

# THE SENATE DEBATES

## (OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

### THE SENATE

*Wednesday, February 15, 2006*

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, February 15, 2006, at 11.15 a.m.

#### PRESENT

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

Her Honour Senator Dame Patricia SYMMONDS, D.B.E., G.C.M., B.A. (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., B.Com., F.C.A., LL.D. (Hon.) (U.W.I.)

Senator the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON, S.C.M., B.A. (Spec. Hons.), M.A., LL.B. (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, 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.

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 Dr. D. S. LOWE, Ph., Dip. Theology, B.A., MED., ED.D.

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

Senator Dr. F. L. CHANDLER, Ph.D., B.Sc. (Hons.)  
Senator R. O. Marville, B.A. (Hons.), M.A. African Studies, M.B.A.

*Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.*

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is in session.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have received an apology from Senator Barker. There is one other announcement. Honourable Members of the Senate would recall that at the time the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation was granted permission to broadcast debates from the Senate, permission was also granted for the use of television cameras in the Chamber. For various reasons, including the acquisition of new cameras and the resolution of certain technical difficulties, installation has only very recently been completed. I, therefore, wish to advise Honourable Members that from time to time, the CBC will telecasting excerpts of speeches made by Honourable Members. In fact, as you look around you, you can see the cameras in front and behind you.

#### PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: I am commanded to lay the following document:

Annual Report of the Community Legal Services Commission for the year ended March 31, 2004.

## SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that Standing Order No. 45(2) be suspended for the remainder of this Sitting.

*The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

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

Supreme Court of Judicature (Amendment) Bill, 2006.

*The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.*

## PUBLIC BUSINESS

### ORDER NO. 3 – INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA BILL, 2006

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, we are all familiar with the discussions which take place on a regular basis on the importance of bio-diversity and the need for respective countries to conserve and manage their local bio-diversity and to ensure that they are all developed in a manner which would lead to sustainability.

Sir, it is because of the recognition by us as one of the countries has signed and accepted these various conventions and protocols, like the Cartagena Convention on Biological Diversity and now the matter before us, the Convention on International Trade and Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), that this Bill is before us. In our particular case as an island State, which is not that close to land, there is water separating us from our nearest neighbour, that in itself imposes some limitation on the extent of our bio-diversity. Of course, the other issue is that over the years it led to some limitation as well as the fact that from the establishment of the colony, the plantation system was put in place, which of necessity resulted in the destruction of an extensive portion of our bio-diversity. However, we have to make sure that we preserve what we have and manage it in such a manner that we do no injustice to it, and ensure our future and sustainability of our various resources.

11.30 a.m.

Mr. President, the convention which deals with international trade in endangered species was acceded to by Barbados in 1992 and came into effect in 1993. We are, therefore, called upon to put in legislation the provisions of the Convention, so that we can ensure that they are adhered to by persons in and outside of Barbados who want to do

business with Barbados, that are trading in these endangered species, follow the various provisions in the Convention.

Sir, the piece of legislation which is before us requires that respective countries set up a management authority and that they put in place a scientific authority, which will advise the management authority on matters related to the trade in these endangered species.

Sir, the Bill has attached to it, a number of Schedules. In one of the Schedules you will find three appendices. The first appendix sets out those species which are threatened by extinction, therefore, trade in those species has to be managed on a very strict basis. The Bill makes provision for the regulation of that trade. The second appendix sets out those species, which are not threatened with extinction to the same degree as those in the first, but they are threatened. It is just that extinction of those particular species, is not as imminent as in the case of those in the first appendix. In the third appendix there are species that are not threatened with extinction, but for various reasons countries decide that they must control the trade to prevent them from reaching the stage of those in the first or second appendices. Sir, in essence, the whole Bill is put together on the basis of providing the appropriate protection for these species.

Mr. President, in the case of Barbados, in the first appendix, you will find species such as the various types of turtles, which we have here, because we are talking not only about the terrestrial matters, but the marine resources as well. You will find things like the red foot tortoise, and among the plant species, for example, the West Indian mahogany, to give you an idea of the matters which you find in appendix one.

Sir, the Bill, in keeping with the provisions of the Convention sets out clearly how trade in these endangered species must be conducted. The responsibilities of the Management Authority, which in this case happen to be the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, are clearly set out in the section 6.1, Part III of the Bill, which says,

“The Management Authority designated under section 5 (3) shall be responsible for:-

1. Issuing permits and certificates in respect of the importation, exportation and re-exportation of endangered species of wild fauna and flora in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and stipulating any conditions that may be attached to the permits or certificates.”

It goes on to list a number of other responsibilities so that, in essence, the trade is controlled by the Management

Authority, issuing permits to those persons who want to get involved in that trade, and ensuring that the kind of information which is necessary to inform the decision, is provided in advance of the trade taking place. It is, therefore, important that persons in Barbados who are desirous of getting involved in trade in these endangered species become very familiar with all of the requirements.

The Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment is engaged from time to time in a number of educational programmes in schools, participating in exhibitions, meeting with people who keep pets and trade in the business, to make sure that everyone is familiar, but it is also incumbent on those persons who are involved in the trade to make sure that they are familiar with the information.

Sir, I will give you an example of a case that I had to deal with when I was resident in Geneva. I dealt with it only in the sense that the person who was involved in the matter was a Barbadian living in France. He contacted me when he got into some difficulty with the customs in Geneva. He was returning from a visit to Barbados and while in Barbados got into a transaction with an individual who sold him some mahogany, without contacting the Ministry, which is in this case the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, to find out what legal obligations he had to fulfill before that mahogany could leave Barbados to come into Geneva.

Sir, he entered into the arrangement and when the mahogany reached Switzerland, it was seized. I do not know if he ever got it back because I left Geneva before it was resolved. I suspect that he did not get it back because the Swiss take these matters seriously. They seized the material and were asking him to give them just cause and reason why he should not be put in jail. It was at that stage that he contacted me. Unfortunately, I was not able to help except to provide some information for him, and to advise him that he should not try to pursue the matter, because he had no clearance from Barbados in this particular case. If the Swiss were to allow him to have access to the material, he would at least have required clearance from Barbados. He had not sought that clearance and therefore it was most unlikely that they would entertain him with any of his explanations, genuine as they were.

11.40 a.m.

I mentioned that to give some idea of the difficulties in which persons will find themselves, if they get involved in trade in these endangered species, without first seeking the appropriate clearance from the competent authority, which in this case is the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment.

This authority is advised by the Scientific Authority which is provided for in section 7(1) of the Bill which says

that the Scientific Authority is responsible for advising the Management Authority on the matter set out in subsection two, and any other matters relating to the Convention. There is a copy of the Convention in the First Schedule to the Bill.

“7. (2) The Scientific Authority shall advise the Management Authority on:

- (i) whether any species is vulnerable, threatened, endangered or extinct;
- (ii) matters in respect of which advice is sought by the Management Authority;
- (iii) policy matters relating to international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora.”

Sir, it goes on and talks about proposed importation, exportation, re-exportation or introduction from the sea of specimens specified in the Second and Third Schedules, whether they would be detrimental to the survival of that species.

It goes on and sets out a number of other matters on which the Scientific Authority shall advise the Management Authority, then, the Management Authority will make the decision, having taken into account the advice from the Scientific Authority.

The Scientific Authority in this particular case is made up of a number of persons representing different interests, such as the University of the West Indies, the Fisheries Division, the Coastal Zone Management Unit, the Customs and Excise Department, TVET Council, the VET Services, the Ministry of Agriculture and so on.

Of course, it takes into account private sector interest as well. This is the body that will provide the advice.

Now that my mind is focused on the inclusion of the VET services, I will raise another issue which continues to provide a threat to the whole system about which we now speak. It has to do with the persons who import exotic birds and hide them away in their luggage, and sometimes in the pockets, who believe that they ‘pull one’ on the authorities at the airport, the customs and the quarantine people, and they have got away with something.

I am sure that all of you have been seeing recently the situation across the world but, most recently in Europe, with the spread of the bird flu. Sir, you would have noticed that it has reached places in Germany, Italy and such places, through wild swans.

Sir, when people hide away these birds and they bring them into Barbados without declaring them to the veterinary

personnel so that they can be properly checked to ensure that it is safe for them to come into Barbados, they pose a serious threat to Barbados, generally.

Now, when people meet me and ask me about the possibility of bird flu coming to Barbados, I have to say to them that there is always that possibility, particularly because we have a number of species of migratory birds that come here for part of the year. Those are some of the birds listed by the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, as part of our bio-diversity. They come here for certain parts of the year from all over the world.

You would have noticed recently in the news that it was a view, that some of those swans came back from Russia. It is felt that is where they might have brought the virus from, but one never knows what happens and what these birds will bring. Therefore, my plea to those persons who are involved in that practice of hiding away these exotic birds because they want to avoid meeting the requirements for the importation of such species, if they would like us to continue to be free of some of these problems that could result, they would declare them, have them properly checked so that we could be satisfied that we are not importing in the process, viruses and other diseases that would create havoc for our local producers.

The Bill also then sets out the conditions under which the various certificates and permits should be granted, and indicates the instances when the authority may be forced to revoke those permits or certificates. It deals with offences and indicates quite a heavy fine to revoke those permits or certificates, which would be imposed in the event that persons are found guilty of breaches.

One may be tempted to wonder why it is so important. We have to take these steps, not only to protect these species which are endangered, but to make sure that we manage those that are not now threatened with extinction, in such a way that we will be able to continue to benefit from them.

If you look back at the history of Barbados, you would notice that a number of the species of plants from which our foreparents and some of us benefited in the past, have now disappeared. It is unlikely that we would get them back. We have lost some of our good resources. We need to make sure that we continue to protect the ones we have, so that we can continue to benefit from them, so that requires careful use of them.

We should not allow them to be destroyed and find ourselves, in due course, to the point where we cannot provide food for ourselves, and have to import everything. Sir, in many instances, we are importing things that may be inferior to some of the things we used to produce and could still produce if we had preserved those species.

11.50 a.m.

Mr. President, even today we benefit from the use of a number of species of plants that our forefathers brought from Africa and elsewhere and developed here. Fortunately, all of them have not disappeared. One only has to go back and study the history of Barbados and one would discover that many of the things we now call our own did not originate here, but were brought by our forefathers from elsewhere and were cultivated and developed here, and we now take it as natural and normal for those things to happen. Some of them are fast leaving us because we do not attach that importance to the sustainability and the careful use of our bio-diversity.

Mr. President, when we were discussing the matter relating to intellectual property and the importance of ensuring that we pay attention to those issues, I mentioned the case of the University of the West Indies being engaged in the research of some plants in conjunction with a group in Canada. Mr. President, all of that was being done simply on the basis of an arrangement between the two parties. Therefore, when this Bill comes into force, it will take care of situations like that.

Mr. President, persons, whether they are engaged in scientific activities or otherwise, once they are dealing with particular species, would have to seek the approval of the competent authority and would have to conduct their business in a manner that would be satisfactory to the competent authority. That is important because not only must we make sure that any intellectual property that results from the research and so on leads to benefits for the country at large, but we must also make sure that nothing is done which would deprive us of the benefits that would come to us from the existence of those species. In other words, we must make sure that whatever is done is done in a manner consistent with our desire to preserve and to manage our various species properly.

Mr. President, there are provisions in the Bill also for the authority to obtain search warrants to check what is happening if it suspects that trade is taking place without the appropriate approval and knowledge of the authority. There is provision as well for the establishment of an inspectorate which will monitor what is happening in the particular area and for the seizure of various specimens.

Section 31 (1) deals with the case where a specimen is forfeited in keeping with section 29. Where there is a conviction for an offence under the Act, the Crown should forfeit the specimen and so on.

Mr. President, the intention of the Bill before us is to make sure that we so manage our business in relation to international trade in these endangered species and that we do it in a sensible way and in a way that would not injure the bio-diversity of the country.

Mr. President, you would recall that I mentioned the case with the person who had imported the mahogany from Barbados into Switzerland, and you would have gathered from that, that if a trader in Barbados gets involved in international trade in these endangered species without the clearance of the appropriate authority, two things are likely to happen:

1. The receiving country, as long as that country is a signatory to the CITES Convention, is going to take legal action against the individual, and
2. Barbados runs the risk of finding itself in a dispute for not ensuring that trade in those species is conducted in a manner which is consistent with the Convention.

That is why it is absolutely necessary that the authority put in place, at an early date, the inspectorate and all of the mechanisms that would allow it to monitor what is happening and, above all, to make sure that those persons who are involved in the trade or who want to get involved are familiar with all of the requirements that they are expected to meet under this international convention.

Mr. President, the educational programme therefore cannot be restricted to those who are presently involved or engaged in the trade, it has to be a general public awareness programme. That is why the competent authority, the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, must continue with and broaden its programme in the schools as well as to continue with its involvement in the various exhibitions and so on.

Mr. President, I do not know if they have made up their minds yet to have a booth at the upcoming Agrofest, but if they have not done that already, I would encourage them to do so. Sir, that would be a good opportunity to make sure that the number of persons who pass through the park on that occasion would be made aware of the fact that Barbados is a signatory to this Convention and also of the need for us not only to take the matter seriously because of the implications for ourselves in terms of the need to maintain and preserve our bio-diversity but also because of the issues that could result with other countries who are party to the Convention if people in our country violate the provisions of that Convention.

