but the fact is, there were several of those cases.

Mr. President, there was also a defect in the existing provision, in that it did not fully take into account the fact that some person can be unfit for work because of mental conditions. The emphasis was on physical disablement and, therefore, it was thought fit to include that provision in the amendment before us.

Mr. President, the good provision which Senator Stuart pointed to is the fact that a person who is in receipt of invalidity benefit that the situation can be reviewed from time to time. Sir, our invalid who was building a house, once he was found doing things he was incapable of doing, a medical panel would look at whether his invalidity had ceased to exist and he could find a job again and be removed from the benefits list that is in keeping with the recommendation of the Committee.

Mr. President, the next provision which deals with the Committee's recommendation relates to the increase in pension, maternity grants and funeral grants. We had recommended specific increases but, at the time, we were well aware that the amounts would have to be determined by the National Insurance actuary. The recommendations here today are framed in a way which provides for increases to be made subject to average national wage or price increases over a three-year period provided the actuary agrees. 4.30 p.m.

Mr. President, one which is well justified, having regard to the large payouts which occurred under these Heads, National Insurance, and the fact that we have

to be very careful of how we use the National Insurance Scheme funds during the coming decade as our population ages.

Mr. President, the other change which the Committee recommended has been included in Clause 8, and relates to the maternity grant. I will take the liberty of reading from the specific report of the Committee, the section relating to the need for making changes, to the maternity grant. I will, with your permission.

“The payment of maternity grants, generated considerable discussion both within the Committee, and in discussions which it held with staff of the Benefit Section of the National Insurance Scheme. Issues included why unmarried couples should be required to meet the prerequisite of living together for two years when it was not needed for married couples. What evidence of paternity, should be provided in relation to a single man, or whether and in what circumstances, a grant in respect of one man’s contribution could be paid to more than one mother.

National Insurance Scheme staff were of the view that where partners were living together, for less than two years, some other factor should be taken into consideration for award of the grant. The Committee was also of the view, that the present regulations in relation to proof of paternity, by a single man, were too restrictive and that the legislation should be modified.

The recommendation, therefore, was that provision should be made for a maternity grant, to be paid to a woman in respect of a child where the name of the father, who is a single man, appears on the birth certificate of the child and the father satisfies the relevant contribution conditions.”

Mr. President, I note that at Clause 8, the provision is for a grant payable under subsection 1 (c), spouse includes a single woman, who is living together with a single man, in the same household for a period of not less than two years prior to the date of the birth of the child and the next subclause, a single man who is living with a single woman, in the same household, for a period of not less than one year prior to the date of the birth of the child.

Mr. President, the Committee had recommended two years in both cases, but I note that in relation to the single woman, it is two years and in relation to the single man it is one year. I agree with Senator Stuart that, especially the latter provision, may give cause to a considerable amount of controversy. You will recall that the thinking of the National Insurance Scheme staff was that other factors would be taken into account, in relation as to whether the single man, could prove that he was the father of the child. Those other

considerations are not included in the legislation, so I expect that there will be some difficulty there.

The other provision which we recommended for the purposes of this subsection, single man and single woman, should include a widow and a widower, as they are in the legislation.

Sir, we also recommended, and at the time, and it was not taken too kindly by some members of the Committee, that the amendment should include the provision, for a single man not living in the same household as the single woman, but whose name appeared on the birth certificate as father of the child to be paid a maternity grant. It was felt, that given our circumstances, with some men visiting several women at the same time and so on, that this might prove a bit difficult for the Scheme, and, therefore, I note that recommendation, is not included in the legislation.

Mr. President, some of these provisions seem very technical, but I assure you that we deliberated over them, several Monday mornings for over a year. I have to say that remembering the experience, I was extremely impressed, and that was probably the first time I had worked very closely, with senior civil servants in the Government. I was extremely impressed by the level of their knowledge and their dedication to doing what is right and making sure that things work.

Sir, I single out for attention Mrs. Thorington-Powlette, who served with the Commission. Even after she went to work in the Prime Minister’s Office we met several mornings. I was not the Chairman but I put the report together to make sure that the recommendations were as we wanted them to be. That was truly a great experience for me.

Mr. President, there is one recommendation which the Committee made, which I note is not in the legislation. It was that powers and duties of the Director of the National Insurance should be included in the Act. There is no definition of what he is, and what he is supposed to do, that also was a controversial recommendation. I believe that once the draftsmen in the Attorney General’s Department had a review of the recommendations and looked at the Act, they may well have considered that it was not necessary. The recommendation was not made because of any controversy. It was just seen as a tidying-up provision that could serve well in the future.

Mr. President, several other recommendations were made, not in relation to the National Insurance Act, but in relation to some of the regulations under the Act. These included, that there should be a new definition of a child; there should be an expansion of the definition of medical practitioner, to include dentists; that the word illegitimate, should be deleted from the legislation, because it is no longer in the Family Law Act; tendinitis and carpal tunnel syndrome, should be included in the list of prescribed

diseases, for the purpose of employment injury benefit. There were a lot of other recommendations, but I am confident that as the review of the legislation takes place in the Attorney General’s Department, that they will deal with them and sooner or later, they will come before Parliament.

Sir, this brings me to a point, which I made quite stridently then and which I will make again now. It is my view, that the National Insurance provisions are contained in too many pieces of legislation. I thought at the time, and I too now still think that, it should be codified, so that when you are looking to see what your entitlements are and what the various provisions are, you would have one document instead of having the National Insurance Act, the Severance Payments Act, and about ten or fifteen pieces of subsidiary legislation. I know that it would be an expensive exercise. The draftsman who worked with us, at the time, could only see the considerable volume of work that would be involved, especially since other items of labour legislation, would have to be amended as well. In my view it would well be worth the effort.

Sir, even when we were going through the Regulation, you had to keep thinking, about another piece of legislation that might have a contrary provision and so on. The modern tendency is to provide labour codes, criminal codes, and so on, so that important pieces of legislation are all brought together in that one document. That would still be my recommendation.

Sir, I have to say again, how happy I am to see, that our work was not in vain, and that the recommendations here, except for that one provision in relation to the maternity benefit, are word for word, as recommended by the Committee that sat to review the legislation.

Sir, with those few words, I give my support to the amendment to the legislation.

I thank you.
4.40 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Linton

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: Mr. President, I rise in support of this Resolution that is before us, the amendment to both the National Insurance Scheme and the Severance Payments Act. I want to seek your guidance in raising a matter, which I regard it from the 1991 austerity measure, there was an amendment to the Severance Payments Act, which disadvantaged workers. For many years, I have been speaking about it on the call-in programmes and other times; workers who enjoyed severance benefits before the amendment in 1991, were eligible to four weeks a year as severance, when they are severed.

The Amendment in 1991 gave two and a half weeks the first ten years, three weeks the second ten years, and three

and a half weeks for time after 20 years. Those workers who were working under the previous law of four weeks, got severance on the amendment of the Severance Payments Act. I have always argued that is an anomaly that should be looked at because I know many of those workers. I am simply asking the Minister to look into this matter, and if those workers were disadvantaged, they should receive their due justice.

Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I wish to thank Senators for their contributions on these two Bills before us. I took note of the point raised by Senator Stuart when he referred to the definition of a spouse in the Succession Act and the Family Law Act. Sir, reading this here, it does not appear to me, a non-lawyer – this is not a legal perspective – that there is an issue. It says that for the purpose of a grant payable under this Act, “spouse” includes this person, so it would seem a little difficult to me for somebody to stretch that to carry that now to justify something under the Succession Act, which I believe – and I only did first year law – would say for the purposes of this Act, this means this, and for the purpose of that Act, that will mean that. Therefore, I really do not anticipate any difficulty here being created by this because I put emphasis on the words. It says: “For the purpose of a grant payable under this Act.” And, that is the only purpose for which “spouse” here is intended to be used. I am sure that Senator Stuart would agree with me that there is really not a difficulty there, and he would give me a pass grade for a first year student.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, outside of that, the issues were not serious.

Mr. President, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Senate resolved itself in Committee for further consideration of the Bill, HER HONOUR THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 5 were called and passed.

Clauses 6 to 10 were called.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Madam Deputy President, Clause 6 states that section 19 of the principal Act is amended:

1. by deleting subsection 2,
2. by deleting subsection 3 and substituting the following (3).

I wonder if you are deleting subsection (2) whether the section would now have no subsection (2) but a subsection (3), or if what is being called (3) should, in fact, be (2).

You are deleting subsection (2) of the Principal Act and you are also deleting subsection (3) and substituting a subsection (3). Will there be a subsection (2)?

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Stuart, I am assured that it is something that the Law Revision can easily deal with. If you would accept then, we could move on. It will be noted. Thank you.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Yes. Madam Deputy President.

Clauses 6 to 10 were passed.

Clauses 11 to 15 were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT 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. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Bill was read a third time and passed as the National Insurance and Social Security (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2006.

ORDER NO. 8 – THE SEVERANCE PAYMENTS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2006

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the SENATE resolved itself into Committee for further consideration of the Bill, HER HONOUR THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.
4.50 p.m.

COMMITTEE

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 – 7 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the SENATE resolved itself into Committee, HER HONOUR SENATOR Dame Patricia SYMMONDS in the Chair.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, 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. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Severance Payments (Amendment) Act, 2006.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 5.10 p.m. today.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 5.10 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
5.00 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO TAKE NOTE OF THE REPORT OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LAW AND ORDER. (Resumed)

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator The Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow.

SENATOR The Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLow: Mr. President, I rise to make my contribution to the Resolution to take note of the National Commission on Law and Order. I join with Honourable Senators, who have already spoken, in congratulating the Chairman, Sir Roy Marshall and Members of the Commission, for the excellent job they have done, in producing a report that is so comprehensive, so well thought out, so very challenging and so very candid in the description of the Barbadian social, political and cultural scenes. All the issues that have sparked widespread controversy have been treated in a very fair, scholarly, sensitive, sincere, direct, rational and balanced way.

Mr. President, those who at first questioned the suitability of the Chairman because of his establishment status and image, must be dumbfounded at the radical nature of the body of the report.

Mr. President, when I was Senior Chaplain of the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, some 35 or so years ago, I saw how just, firm and fearless an administrator Sir Roy Marshall was. In those days of student protests, which were inspired by student power, which had no existence in law, Sir Roy was a brilliant jurist. At that time, he would, as he still does, consult his legal advisors, before taking any action. The students in the Creative Arts Centre, eventually saw the need to see it as a legal matter.

Mr. President, I referred earlier to the body of the report. I did this to mark the difference between that and its conclusion. I likened the conclusion to the calm that follows a hurricane or the tremendous relief a woman experiences, after natural childbirth.
5.10 p.m.

I thought I should start by reading the short conclusion. I am doing this so that the Commission itself could put its case.

Sir, this is the conclusion of the Report:

“Barbados has with relative success experienced the transformation from plantation society to modern state and weathered the impact of successive “revolutions” in the economic diversification, technology and knowledge.

But the contemporary processes of modernisation and secularisation coupled with the apparent decline in traditional cultural values of discipline, tolerance and respect for authority are creating shock waves throughout the society and many, perhaps somewhat nostalgically, yearn for “the good old days”.

There is a positive side to change and development but the rapidity and intensity of the process creates social tension, intergenerational conflict and a perception that those in authority have lost control. Concerned citizens tend to highlight and even to exaggerate the negatives of social change and the escalation in crime rates and the threatened collapse of civil society, law and order.

The terms and references of the National Commission on Law and Order are to advise the Attorney-General on issues raised in the Plan concerning the promotion of law and order, crime reduction, cultural renewal and social cohesion and to assist in the implementation of policies and programmes.

In the process of carrying out our mandate, we sounded out public opinion from a wide cross section of

Barbadian society. Former written submissions were received, discussions were held with stakeholders representing a variety of interest groups and outreach activities were arranged including public meetings and walkabouts within selected communities. At all levels we welcome the views of concerned citizens and found response to be open, candid and informed.

Although the membership of the Commission reflected variations in age, gender, occupational and social status and a diversity of expertise, experience and opinion, we sought to reach concession between us on the many critical issues that were weighed during the consultative process.

While remaining within the parameters set out in the Plan, the Commission’s deliberations covered a wide range of issues expanding the focus for matters generally considered to be central to law and order and covered a wide range of pertinent and temporary problems at all levels of society including Government, community, family, school and social groups in particular, the so-called “boys on the block”.

In general, the Commission concluded that the machinery for justice, peace and security is in place and well-established in Barbados. Nevertheless, grave concern was repeatedly expressed in public perceptions of deterioration of cultural values and norms and specifically an increase in deviant, lawless behaviour in our schools, home communities and public transport.

...immediate removal of music from all public service vehicles and more vigorous enforcement of existing laws on praedial larceny. On the other hand, we also recognise that there is no magic bullet quick-fix solution and that knowledge is of critical importance and rehabilitative programmes for compliance with the law. Of special importance in this respect are recommendations for the implementation of the National Youth Service, parole and community services as alternatives to sentencing, award schemes to celebrate achievements, educational reform and greater collaboration between home and Sunday school, early intervention to deal with at-risk behaviour and the expansion and strengthening of parent, education and support programmes.