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

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Mr. President, the Opposition finds no fault in the Bill before us for consideration. We do understand, based on what the Honourable Minister, the Honourable Leader of Government Business in this Chamber has said that this Bill is really

about our country bringing itself in line with international conventions and ensuring that the provisions and the regulations are in place that would allow us to protect our precious commodities as it relates to bio-diversity.  
12.00 noon

Mr. President, the truth is, I believe all Honourable Senators would fondly recall or would reflect on our own upbringing and fascination with any number of animals, plants and birds, from time to time, that were, and in some cases, are unique to Barbados. We would also fondly recall, particularly those of us who had the honour of growing up in the corridors of the country where, from time to time, we would have spent any number of hours, with or without permission, in the rivers and gullies, exploring our own environment and seeking to gain some interaction with those birds, plants and other things, that would have fascinated us.

Mr. President, I noticed with some relief that in recent months, the Honourable Minister for the Environment, has been spending a lot of time in bringing attention to matters relating to the environment. Sir, we applaud the Ministry of the Environment for such efforts because if we are talking about protecting endangered species and about protecting species in general, then we would have to look at matters relating to the environment because part of the protection system of our eco-systems and bio-diversity systems, would have to be the robustness with which the environment is guarded against the pollutants, both land borne, water borne and air borne, that would put our biological systems at risk.

Mr. President, when we speak about species, we must not restrict our definition to animals of a low order, plants and others but should also include ourselves. We must also be a part of the guardianship of the environment because we cannot leave behind environs that have become so polluted for the generations to inherit. Therefore, I see the interpretation of this Bill to expand as widely as possible, as it relates to the preservation of life, both plant form, animal form and human form in the society.

Mr. President, when we talk about bio-diversity, we have to look at the state of the environment. We certainly have to do more to arrest the threat to all living organisms in our environment. I heard the Honourable Minister of the Environment lamenting the fact that there are now a proliferation of pollutants, derived from illegal dumping. Sir, I think we all know there is now a trend in this society, which is not only restricted to ordinary Barbadians but to business houses and others, where, with some measures of ease, these places are moving such refuse and dumping it in certain areas, particularly in areas which would be considered on the corridors of the disadvantaged.

Mr. President, in preparation for this particular debate, I have taken some time to move around. Sir, only a few

evenings ago, I went into Chancery Lane, on the deeper end, close to the Long Beach area, and I was appalled to note that a number of loads of debris, have now been dumped on the outskirts of the wetlands in that area, so much so that where the pathway to get up onto the wetlands, has now become obstructed by this dumping.

Mr. President, what I have also noted is that, at the same time, there is a lot of construction development going on in the same area. Therefore, I would like to make a logical leap to suggest that perhaps those who now are clearing their lots, who are collecting the fragments of wood and metal, which would not be used on the construction of buildings, are now finding it convenient to dump that debris in areas such as these.

Sir, when we go through places such as Bloomsbury, once upon a time there was a watercourse that would have run all the way from that area, through a place called Richmonds, St. Joseph, all the way down through the Spa, all the way down through the lower parts of the St. Thomas corridor, on the outskirts of Sturges, through St. Andrew, including but not limited to Turner's Hall but Spring Vale, for sure, through Trio Path, down through Cane Garden, through Bruce Vale, on the outskirts of Haggatts, under the Coggins Bridge, and all the way down to Long Pond.

Mr. President, this was a natural watercourse, where one could have gone through those areas any time of the year. I remember very fondly catching large drafts of fish in those areas. There were crayfish, mullets, thousands, *et cetera*, all the way down through, and any time of the year, as a young boy particularly during the summer, I could find a flowing river, all the way down. Sir, Senator Nicholls looks on in awe but I am sorry that he has been deprived from such an experience.

Mr. President, I visited that area recently and to my lamentation, I discovered that the river has been blocked on the higher end, and so the water passage has now been reduced to a trickle, in some cases and in others, it is absolutely dry. Sir, the important thing about that was not only the joys of bathing in the water holes but we also watered our cattle, on a daily basis. Where there was land on the outskirts of the river, we would have caught water, to water our beans and things that we had planted.

Mr. President, therefore, there is an important connection in all of this. Sir, let me go back to say that any efforts by the Government, to ensure that these systems stay intact, are efforts that must be applauded. Therefore, certainly the Opposition does not hesitate to applaud Government on these efforts. I would go further to say that when we talk about illegal dumping, that is perhaps separate and distinct from this malady of littering in this country.

Mr. President, I saw something this morning on my way to this Honourable Chamber. I was coming up Broad Street and I saw a young man, probably in his mid-20s, having something to eat. Apparently, he had finished later than he had anticipated because he had already passed the container that collects the garbage. Sir, I saw that young man turn around, walk back and drop the container of whatever it was he was eating, into that bin. Sir, when I saw this, I told myself that if we could get our population to take on that kind of attitude or disposition...

Mr. President, I have had the privilege of living in a major city in the United States of America. I have travelled across most of the States, particularly places such as Chicago and Los Angeles. I know there seems to be an awareness, where people take time to ensure that their garbage is disposed of, even in the most casual circumstances, in a way that does not impact negatively upon the appearance of the city or the environment itself.  
12.10 p.m.

Sir, we have to do something because there are regulations in place but perhaps the problem is the policing of these regulations to ensure that enforcement takes place in a vigorous way.

Mr. President, it is not uncommon to be driving behind a ZR, minibus, Transport Board bus, SUV, private car or motor cycle and see people just release garbage in the air as if it is a thing that has no consequences on the environment.

Mr. President, I notice with delight that very early in the mornings in certain busy areas of Barbados particularly the south coast that persons go through and collect the fragments of garbage left in the wake of those who left it there carelessly. I applaud the workers at the Sanitation Service Authority, the National Conservation Commission and other places who are doing a very effective job against the odds in trying to ensure that the society is protected from that ugly scourge.

Mr. President, I have never had the opportunity to travel to Canada but I understand from those who have been there that it is one of the cleaner areas in the north where you can go for miles and recognise a cleanliness about the major areas. Sir, I am hoping that all Barbadians on all sides of politics and others, would take it upon themselves to help insist that our country remains a Paradise as much as we possibly can relative to that.

Mr. President, when there is illegal dumping and littering, the state of the environment becomes at risk. When the natural water courses and gullies are infected by all this rubbish, the state of the environment becomes at risk and when the environment is at risk, bio-diversity all stands at

risk. Sir, there has to be a more vigorous effort to preserve the natural lands and wetlands of this country as well as part of our effort in the preservation of endangered species and others.

Mr. President, I would like to appeal through the Honourable Minister and Leader of Government Business that some effort be put in place to protect the Chancery Lane wet lands. I do not know if many of the Honourable Members of the Chamber have had the opportunity to go there and see that location but it is a fabulous area. I believe that as a Barbadian, whether I am from the hills of St. Andrew or those of St. Philip, although there are not many there unless you are looking from the ocean upwards, that we all have a responsibility to encourage the State to do whatever is necessary especially since we pride ourselves as a premier tourism destination. Sir, beyond that, we are doing it for ourselves and for succeeding generations.

I believe it is necessary that in spite of all the development going up and all the efforts by commercial Barbados to ensure that this country is coloured with some of the most modern buildings and other commercial endeavours, for us to strongly advocate for the preservation of those ecosystems in the society. We should do all that we can do on all sides of politics to ensure that we leave behind a place that is not lost in the commercial development of our times but that some natural areas are preserved as well.

Mr. President, I also think about Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary. Again, I do not know how many of us have been there but it is one of the most prestigious places anywhere in the world where I have gone and visited sanctuaries. Sir, Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary is a world-class destination for visitors. I know it has been a labour of love on the part of the individuals who have created such a fabulous spectacle in this country. I am hoping that the country does more to recognise the value of such a destination. I am hoping that the Government does more to encourage other investments like these where there is a twofold benefit, one on the economic side but perhaps, most important, one on the side of preserving the environment.

Mr. President, I know that Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary has some of the most exotic and beautiful birds. I also know that it is one of the premier habitats for the egrets. If you go there on any given day, you would discover that there is a colony of birds on an island within the heart of the swamp area that is a precious and beautiful observation as long as you have the time to enjoy the pleasures of nature.

Mr. President, I would like to see the Government extend the opportunity for further development of that area and perhaps do all within its powers to keep out the other types of commercial ventures that would become a detraction

from the beauty and saintliness of the sanctuary. Sir, I give kudos to the people involved like Mr. Peter Alard who have made it a personal effort to ensure that he deposits in this country a wonderful, precious location where you can go. Sir, for those of you who are contemplating matrimony, it is a good place to go and have the pleasures of the vow taken at the sanctuary.

Mr. President, marine life is also of great importance. Only recently we heard in the news of a situation on the west coast where there was disruption to marine life down there and we are hoping that the relevant authorities do the necessary investigation to ensure that we do not go after any type of luxury in this country at the expense of what is natural, wonderful and unique about Barbados.

Mr. President, I applaud the work of the Barbados Marine Trust because they are doing a fantastic job in this country. I applaud the work of Peter Barrow, who is one of the key leaders of the group, and I am hoping that Government will extend its contribution to systems and NGOs who are committed in assisting us to preserve our environment.

Mr. President, protection and preservation of various species – Sir, I am noting some things with curiosity. I would like the Honourable Member in his wrap up on this particular issue to perhaps give us some enlightenment as to the state of being of these particular species.

Mr. President, there was a time when the mongoose was very plentiful in Barbados, particularly around locations where a lot of ‘yard fowls’ and ‘paling cocks’ were kept. Of course, a lot of damage has been done to them because of the proliferation of cane fires which has been a menace to certain natural organisms. Mr. President, I know that at one point there was a sport developing in Barbados where people went out and trapped them and used them to engage dogs and that had a negative impact on the population particularly in other areas. It is important that we do not sit and make assumptions. What other countries and jurisdictions have done, is to spend a lot of money and resources tracking the whereabouts and growth of population of certain types of species. Perhaps, we need to move to the position where we begin taking this kind of science and applying it to the preservation of those species that we think are in danger of being extinct.

12.20 p.m.

Sir, I remember as a boy, you would see a yellow breast bird in almost every tree. Nowadays, you hardly see yellow breast birds in Barbados. I think that it is one of the more beautiful birds that we have in our collection. I think that we should do some investigation as to what the current level of the population is and, perhaps, and take some action in terms of assisting us with the preservation of this bird.

Mr. President, we have heard a lot about the grass snake. What about the small green lizard? Sir, are you aware that there is now a lizard in Barbados that is apparently eating up the small domestic lizards in this country? Mr. President, I know that you can appreciate this. I remember the days when I would sit outside of my window with a few cans and play music just to see lizards come in their numbers and bow their heads at the rhythm of the music. I have seen this. Of course, if you know of lizards...

*Asides.*

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Mr. President, the point is, if in truth and in fact there is a new lizard in town, we need to set the lizard police on it, because it is destroying something that has been a fixture in this country for a long time.

As a matter of fact, I remember when there were persons who came from overseas to buy those lizards. I also remember that they bought the cocks at ten cents each, if the tails were not broken and the hens at six cents. I made pocket change at the time by assisting.

Mr. President, now that I have an understanding of the precious nature of this indigenous animal, I want to advocate and join those who advocate that, in fact, we do more in preserving them.

Sir, I know that there has been sighting of iguanas in the country and I believe that had been either as a result of illegal importation or that they arrived on boats. I have heard some people say this. Mr. President, whatever the case is, I think we need to do more in that regard.

Mr. President, I am sure that the Honourable Minister will address the issue of the Black Belly sheep, but they are those in the society who believe that we may have allowed the Black Belly sheep to sneak out of this country unwittingly, and where it was once the indigenous sheep of Barbados, we may now have others who are not indigenous claiming ownership to the Black Belly sheep. All I would like to say is, everything must be done to ensure that we preserve what is our own, as a necessity.

Sir, it is not only that side of our bio-diversity that concerns me. I remember, once upon a time, the prevalence of 'ser see' bush, as a matter of fact the same lizards used to feed on the pods of the 'ser see'. There might be another name but I do not know what it is. I also remember that we used it to help us with colds. We boiled it and the extract from the bush had medicinal value, as we were told.

Sir, I remember that once upon a time you could go to certain areas to pick coffee pods from coffee vines in

Barbados. I do not know how many people remember that. I remember where we picked the bean, almost like a large string bean and how you could grind a pound of coffee; it rivalled Blue Mountain, Maxwell House and those other brand names, but that now seems to be extinct because I do not see it anywhere around. Mr. President, the same is true with the 'Khus Khus' grass, again which is a very important member of the plant family.

Sir, I remember when 'Khus Khus' grass was a feature of every hedge row in Barbados, not only every hedge row but some of us who did not grow up with privilege, we used it to make mattresses and so on. There was nothing better than a freshly packed 'Khus Khus' grass bed and the fragrance the absolutely was delightful. All of a sudden those practices are now few and far between.

Sir, arrowroot is another plant that we have noted. There was the sandbox tree. I do not know how many know of or remembered that tree. I remember because it was an important tree that we benefitted from, because it grows a pod which when dried, can be made into earrings and rings for your nose and so on. Sir, the crab eye seed vine is another plant. Mr. President, what are we going to tell the next generation if we do not do more to preserve some of the natural features of this wonderful island that we call our own.

Mr. President, the bamboo tree is now going down south. The bamboo tree has a diversity of benefits, including basket making. Once upon a time that was a natural way some people used to make a living in this country. The last thing that I would mention in addition to the 'clammy cherry' tree is the Bajan cherry. The Honourable Minister and Leader of Government Business in this Chamber – I would like him to tell us something about the Bajan cherry and the status of this cherry. I remember, not too long ago in the 1960s and 1970s, where Haggatts probably had the largest population of Bajan cherry trees. If you go down to Haggatts there are still remnants of those trees around but there is more grass on the fields than there are cherry trees. The Bajan cherry is not only a unique and an indigenous plant in Barbados, it is also known internationally for its content in vitamin C and other benefits that lie therein. Sir, I am saying that if we are talking about protecting endangered species, we have to give note to some of these areas.