It is the responsibility of the State to protect the fundamental rights of all citizens and to create a just and fair society in which each person can reach his or her full potential and live in peace and security. In examining the effect of governance and taking on board a wide cross-section, the Commission saw value in a number of suggested changes; restriction of the power of Ministers to make appointments to the public service; better balance of power between the Executive

and the Legislature; appointment of additional Ombudsmen for specialised areas like white collar crime, involvement of civil society, NGOs and CSOs in the delivery of services. With this in mind, there is a clear need to reform, augment and decentralise the traditional structures and practices of Government more appropriate in this era of modern development is the Government's model of social inclusion, social justice and participatory democracy."

5.20 p.m.

"The model advocates formal collaboration, between governmental agencies and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). This will entail initiatives to empower and enhance the professionalism of the CSOs to improve their effectiveness in partnership with Government.

Much emphasis is also placed on harnessing the local social capital to rebuild caring communities, supporting families and to ensure the rights and well-being of children, the elderly and the disabled. Parish committees working with community based organisations, local churches supporting/leisure clubs and a cadre of Community Guardians, drawn from retired civil servants, the local community, police and Justices of the Peace and other leaders should regenerate the spirit of volunteerism, and initiative projects such as HIV/AIDS, environmental health, cultural and education (after school) activities and community service and mentoring.

In the furtherance of well argued presentations to the Commission, it felt important to call for the following:

Early intervention to assist the special needs of children at risk.

Creative attention to matters of deviance in school.

Reform of family policy and programmes.

Support for a greater role for the church when tackling social problems.

The Commission is concerned about the overcrowding of persons in Glendairy prison, its effect on the health of staff, the prevalence of illegal drugs and the presence of HIV/AIDS among inmates. It makes recommendations that speak to all of these matters as well as supporting a system of parole more as a different way of servicing sentences and reducing the prison population than as a remission of sentences.

There seems to be evidence that there is under-reporting of some crimes, particularly in the cases of sexual assaults on women, children and visitors. This is a matter of concern, which we felt should be noted.

On the matter of discrimination, the Commissions's report makes recommendations, including a range relating to disadvantaged persons, including the following suggestions:

More rights for the disabled.

Fuller protection of the aged.

Strengthening of the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Much of the Commission's time was taken up listening to complaints surrounding land, land use and the availability of housing. Our report therefore devoted space for these concerns and suggested:

Making more land and more affordable housing available to Barbadians.

Creating a national policy on land use and the revision of the Town and Country Planning Department to effect more timely and equitable decision-making.

The Commission feels strongly that much work has to be done in the area of drug abuse prevention and among these matters it suggests is the use of more education as a key role in the prevention of drug abuse.

It goes on to deal with methods of curtailment that speak to methods of rehabilitation and recommends a core of specially trained persons to address this serious social ill. The Commission was unanimous in its conclusion, that the realisation of order, peace and security, in Barbados, is a task requiring the active participation of every one, Government, private sector, NGOs, the legal system, media, schools, churches, families, communities, sporting and service clubs. We must all play our part in the complimentary programmes and processes designed to achieve social integration and equality, racial and religious harmony, cultural renewal, crime reduction and the production of vulnerable groups.

Working together we blend the best of the past, with the potential for a dynamic and positive future for all citizens of Barbados and those who visit our shores."

Sir, although that was the Commission speaking, and not I, I am not asking for an additional fifteen minutes.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Senator, you will have the advantage that the long quotation will form part of the record, and, perhaps, there is an advantage in that. So your minutes would have been well spent.

Asides.

SENATOR The Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLLOW:
Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. President, there is only time to comment briefly on a few topics treated. Notice should be taken of the important part that morality plays in a country’s life. Even the Constitution which is the Supreme Law of Barbados and the laws which flow from it, have to conform to moral principles. This is a quote from the report:

“If fundamental rights entrenched, in the Constitution, are altered in accordance with the special procedure prescribed for its alteration, the court may nevertheless set aside their alteration if moral considerations required them to do so.”

Sir, it means that we need to train more students in moral philosophy ethics. We have been paying more attention to the bread and butter subjects at the university level. I must compliment the Barbados Community College, on recognising the importance of moral philosophy ethics.

I am aware that it is built into some other discipline, such as medicine, but I think that philosophy at this stage of our development, especially moral philosophy, should be more widely studied. In law studies it is covered under jurisprudence, but attorneys-at-law spend more time on positive law, which occupies the major part of the business in the courts. They could not make a living on philosophy of law, jurisprudence.

Mr. President, the public sector reform is not succeeding. The Commission found, that one of the reasons for this, is that it is not supported from the top. The report states:

“The consensual opinion was that the reform programme should be driven from the highest level and needs the support of the Prime Minister, various ministers and the Permanent Secretaries in order to be successful.

Sir, the need for this strong support is constantly repeated.

The Commission states:

“The Commission strongly supports the recognition that the reform programme should be driven from the highest level, which means the active support of the Prime Minister. Nothing short of this will provide the impetus for substantial reform. which appears to be lacking.”

“The Commission contrast the attitude of the public sector in colonial times, when civil servants acted out of fear, with the modern situation, where the work ethic is very poor. The need for improvement, was noticed in areas, such as receipt for conflicting information, for the same query; misplacement of files; officers unaware of services within the same department; officers unsure of services, which might make the clients’ navigation of the system easier; failure to assign officers to unfinished matters; inordinate delays, especially in the court system; inflexibility (unwillingness to use initiative and compassion in the administration of duties and in customer relations).”

Mr. President, this is a severe indictment of persons responsible for the Civil Service. The Commission stated that it is appalling that customer service has been allowed to deteriorate to this extent, and it is imperative that the top down approach be adopted in providing status for the Director of the Office of Public Sector Reform, as recommended in section XII(5) of the Impacts Study Report, and prestige for the OPSR17.29:57 by suggesting that Cabinet and the Prime Minister should publicly and clearly voice their support for the reform programme, as recommended in section X11 of the report.
5.30 p.m.

The Commission has called for the establishment of the civil service college, where officers can be trained and given experience in the work that they will be doing.

Mr. President, stating the need for equity and social justice as the basis for building a society where good governance is practised, the Commission referred to the book, “Slavery and Social Death” by Professor Patterson, where the effect of slavery on human personality is dealt with and the Commission states, I quote:

“Dr. Patterson’s argument would suggest that slavery, as an institution, may be responsible for many of the social challenges and inefficiencies which affect the behaviour of Caribbean people, who are direct descendants of the slaves and inheritors or the legacy of slavery. In 21st Century, we still witness Caribbean peoples struggling to assert themselves against the backdrop of a system which shook the very foundations of their human right to justice and social equity. Through slavery, it can be argued that African people suffered an assault on their traditions and the original bases of their socialisation.”

There are ideas that many of our people do not like to hear, but they are thought even in primary and secondary schools, nowadays, so the older members of the society must get accustomed to them.