Mr. President, I have already said that the Government should try to do more in supporting NGOs whose work centres are about the protection of the environment. I would also like to see more development of the 4-H Club. That used to be one of the organs that really kept us, as young people at the time, involved in understanding agriculture, plant life, food and the like, but that has now become a scarce commodity in Barbados as well. I would like to see more being done.

In order to create a culture where people become conscious about the environment and to help preserve those features of our environment that are unique and indigenous to us, we have to do more with the public education process. We have to create opportunities with regard to curriculum development in primary schools, where there are main features within that particular corridor where persons can understand the requirements in the preservation of the environment.

I would like to see more done among public sector entities relative to their contribution to this education effort. Of course, small business persons should be given every opportunity to be assisted in any efforts that would cause them to save money, but at the same time promote good environmental practices.

Mr. President, again, I think it is noteworthy that the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment is making some very vigorous efforts to advance its work in the area of protecting the environment and promoting the preservation of those species of ours that are on the verge of extinction.

Mr. President, I thank you.  
12.30 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, I rise to support the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Bill. It supports the work being done by the UWI, especially regarding the protection of turtles, the work of CERMES, the Barbados National Trust, the Barbados Environmental Society and Counterpart Caribbean. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate these organisations for their promotion of environmental issues, including bio-diversity. I agree with Senator Lowe that every support should be given by the Government to these organisations.

I am glad to see that there is to be a Scientific Authority so that decisions made will be based on a solid scientific evidence and not on an emotional basis. The Bill also mentions plant pests and disease import control. I would like to compliment the Plant Quarantine Control Division on their diligence in this matter. I would like to reinforce the importance of extreme vigilance, especially in the face of the free trade that we are seeing now in fresh produce.

I saw an article which claimed that the "Pink Mealybug" made its appearance in the Caribbean via a diplomatic bag. We have been seeing many new insects in recent times which have been very damaging to our crops.

Senator Griffith mentioned the loss of some of our plant species. An example of this is our local corn which

almost disappeared when the imported hybrid varieties came on the scene. These new varieties were very susceptible to insects, whereas the local variety can be grown almost without any chemicals. We need to preserve these varieties.

It is also claimed that our sea island cotton is in danger of being diluted. We need to preserve the seeds of these local species like the same corn, guinea corn, finger squash, *et cetera*, which I think are indigenous to Barbados.

The West Indies Central Sugar Cane Breeding Station has been doing good work in the preservation of varieties and this needs to be continued and expanded.

I would again like to give my support to this Bill. I thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Marville.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, I rise in support of this Bill. There is one area which I think the Bill does not address. I am thankful to Senator Griffith for his rather lengthy explanation of the areas covered. I am reliably informed that at some of our shooting ranges, some of the birds shot are migrant birds that are rare. We need to look into that very carefully because we may be, without trading and being conscious of it, wiping out a species that is in danger of being eradicated.

I too, look back to the days when we had a great number of other species, both in terms of fauna and flora, and miss the fact that a lot of land turtles, which I saw as a child, no longer are there.

I lost track of the two doves that are indigenous to this place and I was very pleasantly surprised last weekend, when I saw several of them up in the area between St. Andrew and St. Joseph.

I also have welcomed the fact that with the preservation offered from the University of the West Indies and elsewhere, the turtle is back. Two days ago there was a large turtle, swimming with the rest of us at Pebbles Beach. The funny thing was, I think she had arrived too late to lay eggs on the sand because everybody was about, she really did not know what to do, so she just swam around without going ashore. The turtle comes ashore there and lays eggs there. This is an extremely pleasant sight and, occasionally, you see masses of little ones going out to sea, in an area hopefully where there are no predators.

I share much of the concerns expressed by Senator Lowe on the disappearance of plants and animals. The one thing I completely disagreed with was the question of the mongoose. Sir, not only is the mongoose not indigenous, but

it never belonged here. It was brought by the British, certainly to get rid of snakes that did not exist. Instead of that, it has been a complete pest. I do not know of this absence of mongooses because I see them all over the place still. I hope we had actually got rid of them all together. They do not belong here.

I would like to say that I think the Bill is an excellent step but a first step. I do believe that we have – and we owe it to ourselves and generations to come – to put together a serious environment education plan that begins at primary school. I find that when little children get into the idea that they are protecting the environment, they make their parents do it too. I think this is something we really have to look at. We have to be perfectly sure that we get this in place soon. We are destroying too many things too quickly and we do not have that much time to change the course of things.

I thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Eastmond.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: Thank you, Mr. President, I rise to support the Bill for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and related matters. I am extremely delighted that the Opposition Members actually support this piece of legislation because we know that if the Minister of Finance in his Economic and Financial Policies statement had included any proposals with respect to something so esoteric as the protection of the environment and endangered species, the headline in the newspapers next day, as stated by the Opposition would be that there is nothing in the budget for the poor man.

Therefore, it is wonderful that now on reflection, they actually see value in pieces of legislation like this because it takes time and money to attend these meetings to participate in the negotiation of these conventions. Similarly, it takes time to draft the legislation.

I always find it quite remarkable that somehow these issues like protecting the environment are juxtaposed against other issues like building a school. Therefore, you must build schools but you must not protect the environment.

At the end of the day, there is just so much revenue that Barbados is able to raise and there are a number of issues which we are seeking to address that are equally important. If you build schools and you do not protect the environment, at the end of the day, you will not have a place to put the schools, if you destroy the natural habitat. I find that very interesting.

I was even more interested by Senator Dr. Lowe who actually was of the view that the Government should perhaps

spend money on tracking devices for endangered species, such as the turtle. I do not know if this was said in a whimsical fashion but a project like that actually costs quite a lot of money. He is aware of this, Mr. President, if the Minister of Finance had put that in his Financial and Economic Statement as a project that we were going to pursue, we would hear that there is nothing in the Budget for the poor man as if the poor man does not benefit from having a balanced environment to live in.

12.40 p.m.

Mr. President, it is good that they are coming around to our way of thinking where we wish to see Barbados developed in a balance fashion and where we take into account all of these several issues that confront us where we use the limited resources that we have to address them.

Mr. President, this particular legislation is one that seeks to implement this Convention which is really a monitoring tool. It does not actually say that there should absolutely be no trade, but there is a facility for monitoring and ensuring that we do not deplete stocks in other countries. This is very important within the context that mankind was given dominion over all things, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea and the animals on the land. Mr. President, somehow, we interpreted that to mean that we can clear large tracks of land, destroy their habitats without thinking and kill them off if necessary. Mr. President, I believe that we had in mind that we came and found them and when we leave they would still be there, little did we understand that some of these plants and animals would have a finite existence if we destroy them. They are no more being made.

Mr. President, I had a friend who used to always say when you were spending money that more money ‘mekkin’, not to worry about it.

Mr. President, some of these species are not going to be made again. Some species have been wiped from the face of the earth and any value whatever that they had, be it aesthetic, cultural, recreational or scientific, has been lost. Individuals are now very much concerned with the fact that scientific value had been lost to us for all times.

Mr. President, if you look at it carefully, there is a balance in the environment. Mr. President, while there are certain diseases that might attend human beings, usually the solution to those diseases is also found in the environment, but the balance is going to be lost if there is some aspect of the environment that we destroy for all times. There are some diseases that perhaps there is a cure somewhere but we can no longer find that cure because we have destroyed the

plants or animals that might have that cure for us. This is one of the very important things that this piece of the legislation and the Convention is seeking to preserve, to give us the opportunities still.

Mr. President, while mankind may believe that they have put a man on the moon and have created the atom bomb, there are still so many things to discover and so many things that we have not done as yet, but the tools to do all of them are there. All of the material was given to us, but if we destroy it, it would no longer be there for us to use.

Mr. President, this particular Convention has to be viewed within the wider context of the fact in terms of our international obligations. Sir, what the international communities seek to do in areas such as this, is to ensure that every country in the world, as far as possible, is following the same standards. We would not wish to have the circumstance where country "A" has penalties in place for trade in endangered flora and fauna and country "C" does not, because then it would not work as you would find penalties only on one side. Therefore, what we are seeking to do is to create a framework that is seamless where anyone who engages in this type of activity without permission would be penalised. Therefore, individuals should understand what the rules of the game are with respect to certain animals and plants.

Mr. President, we have to regard this piece of legislation within the context of our various free trade agreements because there seems to be a bit of a misunderstanding about what free trade agreements are about. Mr. President, when we speak of trade liberalisation and free trade, often there is a view that there are no longer rules that you can trade in whatever you feel like, but that is not true. With trade liberalisation there are going to be more rules than there ever were before. This Convention provides a circumstance where there is a very clear exception, in a very broad way, to the notion that you can trade in just about anything. With respect to this Convention, this is saying that you cannot. There are some things that you would not be able to trade in freely as you would like.

Mr. President, I believe that is very important because I do get the impression sometimes that individuals believe that because we have signed on to agreements that there are no rules, that you can sell what you like and purchase what you like internationally and that within your domestic market you cannot put rules in place to prevent the entry of certain goods and services, but that certainly is not the case.

This piece of legislation is very important as part of the Government's broader set of initiatives for the protection of the environment. Hopefully, this piece of legislation also adds to what we should all be doing, including the non-governmental organisations, in creating in a culture where

preservation of the environment becomes important. I cannot say at the moment that there is a prevalence of awareness that we should protect the environment and the importance of protecting it by the broad masses of people.

Mr. President, these are things I believe that politicians need to talk about more. I know that politicians are often seduced by believing that the ordinary members of the public can only be persuaded by gimmicks, and this is not true. Before I become engaged in this activity, I was an ordinary member of the public and the gimmicks never persuaded me. I certainly never considered myself as one of these people who had no ability to think for myself and was downtrodden and oppressed. I never saw myself that way and none of the people I knew saw themselves that way either. Those gimmicks are not going to work with people anymore.

Mr. President, I believe that in Barbados we have to start looking at the issues that are serious. People believe that they should drive in their car and throw plastic paper, bottles and everything else through the window because the people who speak on their behalf do not ever say to them that it is wrong because per chance they are afraid they are not going to vote for them in the next election.

Mr. President, to throw plastic bottles through your car window is wrong, there is no way that it can be right. The person that is doing it knows that it is wrong as well. Therefore, there is certainly a need for enforcement of the principle amongst the people who would seek to lead the ordinary men and women of Barbados.

12.50 p.m.

Sir, these people are not small people, who do not know any better. The people who are loading truck-fulls of garbage, clearing sites and dumping them in gullies, are not the ordinary, poor black man. They are people who have money, who should know better, and who can afford to properly dispose of their waste. Mr. President, when we walk through Bridgetown and see the number of plastic bags that people idly drop on the pavements, they are not there by the casual person, who walks through Bridgetown, coming from his work site at Kensington, to catch the bus to go to St. Philip. Instead, those bags are dropped by the people who own the stores in Bridgetown, who we call respectable people. Mr. President, let us be very frank about these issues. The people who are doing the bulk of this illegal dumping are not those who do not know any better, but somehow within Barbados we have reached the point where nobody wants to say anything to each other, but wrong is wrong. Wrong cannot be right, therefore, somebody has to say it is wrong at some point, otherwise it would seem as though we are going to continue as we are now.

Mr. President, those individuals who can source exotic animals from across the world, from Africa and Australia,

who have the access to do so, either by the internet or by getting someone to hide these things in their luggage, are things that require a certain amount of intellect and capacity to do. In such a circumstance, would anyone expect us to believe those individuals do not know any better? I believe they do but they feel they could make money out of this illegal venture. They do not care or they show a reckless disregard for the impact it has on the entire country. Sir, for example, there could be the situation where someone wants to bring in an exotic bird, who does not care that bird might have bird flu and that a six year old child could die from the bird flu virus, if that child were to contract that virus. Therefore, in this circumstance, these people are not negligent but are showing a reckless disregard for the country.

Mr. President, I believe that in terms of leadership, there is more that would lead through influence than by words spoken. Sir, more is done by one's actions than by words spoken. I believe that Barbadians have to start to take responsibility for their actions, and that those who would seek to lead the people of this country, have to start leading, by example, by way of all their activities. Sir, we must not think the population does not understand. The population understands what it is that those who would seek to lead are doing, and they are taking the cue from these would-be leaders.

Mr. President, I am sure that, in terms of the various discussions we are going to have in the future, that is a clear point that would have to be made. Therefore, in this particular area where we are seeking to protect the environment, where we consider it to be a matter of extreme importance, I wish to say that I am very pleased that all Honourable Senators seem to understand the importance of this particular piece of legislation.

Sir, I would hope that, in future, we would find some other method of trying to persuade the public in our other pursuits and that matters such as these, where Government is going to seek to put measures in place to support issues, such as preventing the trade of endangered species, would be supported at all times. I would hope that we would give support, not only when we reach this point in discussing the Bill but when we are looking overall at what Government is seeking to do, in terms of utilising the resources of the country. I would also hope that, in this regard, we do not make statements to the effect, is it better to put a piece of legislation in place protecting kangaroos, or should we put a piece of legislation in place that reduces the VAT on certain items.

Mr. President, those kinds of comparisons would make no sense, as we have a country to run. Therefore, those individuals who now not only seek to lead but to govern, should understand that governments cannot operate like

non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Governments have very specific choices and very serious decisions to make about how money would be spent. Therefore, in this regard, Government must look at raising revenue and properly spending that revenue.

Sir, that would not be the case with those who believe when they seek to govern, they would be able to behave like that of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have their own roles, the Government has its role and the private sector has its role.

Mr. President, with those few words, I would wish to support this Bill. I am obliged to you.

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: This Senate is now in Committee.

*Clauses 1– 36, inclusive, were called and passed.*

*The First to the Fifth Schedules 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.*  
1.00 p.m.

*On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Act, 2006.*

## SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.15 p.m. today.

*The question was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.*  
1.03 p.m.

## RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

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

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: Mr. President, we are continuing the debate on this Resolution.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dame Patricia Symmonds.

HER HONOUR SENATOR Dame Patricia SYMONDS: Mr. President, I wish to begin by congratulating the Chairman and other members of the Commission on an excellent report. The Commissioners have fearlessly gone into diverse places and met 'boys on the block' and other people who hold various opinions, including members of organisations. Sir, in their "walkabouts" they talked with the man in the street. This report is an impressive comprehensive appreciation of the complexity of Barbadian life in the Twenty-first Century.

First, I wish very briefly to refer to certain statements made by Senator Stuart about our educational system, and to remind or enlighten him about a few facts. I do not think that our influence by our colonial system could be considered a failure. It is true that we studied just English or European history, not West Indian. In any case, unfortunately, very little had been written about that at one time, but they gave us Shakespeare, which Senator Stuart and so many Barbadians are fond of quoting. They gave us the Bible, our legal system, English Language, with all its richness and variety, they established and emphasised certain virtues, such as courtesy, discipline and respect. Although our fortunes have declined temporarily, if you believe in evolution, they gave us cricket.

Sir, I think that Senator Stuart is wrong in saying that our system teaches us to answer the question like when, where, what and whether but never focuses on why.

Mr. President, "Curriculum 2000", for those who have read it, and the new syllabuses emphasise critical thinking, problem solving and creativity. Each of these requires the student to analyse. Of course, there is conflict resolution.

Sir, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the Barbados Association for the teaching of English was thriving with full support of the ministry, certain parts of the Language Arts paper in the Common Entrance Examination

were changed so that there would not only be multiple choice questions but free response was required.

Senator Stuart referred to the conflict arising from cultures but again, I think that we are all richer for this blend, so that people can enjoy, for instance, ballet. Sir, ballet is discipline, deportment, and it is posture. It does not take away from saying the wonderful rhythmic movements of dance in Africa, for instance, which, again, is important for the absolute roots of African into the population.  
2.20 p.m.

If I may quote from one of the articles which I wrote years ago and recently published and which, I believe, I have mentioned before in this Honourable Chamber. Sir, I quote:

"There is danger in an inbred monoculture to admire and appreciate the remarkable versatility of Shakespeare is not to deny the literary significance of our own Derek Walcott and I may add here, our Kamau Brathwaite. It is wrong to think that in order to assert the beauty and dignity of West Indian culture, one must ignore the culture of another country."

Sir, if I had time, I could also go on to speak about the universality of music. I must go back to what I want to concentrate on, certain aspects of the report.

Mr. President, it is so broad-based that, of necessity, I have to limit my observations to certain areas. As regards the plans of the Ministry of Education for the National Youth Service, may I first suggest that the term, "community service", is more appealing and it might be better during Upper Primary and Junior Secondary, where children have more time and are usually far more willing and enthusiastic.

I am aware of the plan to include certain activities in the National Certification Programme, and children will be given credit for it once they have done this as part of the programme. It should meet the requirements for community service. Moreover, in my opinion, the earlier, the better but here again, I should like to utter caveat or a warning.

I noted with some concern, the following about the section of the proposed National Youth Service and I quote:

"Community service, which will be required from all school leavers, who are employed or who are enrolled in an approved course of study or training."

Mr. President, I know that the intention is not to have a military type of service but I think it would be wiser to see that it becomes an activity which demonstrates its own success and, thereby, attracts its own group of people to sustain it. In this way, the land will benefit.

We need the National Youth Service for youth who need direction, those who are at risk and those whose parents want help with selecting the right course. On the other hand, there are some students who are already goal directed and, therefore, not in need of it. Therefore, I think a targeted programme would be preferable to a universal programme. The concept of Trident Awards is a good thing, I fully support it, Sir.

I also read with much interest, the issue about values education, and the criticism by some interviewees that character education and religious education are not sufficiently emphasised in schools. I think this is more of a generalisation that would not apply to all schools. In fact, I would go so far as to say, would not apply to most schools. The report states and I quote:

“Wholesome values and attitudes are fundamental to the continuance of peace, order and good governance in society and have been long reinforced and transmitted by the schools. These core values, focus on respect, love, caring, justice, peace, honesty, pride and responsibility.”

Mr. President, I would add to those, loyalty, moral courage, tolerance and cooperation; loyalty to family, country and the positive groups or organisations to which people belong. The Commission did stress the importance of loyalty.

There may be a few teachers, Mr. President, who see themselves there only to deliver content but most of them, I think, are aware of the importance of their role in character building. Values are still taught in schools and the Ministry insists that they are infused in all subjects. Principals and teachers recognise the importance of their role in character building. I am confident that they are convinced that developing a robustness of intellect must be accompanied by a gentility of spirit.

Therefore, I would urge teachers, my former colleagues, and some regard themselves still as my present colleagues, not to give up in the face of today's enormous challenges and sometimes even dangerous challenges.

I think in all modesty, Mr. President, that I am well-placed to remind people, it is only after children have left school that they fully grasp the lessons learnt. Even some things like how the teacher thinks, how the teacher dresses, how he or she speaks, how punctual in going to their classes, the image which he or she projects leaves a lasting impression.

Lord Wolfenden, who incidentally was Vice Chancellor of the University which I attended, has

insightfully described education as the influence of one person on another. I believe I have quoted that before because I am very fond of quoting it, Sir. If we accept this statement, teachers must inspire trust and respect so that students will wish to emulate them and obey them. I think that is important.

I wish to touch for a moment on materialism, which was dealt with, in the report as another major concern. I think today that to students and people in general, but especially young people, it is a question of what one wants, not what one needs and the external seem to matter.

In the 19th Century, one of England's most famous poets bemoaned the consequences of materialism in one of his famous sonnets, No. 33, when he said that the world is too much with us, latent soon, getting and spending, we lay waste our powers. Nothing we see in nature that is ours.  
2.30 p.m.

W. H. Davies, one of Britain's favourite poets, puts it this way, with marked simplicity and sincerity: “A poor life this, if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare.”

There are some Honourable Senators here whom I am sure learnt that when they were at school and adhered to it. In this regard, literature, especially poetry, can be a civilising force.

Mr. President, the school may be one of the major agents in instilling values, but with so many competing attractions or distractions, it cannot be the only one. Other agents, such as parents, the church and the media, must play an important part in helping to educate, in the sense of influencing behaviours and producing fine citizens.

Mr. President, education is not only for utilitarianism purposes, it must have a sense of balance. In pursuit of our leisure and pleasure, we must be mindful of other people in the community. A true education imbues one with a sense of what is appropriate and what is dignified especially in public.

In short, although legislation is needed to ensure that certain things are done, the success of much of it lies in the willingness of people to recognise that these goals are desirable for the continued moral and spiritual growth of our country.

We have to remember as well that the church is no longer the monolithic institution it used to be. Some people may disagree with me, but it is a fact that some children are no longer made to go to church or Sunday school as they did in my day. However, many churches are doing good work in their communities, but I think that they would have to reassert themselves and encourage new membership.

Mr. President, where parents are concerned, it has to be recognised that children are taking home-problems into the schools, and however stressed they are, parents cannot be absolved from responsibility for their children's behaviour and in some instances for their delinquency. Many of them do not or are unable to attend PTA meetings. That was so even when I was teaching, which is many years ago, and from what I have learnt, it still appertains today. Even when I went to act for a while at a most prestigious school, the parents on the whole were interested but as usual the ones sometimes that you want to see, you never see them unless they are summoned or the child is threatened with expulsion or suspension.

Mr. President, there is need for an outreach programme to bring parents forward to work with the school in a true partnership, not just a fund-raising partnership. I think too that more voluntarism must be encouraged in schools beyond the nursery stage. There is voluntarism there and it is being very effective, but there must be more flexibility on the part of teachers and parents in terms of working together. Parents should also be held more financially accountable for their children's delinquency, not only when they destroy or disfigure seats in the buses but in some instances where they are destructive in the school.

Again, I wish to repeat, Mr. President, that a major responsibility still rest with teachers but society as a whole must not be despondent or think that the present situation is unmitigable. Of the 28 000 children in the primary schools and the 22 000 in the secondary schools, there are between 10 and 20 unmanageable students, I have been told. On the other hand, there are many more fine young people than there are deviant. A minority of young people are in trouble and although this cannot be ignored – I am not saying for one instance that we must take the situation lightly – it should not be blown out of proportion.

I wish to make my meaning clear, Mr. President. Negative things are going on in our society and we have to stop the decline but there are multi-issues and complex problems and we have to look at multi-sectoral solutions. Everybody has to be involved to sustain those who are failing, support those at risk and help the young people who possess core values to maintain them in order to be an example and a mentor to their peers.

Mr. President, I understand that co-education did not evoke much discussion. I do not even think that it was mentioned in the Report, if I remember correctly. It has implications for strategy, more than law and order. Only a few people said that they would prefer a greater choice by having some single sex schools. Mr. President, I am not going to go into that except to add that from what I have seen, they seem to think that the problems are not due to

co-education but to dysfunctional families, advertising, drugs and indiscipline.

The Report, Mr. President, should do a great deal to help all who are striving to see that law and order in our society remains at an acceptable level. As I emphasised and wished to reemphasise, everybody in society will have to make an effort and not give up on some whom we consider are almost unteachable or impossible to discipline.

Again, I wish to end by quoting some favourite lines of mine from one of England's poet laureates. "I have seen flowers come in stony places and kind things done by men with ugly faces and the gold cup won by the worst horse at the races; so I trust too."

Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR G. P. B. NICHOLLS: Mr. President, I am grateful for the opportunity to make a contribution in this debate to acknowledge the Report of the National Commission on Law and Order.

To my mind, Sir, I believe it is the most comprehensive, holistic and far-reaching social policy initiative in the 40 years of nationhood, in the sense of the wide amount of recommendations of social policies that would touch and concern the development of this country in the years to come.

2.40 p.m.

Mr. President, I take this opportunity, like most Honourable Senators, to congratulate the Commission for its sterling effort to hear the concerns of the widest cross-sections of Barbadians, in their own specific fields, and to put together a comprehensive report. Sir, I must warn that I do not accept all of the conclusions contained therein because of my view as to the methodology used to make certain assumptions about the behaviour of criminals and the deviant in the society.

Mr. President, as I said, the report is very comprehensive and recommendations are contained in each chapter. Sir, I believe that if our Barbadian society would spend more time in looking at the work of the National Commission on Law and Order, we could achieve some success in allowing Barbados to continue to become one of the leading nations in the world.

Mr. President, there is a debate going on as to whether or not the last report, in relation to race and racism in Barbados, at the level of the United Nations, really speaks to the Barbados as we know it. I believe that sometimes we like to speak about the concept of racism, without actually understanding what it entails. I do not believe that report from the United Nations should go unanswered, particularly

by this Honourable House because in the very sense that Barbados is a society that has a particular evolution, as various people came from different parts of the world to settle in this country, some voluntarily and some involuntarily. We have been able to build a society that, perhaps, is one of the best-run societies and one of the best-run countries in this part of the world, to the credit of all Barbadians.

Mr. President, in this way, I believe we must not buckle under any international pressure, to accept any designation about the conduct of people in the Barbadian society, when we know, in fact, that we are here debating the importance of a report, to the maintenance of social stability in this country.

Mr. President, the Terms of Reference for the National Commission for Law and Order, seeks to assist Government in achieving civil peace and harmony, by promoting cultural renewal, social cohesion and reducing crime and the fear of crime. Sir, this is important because when the framers of the Barbadian Constitution were seeking to establish a particular grand norm, to deal with the relationship of the State, *vis-a-vis*, its responsibilities to citizens, in essence it sought to capture, the philosophy that Government must exist for the peace, order and good governance of the land.

Sir, I say that against the background of the fact that, in other societies, that Constitutional grand norm differs. In fact, in the United States of America, when they formed their nation after the 1776 Convention in Philadelphia, the Constitutional grand norm is life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This concept comes from the utilitarian principle that man lives for the maximum amount of pleasure; that the State should not intrude into the affairs of man; that the liberty of the individual was paramount; and that the State should be there to perform the role, to ensure that all people live a life free of State intervention, and that they had the right to pursue the ultimate happiness.

Mr. President, that is not the basis upon which this society was ordered. I was not born at the time when Barbados became Independent and many Barbadians of my generation and those who would come after, would see that the society is being ordered in the particular way in which the Barbados Constitution sets out those contractual duties between the State and the individual.

Mr. President, it is, therefore, important that we recognise a government must draw its legitimacy from the very people who it governs. Therefore, to the extent that we, in Barbados, do not see the qualitative levels of crime that is associated with other countries in the Caribbean, is not to the discredit of these countries but to the credit of the social engineering that has been part and parcel of the Barbadian existence, prior to and after Independence.