In chapter 8 of the report, the Commission endorses the Commission on National Reconciliation findings on this matter that, I quote:

“The society must come to terms with its historical and antecedents, recognise and publicly condemn slavery and other forms of human oppression, past and present, and acknowledge the legacy of slavery in our society. We must work assiduously and collaboratively to build a society and its constituent parts on the principal of freedom, social justice and respect for the human person.”

Hear what the Commission itself says and I quote:

“The scale of the transatlantic slave trade, the brutality of the treatment meted out to slaves, the bigotry of the slave owners, in attempting to justify the inhumanity of their conduct, and the post-emancipation neglect of, and discrimination against those set free, support the case made out by the Commission for National Reconciliation (CNR). None of us in Barbados today was born into the condition of slave or slave owner, none is personally responsible for that condition and none can erase the facts of history. Most of us will look back in anger, some with shame at the enormity of man’s inhumanity to man and some would like to close the book before the final chapter is written. That must not be allowed to happen. The end of slavery did not leave behind a level playing field.”

“The descendants of slave owners inherited a system of privileges which they have been tenacious in protecting. Property, wealth, access to education, to health care, to social standing, to credit and to economic opportunity and advancement, the field is still uneven and all right-thinking members of society should strive to make it less so.”

Mr. President, these are not the words of a black power advocate but of a commission, Chaired by the descendant of the white plantocracy, Barbadian. They are words that can bring life to the Barbadians society because they express what actually took place here in Barbados. They can be used to heal our society to free it of useless and paralysing fear. They can help to cross the race divide. Our social life is not healthy as long as this barrier remains. I used to think that it was the mothers who maintained this racial prejudice but I was told that it is their husbands. I was told by white women, that is. We must all now show the maturity that this new openness requires. Let the young people choose their friends. Let genuine love and affection take their course.

I speak as one who has vested interest in this matter, since one of my daughters is married to a European from Belgium and I, personally, have received more help in my career from whites, local and overseas, than from my own colour. The Christian faith is for people of all races, colours, nationality, *et cetera*.

The Commission, in the way forward, at section 8.4(2) reminds us of the remembering and forgetting that is part of the reconciliation process. It states, I quote:

“Looking back in anger, with shame or indifference will not in itself produce reconciliation.

It is looking forward in a spirit of honest endeavour and with genuine goodwill on the part of all of us that will make Barbados a better place in which to live.”

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, could you please wind up.

SENATOR The Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW: Yes, Sir.

I am reminded of a discussion on British television between an Englishman and an Irishman, after an Oxford Union debate on the Irish problem, the Englishman was saying that we have to forget the past and work towards the future. The Irishman said: “Oh, no. We need to go back to the 1920s and repair the damage done before we can progress.” The Englishman turned to the Irishman and said: “The problem with you Irish is that you never forget.” Whereupon, the Irishman turned on him. “The problem with you, English, is that you never remember.” As an impartial outsider to both, I would say that they were both right. We need to remember and then forget.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Crichtlow, you are out of time. Could you please wind up.

SENATOR The Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW: Yes, Sir.

Mr. President, since I had no time to deal with education, and all the other things, I would like to suggest though, that as a tribute to the very hard work done by the Commission, the Barbados Constitution should be taught as an examination subject and not just as Civics at Fifth Forms, Six Forms and University levels.

In my contribution to the debate on the Estimates, I said to the late Prime Minister, the Right Excellent Errol

Walton Barrow, who was responsible for the progressive acts of creating equal opportunities for our secondary boys and girls through co-education.

I am indebted to my old school friend and colleague in education, Mr. John Blackman, for pointing out that the various schools became mixed during the Administration of the Barbados Labour Party and also that the Alleyne School was a boy’s school from its establishment in 1785 to 1946 when it became co-ed. The granting of free secondary education under the late National Hero, prepared the ground for this, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Eastmond.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

This report of the National Commission on Law and Order dated, June 2004 is an extremely important document. I believe probably what is more important is precisely what will come out of the report, and the actions that will be taken, with respect to what was written in the report.

The report, in my view, seeks to grapple with the issues that we have been grappling with, I believe, not very well, for a considerable period of time. These issues have to do with poverty or money, justice and equality, and colour and discrimination. Of course, all of these are extremely sensitive issues. One is really faced with the prospects of speaking bluntly on such issues and being misunderstood, because there is not really any scope in terms of what we do here for anyone to raise issues with you to seek to discern exactly what you meant by any statement.

5.40 p.m.

Therefore, there is always the prospect of believing that this is such an important document that you must speak on it but that you should speak in a way that you do not offend any constituent at all in the entire society, but that is virtually impossible because these are extremely sensitive issues and issues which Barbadians for an extended period of time have essentially refused to deal with.

Mr. President, on my first trip to Europe, it was shocking to realise that the issues of colour and race, justice, equality and discrimination were issues that those countries were seeking to deal with in the open where individuals were able to speak on them without being labelled as one thing or another.

Mr. President, somehow in our Barbadian society we have not reached there as yet. We try to fool ourselves into believing that our issues are issues only of class. However, if that were true you would find people of all colours in all classes. Often you find that if money is added to some

colours, somehow you manage to elevate yourself into another class. Sir, there are other colours that even if you add money you are still not elevated into any new class. Therefore, the maths just does not work out in terms of what people are trying to say that the issue is about class and not about colour. Mr. President, those are issues that I would not deliberate on for any period of time.

Mr. President, one of the things that struck me about the Report and that I was concerned about, especially when individuals make comments, was that the commissioners were commended for being brave. Sir, I would wish to commend the commissioners for a number of things in terms of the Report that was presented to us, in terms of clarity, the content and the comprehensiveness of the Report.

Mr. President, it saddens me that in 2006 in Barbados, Barbadians are commending Barbadians for going into certain areas in Barbados. We should not have to commend anyone for going and talking to the ‘boys on the block’, they are just human beings. When we reach the stage in our community that somehow we feel that there is a separation from them and the rest of us, and somehow it is some courageous act to go within a community and to speak to whom they called the ‘boys on the block’ something is terribly wrong because it was not like that before.

Mr. President, when I was growing up, the little old lady that lived down the street had no difficulty whatsoever in stopping by the boys under the breadfruit tree and saying to them, why you all do not stop gambling. We never had a problem. Sir, it seems now that we have reached a stage where we believe that we have to be afraid.

Mr. President, this concept of these boys hanging out somewhere and of making them into a category of persons that we have to be afraid of, is not going to take us into the direction that we want to go in. Sir, the boys under the breadfruit tree were usually boys from anywhere. Yes, many of them came from small homes and that is why they were out there. When you have four teenage sons living in a little house, the parents eventually would chase them out and tell them to go outside and play with their friends or go and ‘hang out’ because it is just not comfortable for them to be in the house, so basically they would ‘lime’ under the breadfruit tree, which we have now called ‘the block’.