Mr. President, the genesis of the report we are considering today, comes as a result of a decision of the CARICOM Heads of Government in 2002. The increasing levels of violent crime, the pervasiveness of the drug culture, the development of a new ethos of materialism, which has been spoken to by Senator Stuart last week, and the relative deprivation of other people in the society, continue to bother policymakers.

Mr. President, I want to put on record that I am part of a Government that is often maligned by the political Opposition and some social commentators, for their own particular reasons. Despite this, we have seen in this country the best mixture of social and economic policies that would create an environment in which the particular opportunities of every Barbadian is assured by the very policies which Government has pursued over the past 11 years.

Mr. President, for the very first time in our economic history, the small and medium-sized business enterprises on the economic landscape of Barbados, are given an administrative and a business framework in which they can operate. The Government has spent a lot of money and a lot of resources in setting up the Small Business Association and giving support to the activities of that association in this country. Sir, you could very well recall the debates in Barbados at about the time of the 1980s and the work of the Bussa Commission, in speaking to what they termed to be "racial prejudices and corporate exclusivism in the commanding heights of the corporate economy of Barbados." Sir, in a post-colonial society like that of Barbados, a Government must address those issues, and we cannot address them in one fell swoop. Instead, Government continues making sure that we address those economic imbalances at every level of Government policy.

Mr. President, I say that the Small Business Association; the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme; the Youth Business Trust; Project Oasis; the resources given to the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission, in relation to the enterprise divisions of those specific commissions, to assist the small business people, such as pig farmers, shopkeepers, barbers, hairdressers, to access concessional financing and sometimes grants, to facilitate the development of the business class at the lower levels of this country, are all important issues to which Government has committed itself.

Mr. President, this is an important package of the Barbados Labour Party's programme, to address those so-called economic issues that have long plagued this country, and will continue to plague this country, if we bury our heads in the sand or give only lip service to the issue of addressing the concerns of the small, black man, the small businessman and the dispossessed in this society.

Mr. President, the point I am making is that this Government has not fallen asleep or has not pandered to those people, who have called for economic and democratic justice in the Barbadian society. Sir, far from that, we have linked those developments to the cultural aspects of the Government's policy, in relation to the creation of a National Heroes Day, the celebration of Emancipation, as well as bringing a new spirit of enterprise to the National Independence Festival of Creative Arts and the Community Independence Celebrations.

2.50 p.m.

These are all part and parcel of the holistic development of the Barbadian society that sets it apart from other countries in the region. Sir, both at the social and economic levels, the policy of Government has been to engineer the social and economic development of all Barbadian people.

Mr. President, the Report that we are considering today, to my mind, falls down in one specific area. It associates the behaviour of criminally-minded persons in our society with the studies that have been done in traditional criminal studies of deviant persons. Sir, this Report, to my mind, falls down because it looks at the deviant as an individual. The conclusion in the Report at page 143 says:

“Barbados has with relative success experienced the transformation from plantation society to a modern State and weathered the impact of successive “revolutions”, in economic diversification, technology and knowledge. But the contemporary processes of modernisation and secularisation coupled with the apparent decline in traditional cultural value of discipline, tolerance and respect for authority are creating shockwaves throughout the society and many, perhaps nostalgically, yearn for ‘the good, old days’”.

Mr. President, they began the conclusion of the Report in that way. To my mind, I do not essentially share the major thesis in the conclusion, in that there are people who are deviant or criminal in the Barbados society because they do not participate within the accepted norms and social mores of the wider society. Sir, they are creating a havoc in the country because they are creating a fear of crime as opposed to crime itself because both manifest themselves in different ways. The society must come together and see how we can answer the concerns of these deviant people.

Mr. President, in other words, the objective in that kind of traditional thinking is to correct the behaviour in order to bring back those deviant people in line with society. Those criminally-minded persons are believed to be sick, bad or evil and that the rules of society are inherently good and

sound and that the emphasis, therefore, should be on correcting the behaviour of these people. We have institutions like prisons, boarding schools and approved houses of correction. In addition, the tendency is to evaluate their behaviour as a quantitative process.

Mr. President, the mention of statistics or the increasing number of reported crime is a feature of assessing the behaviour of the deviant in society. Sir, I am suggesting that this approach, to my mind, is not sufficient to underscore the relationship of all Barbadian citizens to the socioeconomic conditions in which they live.

Mr. President, I am a student of critical thinking. Unfortunately, some people might argue that because of my exposure to critical thinking at a young age, like most university students that it could never leave me. Sir, I believe that if we think critically about the society and to some extent ask the question which Senator Stuart posed last week... He said that we should ask why and then we should get some of the answers. I do not agree with Senator Stuart that our educational system does not allow students to ask why because that is not so. I believe that a critical thinking approach to the study of crime and criminal behaviour in this country is needed insofar that you are not necessarily looking at the individual as a deviant but at the more all-embracing perspective of deviance in the society as a whole.

Mr. President, society does not experience one kind of deviant behaviour. There are several kinds of deviant behaviour from suicide to corruption, mismanagement, industrial sabotage, all sorts of deviant behaviour pervade any modern society and Barbados, by extension, is no different. The study of deviance rather than the study of the deviant is rather important because it can also point to alleged acts of repression or injustice in the Caribbean society and specifically here in Barbados.

Mr. President, when the Commissioners were accessing their information they went into the bus terminals in Barbados, they went to ‘boys on the block’, they heard stories of mistreatment by the police and other agencies of the State, they heard of instances of people in authority turning a blind eye to their concerns and so forth.

Where I find that the Report falls down is that it suggests that in order to have peace, order and good governance of this country, the Government should create legislative framework to deal with these issues before they get out of hand so that we would not be enveloped in a society in which an underground class of criminal behaviour becomes a more attractive option of people to pursue. Sir, I cannot agree with that conclusion or any conclusion that speaks to looking at it at that level.

Mr. President, in a society, people choose, unconsciously so, a deviant path as a solution to deal with the problems that are posed by the society. Sir, I believe that if we were to look at the whole question of the so-called illegal vendors in the country, they are not operating because they intend to flout the good laws of the land or are trying to create an injustice in the country. They operate because of the certain, socio-economic conditions that are set in the society.

If we look at the whole concept of vending as an essentially and inherently wrong thing in the society and ways to correct the vending by moving them off the street, we are not necessarily dealing with the issues that have allowed them to use selling on the sides of the streets as a way out. Sir, we are only containing what are the essential ingredients, so that they would begin to manifest those traits in another form and fashion.

Mr. President, when I was growing up, I had a discussion with my parents. I said that if music was banned on minibuses that it would not essentially deal with issues of students getting to school later nor would it deal with the issue of children joyriding on minibuses. Sir, I used to get to school early because my school began at 8.15 a.m. and because I wanted an education and my parents insisted that I got to school early. I was always of the opinion that what manifests itself as a minibus subculture in Barbados, might not be exactly what we think it is. It is a culmination of attitudes, behaviours and social and cultural connived responses to the circumstances around people. It is not in itself an issue that could be stopped by mere passage of a piece of legislation.  
3.00 p.m.

Sir, today when I am going to court, I see school children in Bridgetown. I do not believe that at 9.30 a.m. you could be going to school. I have a fundamental problem with that, because every year the Government is spending millions of dollars in an education system and we are reasonably expecting the people who receive an education to make some form of contribution to the development of this country. I cannot think about a more offensive way to treat the hard-earned tax dollars of Government collections with such contempt, by parents, families and guardians allowing their children to leave home to get to school late.

I know that there are transportation problems in the country. I am not speaking to those persons who have to get up at 6 o'clock knowing that the bus might not arrive. I am not talking about those problems because there are some problems that we have to solve ourselves. I am talking about those children who consciously linger, in Bridgetown, waiting for a special ZR van, when they have missed that trip, ignore the regular van, to wait for a particular type of van. I am saying that we need to examine, not the children as

deviants or people who get to school late, but we have to ask ourselves why are people opting to behave in that way.

Sir, to my mind the report has valiantly gone out there and took note of all the concerns of a majority of the citizens in the country; but to treat people as social abhorrent, I am not saying that is the intention of the report, but to speak to a holistic society and behaviour is not in consonance with the socially accepted norms as something to be corrected, to my mind is going down a traditional path of a study of criminal behaviour and I think that we can do better.

In other words, the critical thinking approach does not look at the idea of correctionalism, but it looks more to the appreciation. The situation of deviant behaviour should be appreciated, first, in its own right. It should not be observed merely for the collection of statistics so that people could report in quantitative ways how the fear of crime is affecting the country.

Mr. President, in other words, crime in and of itself is not treatable apart from the wider society. We cannot treat crime apart from other aspects of social behaviour in the society. Crime is just as much an expression of the individual as his self-consciousness, greed and selfishness. It is a product of the society in which we live. I am not saying that you have to accept that people would be criminal or engage in criminal activity.

Sir, if we are seeking to find the root causes of why this behaviour has become so pervasive, and why the normal and traditional measures of corrections are failing to make an impact on the lives of people who are falling prey to criminal activity, then we need to be more critical in our approach to that exercise.

Sir, I believe that we need to look more at the existing arrangements of society and the existing arrangements of society in which the criminal action is taking place, that is important. This report, unfortunately, does not. It is probably outside of the scope of the terms of reference, in fairness to the Commissioners. This report should call on policy makers to commission a social and economic impact assessment in relation to criminal behaviour in Barbados, in the same way criminologists like Kim Price and Harriot are doing in other countries in the Caribbean.

We are fortunate in Barbados that people who achieve some form of material success do not have to hide to show that they have been successful in Barbados. I was on the phone with a colleague of mine from Guyana who tells me on a daily basis that she is leaving the practice of law in that jurisdiction and wants to come to Barbados. She comes from a very wealthy family. Her father was a Senior Counsel

in the pre-Burnham era, and still is. She is not a person that has to beg and look for work there. You cannot show signs of your material success in other Caribbean countries.

Sir, I lived for two years in a country in which the bread and soft drink trucks moved around the country with armed security. Every bank had an armed security guard at every door and window. The administration building of the university was guarded by armed security personnel. Estate police patrol the grounds of the university with the rights and powers of police officers to arrest and interrogate people.

There are garrison communities in which there is no semblance of the State or para-statal institutions operating within the context of communities in other Caribbean countries. I am saying that we are fortunate that this kind of behaviour does not affect the quality of life of the majority of Barbadians.

Sir, at this point in our history, we are grateful for the Report on the National Commission of Law and Order, but if we are to make more informed decisions in relation to our social policy, as it touches and concerns the life of every Barbadian, I am saying that it needs to be more critical of the social-economic circumstances that allow people to follow the path of crime and violence.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you have two minutes in which to conclude your presentation.

SENATOR G. P. B. NICHOLLS: I am very grateful, Sir.

Mr. President, crime is becoming a less direct response to the crisis of the formal economy as the conclusion states in the report. I differ from the report. In other words, they are suggesting that the crisis is that people are disengaging themselves from any formal economy and operating in a so-called informal economy.

Sir, crime to my mind is prevalent in the Caribbean and even here in Barbados. It is more so the direct outcome of the dynamics of doing business in a large and growing economy that is fuelled by the pervasiveness of the drug culture and other dastardly deeds that are operating in the context of our society, in which some people are countenancing. These are becoming more clearly articulated and progressively integrated in the national economy.

Sir, the Government is, therefore, obliged to take a more critical response to the issue of crime and violence before the social breakdown continues and the pervasiveness of the drug culture takes over the unsuspecting young ladies and men in Barbadian society.

Mr. President, I am grateful for this report to provoke the discussion on the issue, but I hope that the social policies that emanate therefrom and the legislation that would sometime come to this Chamber and Parliament would try to treat the whole issue in a much more comprehensive fashion, befitting of the social economic circumstances that we live in.

Sir, I am very much obliged.  
3.10 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, I would like to join other Senators in congratulating the Members of the Commission on Law and Order for an excellent and comprehensive report, with its useful and logical recommendations. It is also encouraging to note how many sensible suggestions came from the general public through the media, but it is the implementation of these recommendations that is going to be the challenge.

Mr. President, the more I speak to students, teachers and parents, the more I realise what an enormous challenge it is, and taking up this enormous challenge, cannot be the responsibility of Government alone. It must be the responsibility of all of us. We all have to work together to rid this island of the escalating lawlessness and violence.

The Government, of course, must ensure that the necessary laws are in place and enforced, that there is justice and that an environment conducive to law and order exists. I do not believe that any one section of the community can be blamed entirely for the problem. I think that most of us will agree that if we are to see success, we have to pay close attention to our children.

As someone mentioned recently, our citizens are molded at the primary level or even before. We must inculcate in our children, a sense of respect for themselves, their peers, parents, teachers and leaders. On the other hand, this respect must be earned. Adults, especially our leaders, must set good examples. I do not think that the behaviour we have seen in recent months from these leaders will assist in the cause.

I heard one young lady who had just reached the age of voting say that she would not be voting because she did not appreciate the behaviour on the political scene that she was seeing daily reported in the media. While there will be disagreement on political issues, I think the abusive personal attacks need to be removed from public debates. It was heartening to see some very young students last week visiting the Parliament Buildings, and being introduced to the rich history of Parliament. I am sure this exposure will be

valuable to them when they become adults, irrespective of whether we have the traditional or republican system of Government at that time. They must feel themselves a part of the nation from early.

The example of parents is important but we are in a situation where children are having children and they have no idea how to look after them. This was brought home forcibly to us recently when we had young children being left unattended. These parents are apparently not willing to sacrifice anything for their children.