Mr. President, I had to get it explained to me because I did not think we had any ‘blocks’ in Barbados. I understand that this is some American term that we have arrogated unto ourselves in order to describe ourselves. I always remember that quotation where it says, “if you do not know who you are, anyone can name you and, if anyone can name you, they can call you anything.” It seems as though this is where we are going with that as well.

Mr. President, throughout the Report quite a great deal of emphasis is placed on the young people within our society and recommendations were made concerning the desire not to marginalise the youth.

Mr. President, I sometimes feel that my life can be defined by many of the songs that I have heard throughout my lifetime. Sir, in looking at this National Report on Law and Order, two songs kept coming to my mind. One was written in 1995, I believe it is, and the other in 1996. Both are written by Edwin Yearwood. One is called "Voice in My Head" and the other "Something Greater Than Me". I remember that when the song "Voice in My Head" was written and performed, it caused a great deal of disquiet in Barbados. Many people said that the disquiet had to do with how Edwin Yearwood dressed, but I believe it had to do with what he was saying because, quite interestingly enough, many of the issues raised in the Report on Law and Order that we are discussing in 2006, were raised by him back in 1995 and 1996. Unfortunately, his song was on a CD and it was not in a Report like this one.

Mr. President, one of the main issues that was raised in "Voice In My Head" had to do with poverty. It says: "Inside of our homes poverty is still lodging there, you packed up and leave but you find it everywhere." And the only reprieve that we seem to have is to win the lottery. These comments coming from that young person echoes comments that were made by people who perhaps we have more respect for.

Mr. President, I came across a writer who was talking about the circumstance of being poor back in 1903 where that writer spoke about being a poor man is hard but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships. I believe that very often this is how people feel. He felt the weight of his ignorance not simply of letters but of life, of business, of the humanities. The accumulated sloth and shirking and awkwardness of decades and centuries shackled his hands and feet.
5.50 p.m.

Mr. President, I believe that many Barbadians still feel that way and that some of them are only now emerging from it. Sir, poverty is one of the key issues that has been raised in this report. That is why the Government of this day, has recognised the importance of social transformation and poverty eradication.

Mr. President, we speak of poverty eradication, not as a misstatement, as we believe poverty can be eradicated and not just alleviated, which is what we are working towards. When the Moyne Commission was established, one of the major recommendations that came out was that there should be the establishment of a West Indian Welfare Fund, of \$1 million to be allocated over 20 years.

The Moyne Commission came to Barbados and after carrying out a number of surveys, realised that poverty does exist in Barbados but that, in order to make a number of changes, it would have required money to do it. This is the same principle which this Government recognises and is focusing on, despite criticisms, not from the people of Barbados but generally speaking, from the Other Side.

Sir, the truth of the matter is that poverty is a burning issue with many of the sectors or individuals within our community. Sir, page 125 of the report says that most prisoners are young, poor and ill-educated. Therefore, there is a connection between the number of young people, who end up in prison, and the lack of opportunities and the results of poverty. This is why this Government has focused on this issue in such a serious way.

Mr. President, I do find it difficult to understand how would those social advancements be achieved, without money. If you look at the recommendations that came out of the report, with respect to advancing the social cause, it recommends a National Youth service, which would have to be funded. The report speaks of identifying and nurturing talent at an early age, through specialist classes. If there is going to be specialist classes within the primary and secondary schools, there is going to be the need to have extra material, extra classrooms, extra teachers, extra resources, in order to provide this specialist classes. Therefore, it still comes down to money, at the end of the day.

Mr. President, there were recommendations about appropriate funding to be given to support programmes for public awareness, enlightenment and the prevention of drug abuse. Sir, all of these things require money. The report spoke about a Rape Crisis Centre and other counselling facilities, which are all for social advancement but at the end of the day, they cost money.

Mr. President, Government will certainly try its best, to provide such services but it could only do it with money. Sir, we tend to look at European or Scandinavian countries, which seem to have a good balance, but in terms of their economies and how well they do, their ability to earn revenue is better than that of Barbados. Therefore, they can afford to put more money into those types of social services than we can. Sir, in looking at these issues, one has to be very realistic, so that in looking at the report, poverty still remains an issue for us.

Mr. President, as I said, these are issues we are tackling with, from the beginning of time. I am not arguing either that progress has not been made because progress has been made. Sir, over time, more and more Barbadians have been able to improve their lot, but we recognise too that there is still work to be done. That is the work we are focusing on, as an institution.

Mr. President, I would like to look at the issue of justice. Sir, the young people of Barbados believe justice, perhaps, is not enforced as vigorously in all sectors of the community as it could be. I can refer, once again, to Edwin Yearwood's song, where he said: "I'm a drifting stranger, in the land of the not-so-free." Sir, what a way for him to put it, because that is how an individual feels, as a Barbadian, in his or her own country. The song continues: "Where a poor man can't have equality or his offspring a bright morrow."

Mr. President, this is the feeling of a young person, who would have been 25 years old in 1995 or 1996. I am sure these were not only his thoughts but were the thoughts of the young people around him at the time. The song goes on to say: "The mind's description of drug pushers makes them out to look just like me. But can drugs slip into a tight system, without any authority? Small fries like we distribute them and take life without mercy" But he said: "Do I look like authority?" The answer, of course, is no. Therefore, why is all of this happening? This is what young people see.

Mr. President, young people believe that in a country like Barbados, it is impossible for these things to happen, because the few fellows on the 'blocks', are not the ones who are really responsible.

Sir, Page 93 of the report said that:

"Much concern has been expressed by the youth in depressed areas about a very limited number of cases before the courts, involving corruption by public officials, economic crimes, other than the harvesting of sea eggs, tax evasion, corporate crimes committed by the owners of large businesses, white collar crimes committed by accountants and crimes committed by attorneys and other professionals who are unable to account for monies received by them for or on behalf of clients."

Mr. President, the youth believe they are the only ones who normally come before the law courts, not because they are the only ones guilty of crime but that somehow the justice system manages to attach itself to them and not to others. Sir, this was said in 1995/1996 and, therefore, it would seem that when we look at corporations in Barbados, the report talks about the fact that in terms of the business community, while individual companies might actually engage in theft, in the order of thousands of dollars, instead of theft for a T-shirt of a pair of jeans. If a youngster does that, he may very well come before the law court and may end up in prison, unlike where other individuals steal thousands of dollars, the young people are saying they do not ever see these people coming before the courts.

Mr. President, there are now circumstances where most people have access to television, so they would have seen that in terms of the Enron scandal, there are people who are Chief Executive Officers and Chief Financial Officers, and

once they have been found guilty, they are imprisoned. As an example, they would have seen where Martha Stewart was imprisoned for tax evasion.

Mr. President, as far as young people are concerned, there is a concern raised in the report about the fact that there does not appear to be some kind of a level playing field, where people get their just reward for whatever crime they would have committed within the community.
6.00 p.m.

In my view, it is a serious concern for young people to have in a community. This is why I think it is so important that these particular matters be addressed seriously. I do not know how long we believe that we can refuse to take these issues seriously but, Sir, we have to.

Mr. President, I get the feeling that there is still hope. I imagine that having been given the opportunity to be heard through this Report that their comments would be taken into account and put into a document that there is every hope and desire that these concerns about the quality of treatment would be addressed. I am not so naive to believe that in Barbados we could have a place where there is 100 per cent justice but I believe that individuals need to see that in some circumstances that there is another class of person in Barbados other than what are described as poor, black, uneducated males who actually find themselves before the law courts. Sir, somehow in our minds, those are the ones guilty of crime.

Mr. President, it is an interesting thing because, for example, some might look at the newspaper and see someone being convicted of an offence and asked how such a good-looking, brown-skinned fellow could commit such a crime. Sir, the thinking is that good-looking, brown-skinned fellows do not commit crime so they wonder how he managed to find himself in such a position.

Mr. President, a number of recommendations have been made but the one which caught my attention has to do with corporal punishment and I find it interesting. I am not going to draw any conclusion from it but I want to highlight it so that others can draw their own conclusion. Sir, I understand that apparently in Barbados the majority of people are for corporal punishment and hanging and it is interesting that it says that where the "Cat-o-nine-tails" with the imposition of large abrasions of the skin is fairly inhumane, the use of bamboo, the tamarind rod or the birch seems to strike a reasonable balance. Sir, I find it interesting because for whom does it strike a reasonable balance?

Mr. President, if you hit me with a tamarind rod or bamboo, I will get large abrasions on my skin. Sir, I also feel that Sir John would get large abrasions on his skin

as well. Sir, if we are saying that you hit a person with a “Cat-o-nine-tail” and see marks, what is it about the skin of the person that would cause you not to see the mark from the bamboo, tamarind rod or the birch? Sir, I know what my back looks like and I believe it would be seen in my back. There is only one class of person on whose back you would not see this mark after beating that person with a tamarind rod or bamboo.

Mr. President, I find it interesting that the image of men hanging up somewhere and to have another human being beat them with a rod with the idea that no marks would be seen on their backs, is still a solution in 2006. I know that the idea of beating people is still popular in Barbados. It is not for me to argue against it, if this is how people feel because the society can only go by what people feel at any given point in time. Sir, I do not look at that any more but I have seen in my lifetime, too many pictures, too many movies, too many instances of people being strung up and beaten for me to feel it is something that I would like to witness. I believe when we are doing these things in Barbados that they should be done for the public to witness. If the public is going to endorse it, I believe they should all be done publicly for everybody to see because I believe we should participate in what we are agreeing to.

Mr. President, I found it very interesting that one could speak about beating in such terms and using terms like “reasonable balance”, which sound legalistic and technical. I believe that Report on Law and Order has to do with many of these fundamental issues. I know there is a great interest in talking about the ZR culture and issues like that but those issues about the ZR culture, are only at the surface of the deeper issues that we have to consider in Barbados.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Eastmond, you have one minute to wrap up.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: Mr. President, I think it is important for us in Barbados to try to make a contribution. Sir, I believe if you are given an opportunity to help to make a contribution that you should do so and that you cannot become too afraid of being misunderstood and misjudged. These basic issues in Barbados about poverty, justice, inequality and colour and discrimination must be addressed seriously. We need serious people to start addressing these issues without labelling people. It is easy to label on individual in Barbados without hearing what they have to say.

Mr. President, I must say in case of Edwin Yearwood and his two sons, which I have quoted that he was very much a victim of being labelled and misunderstood because when you read what he wrote, it is very much what was

written in this Report on Law and Order. Sir, I must say as a caveat that I am not seeking to present him as a role model to anyone because I do not believe in that. Sir, let us stop looking at individuals labelling them and questioning their origins, we should just listen to what they have to say. Most people, when they open their mouths and try to say something, usually they are making a point. I wish that we would seriously address this issue.
6.10 p.m.

I thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Grant.

SENATOR R. W. GRANT: Sir, I intend to be brief with my comments. I wish to join with Honourable Senators, in recognising the work done by the Commission and I, think that the Commission should be highly commended for this quality document, which we are asked to vote on in this Chamber. This document speaks to issues, which impact on a just and fair society. It is my contention that Barbadians have respect, and adhere to law and order and Barbadians have, in general, a respect for the Constitution of Barbados.

Sir, as I indicated before, there are some challenges that are identified in this report. I think we need to create the environment, that we could deal with those challenges and move forward, in such a way that the society as a whole grows and develop.

Mr. President, I must say, that I do not agree with what I consider sometimes, to be the distasteful disrespectful manner, in which deviant behaviour is reflected. I am not suggesting in any way that we seek to create a society which, as you would say, is one that is based on the good old days'. I certainly am not from a period, where I can speak of the good old days, but I do believe that there are aspects of Barbados' past, which are very relevant and important, for Barbados' development today. I do believe that those aspects as well, would be relevant as we seek to develop Barbados in the future.

Sir, a number of issues are highlighted on, Pages 34, 35 and 36. These issues related to abuse, violence, negligence, parental absenteeism and the marginalisation of the father. I am going to speak to some of those issues very shortly.

Mr. President, before I do that, I would want to reflect on what the Sociologist Auguste Comte would have communicated in some of his writings. In fact, Comte was regarded as the person who coined the phrase sociology, and he identified three factors, which were important for the maintenance of social order. The first was language, which provided a medium of behaviour; the second was

religion, which cements society by providing shared values and beliefs; the third was the division of labour which created interdependence. Sir, Comte identified institutions such as religion and the family, as being critical and important for social order, because they contribute to creating and maintaining society, as a harmonious whole.

Sir, I think that as we speak of the Report on Law and Order, and on the issues, which this report brings to our attention, the focus is to ensure that we create a just, fair and free society, but where the harmonious whole exists.

Mr. President, I want to spend a few minutes speaking about the family. I believe that the family, is a microcosm of the societal environment which we have. If there is dysfunction in the family, one can expect dysfunction in the society. It is my contention that we have in recent times, in the family, the community and school, we have been retreating from instituting corporal punishment.