Sir, there are those who are on drugs bringing children into the world. What can be expected of these children? Of course, this has been creeping up on us for many years, starting in some cases with the grandparents of the present primary school children. Those who are now in the fifties and were caught in the hippy type culture, that type of behaviour was not nipped in the bud and now has reached critical proportions. Similarly, the ZR and other undesirable cultures have not been curbed and we are suffering as a consequence.

There are many parents who strive to train their children in the best way they know how but this is made difficult because all parents are not doing the same and the well trained children are considered nerds by their peers, who are not given any direction by their own parents. They throw up their hands and say that times have changed and you have to accept it and go with the flow. I do not agree.

Change should only be accepted when it is change for the better. For instance, there are some parents who are encouraging their young children to go to abstinence classes, but other parents consider this a foolish act, unrealistic and a waste of time.

When these two groups of children meet at school, they are confused by the differing values that they have been taught. In fact, one parent told me recently that the worst part of parenting is having to send children to school to be exposed to all the negative influences.

Teachers must set good examples to earn the respect of children. While there are still many outstanding teachers, there has been a general deterioration in the conduct and deportment of teachers over the last decade, at least. We hear of teachers, even at the so-called elite schools who drink tea and sleep in class and sit with their feet on their desk. How can they command respect?

When I was at school, we stood in awe at our teachers, especially our Head Teachers. They provided not only teaching of their subjects but they ensured that children were exposed to good values. This is no more.

Recently, I attended a function at a newer secondary school, where students were brushing past their Headmaster as if he was not even there. I am aware that much of the problems in schools, stem from the non-cooperation of parents. These parents become involved in every little thing that happens at the school, and teachers are constantly under the threat of being taken to court.

The natural reaction, of course, is for the teachers to step back and avoid these problems but this is to the detriment of the children. Parents should be taking a more positive and active interest in their children's schools and even doing fund-raising projects together to carry out certain improvements to the school, rather than leaving everything to the Government. This would bring a sense of team work and camaraderie between parents, teachers and children and a sense of pride and achievement.

Instead of just sending sponsorship letters home, I think that everyone should be working together, actually doing something to raise these funds. Perhaps a part of the solution would be for the PTA of each school to decide on a common standard of acceptable behaviour, which would be adhered to, not only at school but at home.

I also agree with the view that more school children should be exposed to the Independence Day Parade. Observing this disciplined activity, especially in the Cadet Corps and other youth groups, should instill a greater sense of pride.

The issue of demanding that parents take more responsibility for their children's actions has also been put forward. This would probably need some new legislation but it may be effective, if enforced.

I think too that there tends to be too much interference from the Ministry of Education in the running of schools. I am not saying that there should be no monitoring but as a teacher was quoted as saying in the media recently that all teachers, not just the Principal, Deputy Principal and Senior Teacher should be allowed to punish children, but then, you have to ensure that the teachers behave responsibly and can be trusted to be fair and not to go overboard.

I am all for corporal punishment, administered by responsible individuals but I feel that this might not even be necessary if teachers commanded the respect of pupils. On the other hand, I heard that at the top schools in the island, students are competing to see how many lashes they can get. There again, that may not be a solution.

Another thing which I find upsetting is the 'mad rush' in primary schools to prepare children for the Common Entrance Examination. It seems as if there is no time for

anything else and this does not augur well for the full development of children. I agree with the recommendation that this system should be reviewed. Perhaps, the whole school system should be reviewed so that it better prepares children for life.

The recommendation to improve the distribution of talent among schools appears, at face value, to be a solution. I have been told that even at the top schools, there is a growing lack of interest in learning and disruption of classes by these talented individuals.

Materialism, I think Dame Patricia mentioned, is taking a toll at all levels of society, not only on the foreign exchange situation. Instead of mothers raising their children, they are busy working to be able to afford things, many of which are totally unnecessary. The poorest in the society must have brand name clothes and the middle and upper classes have their children flying around the world before they could even walk or talk. This is perpetuated in the schools.

3.20 p.m.

Mr. President, I remember taking my niece overseas for her first trip at age 12. I took her to St. Lucia for the Easter weekend, and we went to see the volcano and the Pitons and other places of interest. When she went back to school, what is supposed to be our top school, the class was asked to write about something exciting that they had done in the holidays. When she wrote of her visit to St. Lucia, the teacher downplayed her story in front of the class, as I recall, saying that was nothing exciting. Apparently, if you have not been to Disney World, you really had not done anything. She was deflated at the time, but happily though, she did not let it affect her life. She went on to win a Barbados Scholarship, earned a first class honours degree and a gold medal in her field. This could have had a permanent effect on some other child.

Mr. President, I am totally against co-education which I think has contributed to many of our problems. Boys should be taught by male teachers and be allowed the freedom to become involved in healthy boyish activities without the pressure of wondering how they appear in the eyes of girls.

Mr. President, it would seem too as if we are following the United States of America and prayers are no longer said at school assembly. Apparently, it is considered not politically correct since there are varying religious beliefs. I feel that since we are a predominately Christian society, this teaching should prevail while allowing other religions the freedom to practice their own beliefs. When we go to other countries where other religions predominate, we have to fit in. I think that prayers in schools would go a long way

towards contributing to discipline and perhaps helping to solve the schools violence problems.

Mr. President, I certainly support the view of some that children who are continually disruptive while still at school should not be put out on the street but should be placed in a 'boot camp' type environment run by personnel trained in the area of motivation for this type of student. A teacher recently noted that he was able to turn around three students who had apparently lost their way and they ended up earning degrees. He obviously had the correct skills to motivate these students.

Mr. President, since it appears that youngsters are not voluntarily joining the Cadet Corps and other youth organisations, the idea of a well-run national youth service, a place where parents would feel comfortable to send their children to bridge the gap between school, higher education and employment, is to be commended. The idea of having a residential youth service programme for young first offenders should also bring results but they should be totally separate physically from the other youth service programmes.

Mr. President, these programmes would be of no benefit if employment is not available for the youth who have completed them. Government must ensure that not only jobs are created but that entrepreneurship is encouraged and supported.

Mr. President, one matter on which I do not agree with the Commission is their recommendation not to introduce local Government. I have felt for some time that central Government is too busy dealing with the bigger issues, like international agreements, trade policies, *et cetera*, to pay attention to the basics of the society. While we are busy trying to become a developed country, the very fabric of our society as well as our basic infrastructure are deteriorating.

Mr. President, I was hesitant in the past to express this view for fear of being labelled a colonialist and wedded to the past, but I was heartened to read, in a recent newspaper editorial, that two eminent persons appear to be promoting the benefits of a local Government situation to build stronger communities.

I think the parochial system in the past worked well and tended to bring a sense of pride to parishioners and healthy competition between parishes. The idea of having a council of wise persons to advise others seems to be a step in the right direction to help those youth in particular who apparently feel bitter, frustrated and distance from any decision-making in the country.

Mr. President, I think too that the wealthy in the parish would be more inclined to participate more fully in the

development of their own community. In the city where my brother lives in Canada, this system of local Government is practised and has been successful. I think many youth may also become disenchanted when alleged wrongdoing on the part of persons in high positions is highlighted in the media and promises of inquiries are made but are never materialised. The feeling may be, if they could do it and get away with it, why could they not do just as they please and get away with it too.

Mr. President, as far as I am concerned, the Auditor-General's Report does not serve any purpose because there seems to be no follow-up on its findings, another bad example for the youth. It seems as if the Public Accounts Committee is still ineffective in spite of the new legislation supposedly to improve its operations. I said at that time and I would say it again that the Public Accounts Committee should be comprised of totally independent persons with the skills to analyse the situations and give recommendations. Strict deadlines should be given for submission of reports. If all of these situations are left hanging, people would not see the necessity or advantage of being honest in their own affairs.

Mr. President, domestic violence is another worrying problem. As far as I can see under the present legislation, the Police seem unable to intervene in domestic affairs until there has been a death or serious wounding. I think this needs to be changed to encourage prevention. The church has been reaching out to some extent, but I do not think there is enough mixing of the church leaders in the community. In the past, the leaders knew their parishioners personally. They visited the sick, troubled or bereaved. I do not think that much of this happens now and the priesthood has become an 8 to 4 profession rather than a calling.

On the issue of church and religion, it is encouraging to see the increase in the number of businessmen going to church and having breakfast meetings to discuss religious matters. I think this could have a beneficial effect on the society.

I have commented many times on the damage done by the 'wuk up' culture and the increasingly lewd lyrics of calypsoes. I am afraid that I do not equate the rhythmic hip movements characteristic of the Caribbean people, which Senator Stuart and Dame Patricia alluded to, with the vulgar 'wuk up' movements which are carried by the media. I must say that it is heartening to see a real increase recently in the number of young people taking up ballroom dancing instead. There have been a number of clubs giving wonderful performances recently on television. It is also encouraging to see the Christian tent making inroads into the Crop Over celebrations. We should be trying to make a difference rather than flowing with the tide of bad behaviour.

Mr. President, with regard to praedial larceny which has been with us from time immemorial, but which has not been controlled in spite of legislation being put in place, again this cannot be left up to Government alone to solve. I am happy to say that some members of the private sector are now cooperating with Government by putting in place purchasing systems which would seek to control if not stamp out praedial larceny. However, the system needs constant monitoring which involves a high level of resources.

Mr. President, I have suggested to international organisations that while funding for seminars on the subject may be useful – everybody enjoys the lunches and the coffee breaks – supporting this effort by the private sector by assisting with monitoring would be even more beneficial.

Mr. President, I fully support the Resolution to note the Report of the Commission on Law and Order and trust that the entire society would see it as their duty to work together on solving our problems. It is almost two years since the Report has been made available, and although I understand that some of the recommendations have already been implemented, I hope that we would move quickly to ensure that our society does not decay further.

I thank you.  
3.30 p.m.

SENATOR THE HON. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. President, I rise to add my voice to those who have gone before me, and as the others have done, to congratulate the Commission that has written this report on a job, generally well done. Sir, in general, it is a far-reaching report, one that is wide in scope. Sir, I consider some of the recommendations to be excellent, while some others I consider to be conservative and reactionary. There are others which Government could do well to follow, accept and implement.

Mr. President, I do not intend to dwell very long on the issue of violence in our schools, in public places, or on the fact that many of our youth go forth to public events, both equipped for and looking to find trouble and will, therefore, resort to violence at the slightest provocation. The Report of the Commission has examined many of the issues which has led to an attitude of annihilation among the youth, such as growing feelings of marginalisation, disillusionment and disenfranchisement.

Mr. President, some of the youths believe that Barbados does not belong to them and that laws neither protect nor serve them. It has warned that at page 65:

"There are signs that all is not well in the Barbadian society."

Mr. President, of course, we all know that. Sir, those of us who would disagree with the Commission's conclusions, are living in a world of make-believe. We need to be in the shoes of those who are barely coping with high grocery bills, who cannot find places to rent at affordable prices and who, on a daily basis, see good agricultural land being subdivided for housing. This would be housing which they, in their wildest dreams, would never be able to afford. Instead, it would be housing, which is priced to be purchased by expatriates, at US\$200 000 and US\$300 000 or more.

Mr. President, I say that today in Barbados, many of us who are privileged and are as much into the mindset of 'them' and 'us', if we would take a good and hard look at what is happening around us, we would see there is no great cause for rejoicing. That is my earnest belief.

Mr. President, while I agree with the Commission's recommendations, that in order to ensure that our values system promotes peace, harmony, social justice and equality, we must employ a wide range of tools, ranging from moral suasion to education, to legislative solutions and enforcement.

My conclusion is that these suggestions, taken separately or together, will not be effective, as long as there is the perception in Barbados that it is being made a paradise for the rich and famous and those from 'away'. It is time for a complete rethinking of what we are doing and where we are going.

Mr. President, I would not necessarily recommend another commission because that too would find the same thing. It might employ other methods to reach the persons to whom it ought to speak for information but I do not think the conclusions would be any different. I think it is time for action, rather than speculation and more research.

Mr. President, some of us who consider ourselves privileged, are also guilty of the 'them' and 'us' syndrome and will become a group who would not stand up for what is right, if it means 'rocking the boat' or offending those who are considered influential.

Mr. President, when we speak of indiscipline in schools, we are not just to look at the pupils or the parents. Sir, sadly many of those parents do not know what are their responsibilities. Many of them are no more matured than their children, and have long turned a blind eye to deviant behaviour on the part of their children. Parents pretend that deviance does not exist amongst their children because they do not know to whom they should turn, or they cannot take the time out from work, to deal with the problems, for fear of losing their jobs. These are all realities.

Mr. President, we must also look at those persons into whose care we entrust our children on a daily basis. These persons would seek to humiliate children for the slightest misdemeanor but on the other hand, would speak publicly of having good manners themselves. They would speak of all the good things they are doing for society but in the privacy of their offices, they would shout at their colleagues and students alike. These persons are also strangers to the truth and would use loopholes in the financial system for personal gains. They are also people for whom the students in their care have no respect because that respect has not been earned. In addition, to make matters worse, many of our children are the victims to those persons to whom we have entrusted our children because persons in authority know of the goings-on but are willing to protect some people or to turn a blind eye because of these persons 'standing' in society and their connections.

Mr. President, I say it is time we pay more attention to the personal qualities of those, to whose care we entrust our children. We should ensure that they all receive training in people and financial management skills. Sir, friendship and politics have no place in the selection of those who are responsible for guiding and protecting our youth.

Mr. President, having said that, I am going to take a brief look at public transportation. At present, public transportation is provided by the Transport Board, a Government entity and by private enterprise, through a system of buses and minibuses, licensed by the Barbados Licensing Authority.