I want to say to this Honourable Chamber, that it is important as we seek to create an environment, which is one that recognises the need for law and order; and one where we recognise the importance of the family that we also ensure, that there is a significant element of discipline. I do believe that there are times when the phrase, “spare the rod and spoil the child”, is very relevant and important. I am not suggesting in any way, that we should reach a point, where there is random floggings or anything of that nature, because I think that would be a backward step. I do think that we need to ensure, that there is a greater level of discipline, particularly among our young people.

Mr. President, the report also speaks to the marginalisation of fathers. On Page 35 of the report:

“Local cultural beliefs and practices continue to privilege motherhood, while fathers are considered less important in the lives of their children.”
6.20 p.m.

Mr. President, I believe that we have to create an environment where there is equality in parenthood. I see, on a regular basis, fathers with their children, weeks and months old, taking them for walks. I see fathers at various recreational functions, interacting and providing guidance for their children. I however, Mr. President, constantly hear fathers say that because of challenges which they have with their children’s mothers, complain of not having the access to their children to help provide an input and guidance for their development and growth.

I believe, Sir, that equality in parenthood requires that both mothers and fathers adhere and accept the responsibility, which they have as parent but that both must be given the opportunity to be involved in the development and upbringing of their children.

There is an advertisement, I see on television sometimes, which speaks to parenting. It is for the most part, a good ad, but there is one aspect of that ad, Mr. President, which concerns me. Sir, to me, it reflects, in part, what our thinking is, in terms of parenting and what our thinking, is when we talk about parents. The ad says in part that parents, including fathers, and that is the part that annoys me because if you are talking about parents, certainly within the Barbadians context, because I recognise the world is changing but if you are speaking about parents, I take it that you are speaking of both mothers and fathers. The fact that the ad, had to say parents, including fathers, in my mind demonstrates that within the society, there is this concept that you have to, for some reason let fathers know that they are parents.

Mr. President, I want to speak briefly to issues of our school system, specifically to the issue of the male presence in the school. It is true that we have been seeing declining numbers in male teachers in schools. I feel that we have to identify ways in which we can encourage more males to engage in the teaching profession.

The truth is, Mr. President, no matter how much I love, admire, care for, respect females, I will never truly understand what it means to be a woman. I content as well that by that same fact, *ecto facto*, I believe the Latinists would say, a female or a female teacher cannot truly understand what it means to be a man, but more importantly cannot truly understand the temperament of a young boy.

I believe, Mr. President, and I know there are persons who have experienced this, a young boy, eight/nine years old, running around before class starts, becomes all hot and sweaty and goes into class and his female teacher does not like to see him with that appearance. I feel we have to encourage within our schools and our communities, the presence of more strong male figures. I am going to move on, Mr. President, because I intend to be very brief in my remarks.

I believe, as well, Mr. President, that the Church has a very important role to play. When I was a little boy, I grew up in the Anglican Church, but my maternal grandmother took me to the Jehovah Witness, she took me to the Antioch, it seems to me that once there was a church service, my maternal grandmother took me and I am happy to say, Sir, that it has significantly and positively contributed to the type of individual that I am today.

Mr. President, I believe that in the same way that the Church focuses, with a lot of energy and commitment on the eternal order, I feel that with as much energy, they have to focus on the temporal order as well. I am reminded of Luke Chapter 20 – and Senator the Very Rev. Harold Crichlow could guide me and assist me, I am sure – where the

Chief Priests, Scribes and Elders sought to send out spies to see if they could capture Jesus, they tried to trap him. They asked Jesus if it was right to obey the Law of Caesar, and Jesus asked them to show him a penny and he asked the question: In whose image is it? They responded by saying, Caesar. Jesus, said, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." I say that because there must be the recognition by the Church that you have to put as much emphasis in this environment, as you would in the eternal environment.

Mr. President, I believe that it is very important that we seek to build strong communities. There are many issues identified at pages 54 and 55, in relation to communities. I believe that persons who reside in communities have to seek to contribute to the community's growth and development. Sir, too often, there are individuals who live in communities and just do not contribute. They live in the community but they do not relate in any way to the community, in which they live.

I believe that it is important that persons residing in communities all play their part in building strong and vibrant communities. I believe as well that politicians have an integral role to play in the development of communities, whether those communities are in Station Hill, whether those communities are in Deans Village, whether those communities are in Queen Mary Road...

Mr. PRESIDENT: You are being very selective, Senator.

SENATOR R. W. GRANT: Yes, Sir. Mr. President, Sir, I am selecting communities in St. Michael Central to the concept that I have for overall community development.

Mr. President, I do believe that the local icons in the society, and in the communities have to come out and they have to help to build in a positive way and to become the positive and good local role models and the heroes for those communities.
6.30 p.m.

Sir, I believe that individuals in communities where there are difficulties can assist by utilising mediation as an alternative dispute resolution to settle conflict and to ensure that there is a peaceful and respectful environment. Such a function would help to build the communities by restoring relationships, providing for greater community safety and ensuring that we maintain a healthy community environment.

Mr. President, with those few words, I am happy to join in supporting and noting this Report.

I am grateful to you, Sir.

SENATOR A. A. BYNOE: Mr. President, I rise to give support to the Report of the National Commission on Law and Order, June 2004, as laid in this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. President, Senator Crichlow said in winding up that the Barbados Constitution should be taught in every secondary school, and I would like to endorse that and go further to say that this Report should be on the syllabus of every secondary school in this country because it is only by being involved in this kind of activity and knowing what is happening within our country, that we, at the end of the day, would get better informed persons within our society.

Mr. President, no society can make progress in a state of chaos. This Report has given us a design to remove chaos and to confirm law and order as an integral part of our society. While the Report to a large extent can be said to be all encompassing, I would want to pay attention to a few areas that most citizens in Barbados now complain of.

Mr. President, I would like to look at the attitude of our ZR and minibus drivers in this country. We have given it the name of the ZR culture. It is about time that persons like ourselves, who from time to time get the opportunity to make certain statements public, should be saying very often that we do not condone the kind of culture or the attitudes of this element within our society.

Indeed, they would have gone through a school system where in school they would have been taught like most of us. To have come out of school to be showing this kind of disregard for law and order really begs the question how can they now, after a Government spending so much money on their day to day education, display that kind of attitude in this society. Perhaps, the law authorities have not demonstrated a strong enough arm in dealing with this element.

Mr. President, I would like to suggest a very simple way of dealing with the ZR and the minibus people. Mr. President, when they contravene the law, the buses should be impounded with all the passengers and taken to the nearest Police Station, and the police officers should take as long as possible to carry out the investigations. Mr. President, we would find that the passengers, because they do not want that kind of inconvenience, would not assist the drivers and the conductors in overloading. Sir, I am sure that within a short space of two weeks we would not have that as a problem in this country at all.

Indeed, there are other problems that we would also have to address. There is a problem of the type of music they are playing *et cetera*. Again, we need to be firm in the

way we deal with these matters. We should remove the radios *et cetera*, and then we automatically would have the buses without the means of playing the kind of music that they play.