Mr. President, I will also touch briefly on the question whether or not our school children should ride on public buses. Sir, there is absolutely no evidence that the Transport Board will, in the near future, be able to sustain a fleet in good enough order, to provide transportation for all our school children. At present, on a daily basis, about one-quarter of the Transport Board's fleet is out of commission and although the Chairman has informed us that improvements are being made, the problem is still with us.

Mr. President, I was heartened to read that the Minister of Education has recently admitted the Transport Board cannot provide the required number of buses and in a report of yesterday's *Advocate*, also alleges that he has invited Private Service Vehicle operators, who are interested in providing this service in a "safe environment", to contact his Ministry.

Mr. President, I was intrigued by this report because I was wondering how the Ministry of Education, the Minister, or anyone else, could keep school children off private transportation, if they wish to travel on it. How would this be done? Would it be done by legislation?

Would it be done by offering incentives of subsidies to the chosen few, as the President of the Minibus Association has suggested? Would these buses be driven by persons other than the present crop of PSV drivers, about whom all and sundry complain? Also importantly, would the taxpayers, in a situation in which bus fares have not been increased for many years, be saddled with a larger subsidy to transportation, in which the Minister of Education has suggested would be the result?

Mr. President, at the risk of sounding a discordant note in a country where we must all jump on a particular bandwagon and sing the same tune, do we really know whether the behaviour of a majority or just a small percentage of our school children, who travel on public transport, is influenced by the loud music or contact with unruly PSV operators? Can we actually link bad behaviour in schools, to riding on ZR vans? No, we cannot.

Sir, I agree with Senator Nicholls in his approach on this particular issue. In other words, even if school children were taken to school in Transport Board buses, driven by elderly drivers, with no accident record and with no loud music being played, they would have a safer ride but would it result in a school child with a better attitude? I am not sure.

Mr. President, I now turn to Chapter Six of the Commission's Report, at Page 91, which deals with traffic control, and I note the total disregard of traffic laws by the drivers of PSVs.  
3.40 p.m.

The Report sums up the ZR culture as comprising acts of dangerous driving, carrying large numbers of excess passengers, unnecessarily obstructing the roads in which they operate and playing loud music on their vehicles.

The Commission states that perhaps the greatest weakness in controlling lawless activity of ZR drivers lies in the fact that the Minister of Public Works and Transport has failed to give effect to the demerit point system administered by the Ministry.

Mr. President, I am not sure how the demerit system actually works but at one time, I had a discussion with the Chief Licensing Officer about a ZR driver whose licence had been taken away for six months and was informed that the legislation did not permit the Licensing Authority to permanently take away the permit of this driver who was a gentle and seemingly sober and responsible person otherwise, but becomes a dangerous actor and maniac as soon as he had a steering wheel in his hands.

Mr. President, the action taken by the Licensing Authority did not result from police reports but from the activity of its own patrolling team. As far as I am aware, the Licensing Authority is not routinely informed of repeat offenders by the courts or by the police.

Sir, some of the offending public service vehicle drivers are reported by the police on a daily basis. Some of them say that certain police have it in for them and will report them even when it is not warranted. I have no basis for saying whether this is true or false but I do know that because of frequent adjournments, that PSV drivers may be attending court for many months in relation to one of these offences and that at the end they pay a fine and return to business as usual to be reported the next day and the next day. Sir, at the end of the year, they go to Licensing Authority after having committed all these offences, and the licences are renewed.

Mr. President, some months ago, after this Report was published or soon after the new Commissioner of Police took office, there was a high profile campaign, entitled "Operation Road Maintenance", against ZR vans and the police vowed to stamp out indiscipline. As a result of that campaign, the total number of cases lodged in the Magistrates' Courts moved from 25 000 in 2003 to over 50 000 but, Mr. President, because of insufficient magistrates, most of the cases could not be dealt with and today, many of them still have not been dealt with.

Mr. President, I was recently informed that the campaign is still on. Sir, I have to tell you that the actors in the industry were confident that the zeal will soon fizzle out due to lack of insufficient police officers and completing claims in time. Some of them said openly that they just had to 'bide their time' because they cannot keep it up. I believe that their assessment was correct because most of the time, police officers are stationed in the van stands and some semblance of law and order is maintained and the police on the road will try to do their duty but operators are well-aware of the constraints of the Police Force. They know the corners around which the police will lurk to try to get them so they will speed and do the things they should not do in between and by the time they reach the area where there is likely to be a police, all is well again.

Mr. President, it seems to me that it would be useful if the Licensing Authority performs due diligent checks when applications are made for renewal of licences by PSV drivers. This would mean checking with the police and the Magistrates' Courts to see what sort of record applicants had during the previous year. Ultimately, this should decrease the work of the police and, hopefully, assist in changing the behaviour of some of the operators. It would have the wider social impact of decreasing anxiety of those parents whose children use public transportation and of the general public at large.

Mr. President, having made this recommendation, I have to say that I do not entirely agree with the recommendation at page 93 that the demerit system should be removed from the administrative control of the Minister

of Public Works and placed under the judicial control of the courts giving the courts the sole authority to suspend or revoke licences in respect of offenders acquiring the prescribed number of demerit points.

Mr. President, the Licensing Authority has been set up to issue and regulate licences and it should be given whatever power it needs to do it properly. In addition, there will be cases to which the demerit system applies which might not come before the court. Sir, what then? I strongly believe that the courts, the police and the Licensing Authority should work more closely together but that actual revocation should be done by the Licensing Authority which has the apparatus set up for monitoring and doing what this involves.

Mr. President, needless to say, the checks and balances in the Licensing Authority ought to be such that opportunity for bribery are minimal, if not non-existent. As for revoking the permits of owners who hire drivers who have records, this call is made by the Commission and the general public time and time again on the principle that the driver is agent of the owner.

Sir, few persons are willing to take the stress of driving public service vehicles and the pool of drivers is very small. There are reliable, honest and decent persons out there driving public service vehicles and there are also rogues and vagabonds who will leave the owners house driving at 20 mph and five minutes later if the owner were to take another route, he would be driving at 50 mph or doing things he should not be doing. Sir, that is the nature of the industry.

Mr. President, few in either category, that is, the decent among the drivers or the rogues and vagabonds will tell an owner the truth about their antecedents and it is often difficult and takes a long time to obtain information from the police. An owner's best bet might be to check with the insurance company which insures the PSV because drivers are required to register with these companies and must have a record of the number of accidents in which the driver is involved, that is, those which are reported to the company.

Mr. President, I could qualify this and say that this is the case in relation to the Insurance Corporation of Barbados but I do not know about other insurance companies. If you plan to hire a driver and your vehicle is insured by Insurance Corporation of Barbados, he or she has to be registered to drive your vehicle and the company will check to see whether the person has a good or bad record. The company also requires PSV drivers to be 25 years and over because like most people they operate on the premise that the driver is in charge and no such requirements are in place for conductors. Unfortunately, it is many of the conductors who give the industry the bad name and, strange but true, who

influence the drivers to take on more passengers than they should and take illegal routes.

Mr. President, the point I am trying to make is that finding drivers is not easy. It is difficult to obtain information about their track record, few will say how often they are reported by the police and when they do so, they portray themselves as being the wrong parties. Sir, owners will usually act when there are frequent accidents and people are hurt and the vehicles damaged.

Mr. President, contrary to public belief, most owners will warn or dismiss drivers and conductors for bad behaviour and indiscipline on the road if it is drawn to their attention. We tend to forget that owners have an investment, which they want to keep on the road and that for every accident the insurance claim goes up unless the matter is settled by the court.

I think that generally speaking, owners of public service vehicles want the same thing as the general public. They want to keep their vehicles on the road, they want them to be driven in a safe manner to keep the vehicles working so that they can get earnings on their investment.

Mr. President, the Commission has recommended that PSV owners should be notified about traffic violations committed by the drivers of the vehicles. We have to distinguish between accidents and traffic violations. At present, when a PSV is involved in an accident, the owner is notified by the insurance company and should be notified by the police but this does not always happen. If there is a traffic violation like overloading or speeding, the owner is not involved and the driver is solely liable. Sir, the owner may never know of the incident because it is in the interest of the driver not to disclose the number of his traffic violations and the police are not going to notify the owner.

Mr. President, the Commission made a number of recommendations for applying the demerit system to owners and for the suspension of permits to owners after a prescribed number of demerit points are accumulated. If this is done, then owners would have to be made vicariously liable for the violations of their drivers, who are really their agents.

3.50 p.m.

Sir, I have not studied the Trinidad and Tobago legislation on which the Commission's recommendation is based, so, I cannot endorse it, but it is worthy of further study.

Mr. President, this brings us to a consideration of the root cause of indiscipline in the public transportation system. The root cause is that the driver, conductor and sometimes the owner, because some of the public service vehicles are owner-operated, need money to survive and their

remuneration is based on the number of passengers taken up daily and carried from point to point.

Under the present system, the driver is supposed to give the owner all the takings and is paid a percentage, usually between 20 and 30 per cent in a dollar for the driver and 10 cents in the dollar for the conductor. This is after diesel is purchased for the next day. All the maintenance expenses, which are considerable, are on the owner and in many cases so are all the repair costs, even when caused by the negligence of the driver.

Sir, the owner also has to pay for road tax, renewal of permit and insurance, which can be quite high, especially if the vehicle has been involved in accidents during the previous year. Alternatively, the owner arranges for a fixed sum per day and the driver and conductor take the remainder after filling up the vehicle with diesel for the next day and taking money for lunch snacks.

Mr. President, no matter what system is used, the owner is the victim. I know that the general public does not see it that way. The owner has no way of knowing how many passengers are taken up in a vehicle during the day. There is something called a counter that some naive owners will give a driver, but the truth is, the counter can be reset. The driver can say that he took two hundred passengers daily and in fact he has taken four hundred. You have no way of knowing.

Sir, it is an industry that is ripe for regulation because it is probably the only industry around in which the owner is at the mercy of the employee. You have no way of knowing how much your vehicle makes. You have to take their word for it unless there is friction between the conductor and driver, in which case you may get to know when something is going on.

Mr. President, a system is needed to ensure that both owners and operators of the public service vehicles earn enough to take care of their responsibilities and that the travelling public is taken from place to place in peace and safety and less noise.

Mr. President, talking about noise, there is a regulation that relates to the use of radios or stereos on minibuses. In spite of this, most of them have and they play loudly and continue to play loudly and the police is everywhere. Most of them continue to have loud radios and stereo systems in these vehicles, and it is a measure of how well the operators know how the police regulate. There is a regulation which says that they must not do it and they do it with impunity.

Mr. President, if, like a child, you are prevented from playing with a certain toy which is dangerous for you and you know that your mother is going to be away from you for an hour or two, you play with the toy and when she returns you put it away or if you do not think that she is coming

back you continue to play with it. There must be some reason that in spite of all these regulations that the Public Service Vehicle drivers can go ahead and do what they want to do and get away with it.

Sir, some owners do not know that their vehicles have expensive and loud sets, because these fellows who drive and work on the public service vehicles are of the view that they need all these extra things to make their vehicle more attractive to the younger persons. Therefore, they must have rims, which are very expensive, fancy lights inside and music. A good 'boom box' is an essential part of the set up. Sir, they will put them in at their own expense and the owner will never know until something happens and you have to look under the seat where the 'boom box' is, then you realise that your vehicle on which you took out a 'set' six months ago, has another one in place.

Sir, a mechanism is needed to remove control of funds from the operators. It is meaningless for persons who have no knowledge of the industry to recommend a daily wage in the present circumstances. It would mean that the operators will be paid twice, they will pay themselves and will also then be paid a standard wage. There must be some other mechanisms to be put in place which will ensure that there is some equity for all. Like the Transport Board buses, the drivers and conductors cannot push their hands in the till.

Sir, this brings us to the matter of a regulatory authority which will fully investigate the industry, at present there is none. Therefore, I strongly endorse the recommendations of the Commissions that a regulatory authority be established to control the activity of all public service vehicles. While endorsing this recommendation I am fully conscious, and as I said before, that these statutory bodies take on a life and culture of their own and it is sometimes questionable whether they spend taxpayers money efficiently. I would further recommend that, if possible, the duties of regulating the public service vehicles be given to an existing statutory body if there is a suitable one with similar powers.

Mr. President, whatever solution is arrived at, it must be sustainable. It is not enough to say that owners must be punished for the misdeeds of their drivers. That does not carry us very far. A system must be adopted which would result in the bad public service vehicle drivers feeling that they must drop their bad habits or be banned from driving, not just for a short period but for very long periods or permanently. Sir, while on the subject of public service vehicles, I also endorse the Commission's recommendations for improved conditions in the van stand both for operators and passengers.

Mr. President, now a few brief words in relation to criminal courts and punishment. I also endorse the call of

the Commission for the introduction of lay magistrates to assist in reducing the workload of the Magistrates Courts. Recently, the appointment of two additional magistrates was announced by the Chief Justice. In my view, this will go a great way in coping with the phenomenal increase in cases at the Magistrates Court level but that may not be enough.

Sir, the Honourable Chief Justice at a special sitting of the court last Friday, reported that a number of reforms and deployments would also be made which should result in greater efficiency in the magistrates courts. He stated that the introduction of night courts would be investigated. All these initiatives are welcomed and are badly needed.

Sir, to end on a slightly mischievous note, the Chief Justice also announced the contemplated establishment of a family court and a commercial court. I am always mindful of how taxpayers' dollars are being spent. While it may well be that a family court is justified, in my humble view, the number of complex commercial matters, which are heard in the courts of Barbados, and I look at all the cases for the Barbados law report, do not merit the introduction of a commercial court.