Mr. President, we have the problems where it is known that our school children purposely overload these buses so that they may engage in certain undesirable forms of behaviour. Sir, we need to be firm in dealing with this kind of misbehaviour in our community.

Mr. President, another area that I would like to look at is the overbearing exhaust fumes that really send us under dark clouds from day to day in this community. I know that in England a lot of the vehicles that we see on our roads would be pulled off the road. I believe again that we have to be firm, if we are not, this kind of behaviour would continue all the time because we would exhibit this ‘marmy parmy’ approach to the business of governing this country.

Mr. President, there is another problem that perhaps goes unnoticed right now in this country, that is, the commonplace swearing of our school children in any corner, be they in school or out of school, in the bus stands and anywhere else. When we were young, someone would take us aside and say that you do not say those kinds of words. What is happening there is that they are merely expressing a shortcoming, which is the inability to express themselves within normal language, so we need to address this. They really need help. Within our schools we need to recognise that this is a problem and our teachers should spare no effort in addressing this as a problem within our community.

Mr. President, I now come to the destruction of Government property. To a lot of those who destroy Government property, it is not their money, so easy come, easy go. Again, we have to be firm with such matters and wherever possible cause them to repay. It is no point sending someone up or down to St. Lucy as the case is today for six months. I think that these simple answers may very well give us some results.

Mr. President, garbage is terrible in this country. People litter and throw things out of their cars. Yes, we have spoken on these matters before, but we need to continue to speak on such matters by sending the message over and over again to the point of brainwashing, if that is the only solution that would cause some relief.

6.40 p.m.

Mr. President, this report, as I said, is a very wide report. There is much that is around the table that we can delve into during this exercise. However, I am very happy to have brought these matters to our attention and hope that we could see some results, as a result of the Report of the National Commission on Law and Order.

Mr. President, I thank you.

SENATOR Miss P. E. PARRIS: Mr. President, I rise to support this Resolution, which takes note on the Report of the National Commission on Law and Order. I would like to commend the Chairman and Members of the Commission, for producing such a comprehensive report.

Mr. President, this report can be used by religious leaders, youth groups and principals of schools. It is coming at a time when law and order is of concern to all of us, as citizens of this country. The recommendations found in the report will assist in restoring law and order to this country.

Mr. President, I do believe that law and order is a responsibility of all citizens. The restoring of law and order, should not be left only to the police or to politicians. There is much talk on the call-in programmes as to what could be done, to assist in restoring law and order but I believe that these persons should join hand-in-hand with religious leaders, youth groups and school principals and help to restore law and order.

Mr. President, the media also has a part to play in this exercise. I know at the end of the financial year, that media houses love to see big profits, which can be understood. That is why they seek to increase their sales, to achieve this. Sometimes they go for catchy headlines, which would help them in achieving big profits, without realising when they are advertising this negative behaviour, especially things that are done by our young people, that other young people, who are involved in positive activities, are left to believe that the negative is always being highlighted and therefore that would be the way to go.

Mr. President, in this regard, I believe the media has its part to play, in ensuring that positive stories are told to the citizens of this country. Sir, to cite an example, some weeks ago, there was a 10-year-old boy, who wrote a love letter to God. In his love letter, he was saying that he hoped other young people would desist from violence and would help to bring the country back beloved Barbados that it was once. Sir, instead of highlighting that article, it was tucked away somewhere in the body of the newspaper. Sir, that should have been highlighted for other young people to see.

Mr. President, there are instances where we have young people, who excel in sports. That, again, is tucked away or hardly ever highlighted. Sir, this is where I believe the Church has a role to play, but in our communities we have some young people, who, for whatever reason, have chosen to go on a different path of life. Some of these young people were once members of the Churches in the communities but we would find that religious leaders would pass them, sitting on the ‘blocks’ and would not go and have a conversation with them, to encourage them to

come back to church. Sir, had these leaders done that, they would have been surprised to hear there are simple things that could be done, to bring these young people back into the churches. Sir, I do not believe we should find comfort in saying that we have lost an entire generation. We, as responsible citizens, have to do our part.

Mr. President, page 30 of the report makes a recommendation for the Parent-Teacher Association to be widened, to include other aspects concerning the education and personal development of children and the youth. I believe this is a very important recommendation, which would assist parents in becoming involved in the school lives of their children. What would be important, would be meeting with teachers, which would give parents the opportunity to track their children's progress and involvement in the school.

Mr. President, fund-raising is an important aspect of the Parent-Teacher Association, but I do not believe it should be the main focus. They need to be involved with their children's behaviour. They need to meet with teachers, to find out about their children's progress. Sir, I see there is an effort being made to bring the National Council of Parent-Teacher Association back to life again. I hope they would also embrace the recommendations.

Mr. President, we are exposing our young people to movies, in situations where the contents of these movies are unsuitable for children. The Film Censorship Board of Barbados, of which I have the honour to be Chairperson, will shortly be embarking on an awareness programme, where it would educate parents about the rating of movies and their relevance to their children.

Mr. President, I believe when young people are exposed to violent movies or cartoons, they would be encouraged to think this is the way for them to go. We must remember these young people are at vulnerable stages of their lives and therefore wholesome movies must be viewed by them. Sir, I am encouraging parents to desist from exposing their children to adult and restricted movies and to expose them only to wholesome movies.

Mr. President, in supporting this Resolution, I am appealing to the Church, the Parent-Teacher Association, the media, the moderators on the call-in programmes, who seem to have all the answers, the callers and other citizens

of this country. Sir, I say to them to stop the lip-service and to join hand-in-hand with the law enforcement officers and Government, in restoring law and order to this our country.

Mr. President, I am obliged to you.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I wish to thank Honourable Senators for their contributions on this Resolution, which is asking us to take note of the report on the National Commission on Law and Order.

6.50 p.m.

My advice is that the Department of the Attorney-General will now set about to draw up an action plan through which it will seek to implement the various recommendations in an effort to make sure that we improve the maintenance of law and order in our society. I am sure that all of us look forward to the implementation of the various recommendations in the Report.

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

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, this brings us to the end of our business for the day. We have disposed of all the matters on the Order Paper and it is unlikely that we will meet until sometime after Easter. Therefore, I wish to take this opportunity to extend to you, Mr. President, to all Senators and their respective families a joyous Easter. I also wish to extend to the Clerks and members of staff a joyous and Happy Easter and look forward to returning to continue with our business.

Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be adjourned *sine die*.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator Griffith. Before putting the motion, first I thank the good Senator for his good wishes and join with him in extending my best wishes for a blessed Easter to all Honourable Members and to the staff.

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

6.53 p.m.

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