Thank you, Mr. President, for hearing me and with those words I endorse the recommendation that the Report of the National Commission of Law and Order should receive our endorsement.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Linton.  
4.00 p.m.

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: Mr. President, I rise to give my wholehearted congratulations to the Commission on Law and Order in its report but I have one area of dissatisfaction, and that is for me to understand the report in relation to white collar crime, you would have to read almost the entire report. You know, Sir, my reading is not there.

*Asides.*

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: Anyway, I have had dealings. I spoke to a particular situation in this Senate earlier, in relation to an old friend of mine. I have done all – and I am still doing – to see what can be done to this poor person, who has succeeded in succession to what I would call, great riches, but still cannot get hold of them.

In my checking, I have discovered to my amazement, that in regard to white collar crime and some cases of what some people call blue collar crime that it has literally permeated the whole society in the private sector and particularly in the case and as I study it, the public sector, even to the point that it is present in the justice system of Barbados.

I will not speak to that aspect today because legislation is coming down on the reform of the justice system. When you could discover through documentation... In fact, I have a document here that I am going to make a document of this Honourable Senate. I am making it without going into any great detail on the subject.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Linton, I am sorry to interrupt you. Is this a matter that is currently before the courts?

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: I do not even know that, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Linton, I have been advised that it is a matter before the court. I will direct that all references to it be struck from the record and will ask you, Senator, to move on to other aspects on the matter before us.

*Certain remarks made by SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON were ordered to be struck from the record by Mr. PRESIDENT.*

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: Sir, could I mention the fact that I approached certain persons, without names, in relation to matters concerning the estate?

*Asides.*

Mr. PRESIDENT: I think you should now be careful because you have said a great deal already, in terms of identifying parties, which I have ordered to be struck from the record. I must ask you to deal with other aspects of the Law and Order Report.

I think you were generally making the point about aspects of crime. You can continue in that vein but no references to matters now before the court.

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: Sir, your guidance is accepted.

I am simply saying that I have discovered that there is white collar crime in Barbados, within the private sector as well as in the public sector of Barbados and can be traced to the justice system. This is a difficult area for me, as you would know, and following your guidance, I would hope that at sometime, this subject could be discussed at the level of Parliament. Sir, some effort should be made to deal with this matter because it affects the lives of people, and to my understanding, the lives of poor people to be able to get their constitutional right, which is provided in the Laws of Barbados, in ownership and succession of properties in Barbados.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Marville.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: I thank you, Mr. President. If you would permit me to begin on a mischievous note, I would say that I would not mention the words, PSVs.

*Asides.*

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, my view of crime is rather like that of my view of health, prevention is the thing. Sir, just as doctors should, in the old Chinese thinking, not be paid for curing people but for keeping them well, I believe if we study and tackle the problems that lead to crime holistically and early, as suggested by Senator Nicholls, we could save ourselves a great deal of resources and grief. Like everybody else who has spoken, I must say that the report before us is a formidable one. My own view is, flaws and all, it should be read by every Barbadian.

The report leads me to wonder though, how it is that we come up with so many Commissions with so many good recommendations over the last 20 to 30 years and very little is adopted from them. I do believe that this report has merit. Its reach is vast and it suggests some very good suggestions for change. It is sometimes very astute in its observations. On other occasions, it is remarkably naive.

Sir, for fear of being jumped on by those who would believe that this is the greatest thing since sliced bread, let me give you one example of such naivety. Early in the report, we are given a list of the negatives in our history. I think it is Chapter 2.1(1) – five indents:

- “• the indelible scars of slavery;
- the post-emancipation neglect;
- the use of law to suppress the aspirations of the disadvantaged...;
- the barriers to social and economic advancement...;”

Sir, so far, so good, then, in the fifth indent, it lists as a fifth negative:

- “• more recently creeping erosion of values as manifested in the slippage of standards and an increase in the incidence of deviancy and crime.”

Sir, did it not occur to the Commission that the fifth indent, while in fact being a fifth negative, was also the direct result of the four indents that went before?

Martin Luther King, Jr. once observed that violence was a language of the unheard. Here was a non-violent person explaining very clearly, the origins of violence. I want to make it clear too, that I am a non-violent person.

*Asides.*

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: This is not to gainsay that the document before us is a comprehensive effort of tackling the various areas, which need to be covered in any analysis of the law and order situation in Barbados. Again, the document, in describing our political structures refers to the supremacy of Parliament, a concept usually associated with the Westminster system, which we are not. We are more properly called, White Hall. Westminster is a seat of the British Government. What evolved there is rather peculiar to Britain. The reason Parliament is supreme in that system is because there is no British Constitution.  
4.10 p.m.

In our system, the Constitution is supreme. Our system was, to a large extent, the result of the work of Lord Bryce in the early 1920s. He tried to restructure the House of Lords by having persons with specific useful skills brought into the House. His proposal was of course rejected, but was later used in the colonies, which incidentally were ruled from the foreign and colonial office in White Hall.

In Westminster, persons of privilege, life peers, peers of the realm, *et cetera*, people of the Upper House. Their tenure is life long. Our Upper House is partly the result of Lord Bryce, independence in the Senate, and is by no means life long.

Mr. President, I do not propose to analyse detail after detail of the document but I would like to look at a few more points of general interest before I turn my attention particularly to Chapters 3 and 2. I would love to have been able to delve into Chapters 4, 5, 7 and 8, where I thought the Commission was at its best, but I will content myself with pointing out a few of the areas where I thought the Commission was a point.

In the Chapter on Governance and Civil Society – and we as a society marvellously confuse governance and government, an error the Commission does not make – the Commission makes some outright statements on one of the major instruments of governance, the Public Service. It concludes, unlike the Honourable Leader of Government Business, that the public administration in Barbados should not be relied on to reform itself. It also noted that ineffective disciplinary procedures in the Public Service constrain the effectiveness of public sector reform and some workers take the attitude of, they cannot do me anything. The Commission then makes the bold recommendation that Cabinet and the Prime Minister should publicly voice their support for the reform programme, I concur.

In the same chapter, it also recommends the creation of a civil service college and research into and teaching of management skills for the public service; bravo! It also points to the views of youth that there is no opportunity for

them to participate in governance; a sad reality in view of the fact that governance is everyone's business.

Finally, it recommends the strengthening of the relationship between Government and civil society and also the linking of sports and culture to sustainable development. My favourite recommendation from this chapter is the use of some Justices of Peace as lay magistrates in an extended system of magistrates.

In chapter 5, it proposes, not as an alternative to flyovers, a national school transportation system. I believe that this, while being less ostentatious than flyovers, would make a startling impact on our traffic problems.

The Commission also recommends the points demerit system, which functions so well in Singapore. Mr. President, this system functions well in Singapore because it is very draconically implemented. If you park badly, you lose two points out of eight. If you lose eight points, you lose your licence for a year. It is a system that we should really consider because it would take a number of our crazy drivers off the road in a hurry.

In Chapter 7, the Commission makes some valuable comments about the jury system and its need for revamping. It also recommends the abolition of criminal assizes as a means of speeding up criminal trials. It talks about the need for legal aid for the needy in cases apart from murder trials. It also supports the establishment of a scheme for Government to compensate victims of crime. It proposes some innovative measures like house arrest and the use of electronic devices that ensure that the law has a constant watch on offenders with these devices.

The Commission also recommends the institution of a national youth service as part of the educational process, a move which I feel would create a greater understanding by our young people both of the society they live in and its genuine needs.

On the issue of youth, the Commission cites a case where Justice Belgrave was harsh and forthright in the sentencing of a rapist, who violated both the mother and her virgin teenage daughter. Justice Belgrave explained the severity on the basis of the rape of the virgin. My own view is that any rape of anyone is so egregious a crime that sentencing for it should always be severe whether the victim is a virgin or not.

This perhaps introduced me to the matter of the destruction of our youth, chapter 3. It was most instructive what the six schools which attended the hearings had to say. They said more or less what I have been saying all along and what I supposed I would stop writing for. The 11-plus Examination is destroying any possible cohesion in the

society. I should point out first of all that we need to be innovative instead of constantly copying models from the United States of America or the United Kingdom.

Interestingly, the 11-plus Examination, which we adopted with such gusto was abandoned by Scotland, and the system came out of an elitist UK initiative in 1969. Did that not tell us anything? This is a system which places inordinate levels of stress on our young children, then to inform 70 per cent of them that they are inferior based on an exam that test two areas of their intelligence, while other valuable areas like creative intelligence are discarded. As the students indicated, there remain with these students, sometimes for life, the notion that they have had an inferior education which in fact they normally do.

Mr. President, we have been talking about a continuous assessment model for the longest while with little movement on the process. The Commission proposes a number of interesting initiatives including frequent interschool meetings and the rotation of the most talented teachers. It would perhaps be even more helpful if we created a system of target schools among the so-called newer, a euphemism for inferior, secondary schools, thus making them attractive and removing some of the elitist nonsense that now prevails.

Mr. President, I am conscious of the fact, the 11-plus Examination or not that given the present structure most parents would still opt for the two or three best equipped schools. If on the other hand some of the country's secondary schools were centres of excellence in, let us say, technical drawing, languages, cultural arts, sports education or management, to name a few areas at random, the choice would be less obvious even with the 11-plus Examination.

Mr. President, we also jump at the idea of co-education. While many of us close our ears to what has been happening, others of us rule the fact that our cricket pavilions have become centres of students population. I should point out that one of the so-called newer secondary schools, Springer Memorial, which remains a single gender school, has risen from strength to strength. Their academic performance has been improved over the years and their sporting prowess is becoming legendary.

Boys, whether we like it or not, are falling behind. Is this because fewer men are entering the profession? It is now considered effeminate by boys to do well academically. In my day, it is true that anyone who only studied was considered a 'sissy' but the most respected students were all boys who did well academically and represented the school at sports, acted in school plays or did something extramurally.

The Commission recommends enhanced after-school activity. It also recommends greater parent/teacher

coordination. This is an area where there is at the moment, so much conflict that I think that we have to have some conflict resolution before we can start talking about cooperation.

Mr. President, what I would like to see basically is a national commission on education. It should be as open-ended as possible and everyone encouraged to attend. Among the issues I would like to see raised would be the training and retraining of teachers and their salary structures. This is ground zero. If we do not begin here, we would lose any serendipitous advantages we have so far enjoyed. 4.20 p.m.

Let us not fool ourselves. Those of us, who have been engaged in teaching, will recognise the English Language is also losing grounds amongst our students. Our boast of 98 per cent literacy has little to do with functional literacy. How many of our school leavers can successfully complete even the simplest of form? I suspect most can but more than a few would be incapable of doing so.

Mr. President, already we have been losing ground in what we love to point to, that is the United Nations Human Development Index. Once we were situated above Italy and just below Luxemburg but Singapore has now gone past us. The Commission makes the excuse that the Developed Countries have had centuries to move from industrial revolution through to the cyber revolution. I should also make the point that they also had the advantage of chattel slaves and the sale and deployment of which has allowed them to create the basis of wealth for their industrial revolution. Where are we to find our slaves? While I agree that we have had little time to make the adjustment, I would prefer to focus on the fact that Mauritius and Singapore have not considered the short time available as a total drawback. Singapore has virtually become a developed country, even with its lack of natural resources and its need to import water, and even with its mixed population which, in a failed economy, would have had each ethnic section fighting against each other.

Mr. President, instead, 49 per cent of Singaporeans are computer literate and use the internet. Barbados, by comparison, has a figure between 5 per cent and 10 per cent, which, under any circumstances, is too low. Mauritius converted the wealth it has acquired from sugar cane into tourism and then moved on. They went to Europe and decided they would become 'top dog' in the wool and garment industry and imported wool from Scotland. Like Barbados, Mauritius has no need for wool. They then became the larger exporter of wool and garments to Europe.

Mr. President, we, in this beloved country of ours, are both too smug and to dependent. It goes back to what Senator Stuart described as gossip, the academic process that tells us what, where and when, but never why. We now have

an education curriculum that has been drawn up for children we no longer have. Our secondary and tertiary students are at least 90 per cent post-independence people.

In schools, there is the abomination of having very young children being crammed with two subjects for some magical examination. We then have a secondary school curriculum that has no element of life skills, where no basic economics is taught; where no effort is made to teach children to question everything or even to be innovative; and where teachers generally are in the old colonial mode, still frown on the notion of something new and are not happy with answers that do not tally with their own.

Mr. President, the Commission did not propose this but I think we need a school for criminal youths. Sir, advanced societies like that of Sweden have such schools. They do not need the death penalty but they have less crime than we do. What the Developed Countries have and we do not, is independence of spirit. We look to Government for everything. Sometimes the answer must be better if we do it ourselves, rather than waiting on Government. We need to teach this in our schools. We need to teach children that when they grow up in a globalised world, it would be better if they could create jobs, rather than having to go looking for a job.

HER HONOUR SENATOR Dame Patricia SYMMONDS: On a point of order. Mr. President, I am very sorry for interrupting the Honourable Senator but I think he is very wrong in making those statements and is, therefore, misleading this Honourable Senate.

Mr. President, I do not know if the Honourable Senator was in this Chamber when I referred to the new Curriculum 2000, which teaches our children to be creative. It is also preparing them for the 21st Century. We also have a high percentage of trained teachers, who are being constantly retrained.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, I am afraid the question of whether the new curriculum is innovative or not, is a matter of opinion but I would be prepared to discuss this with the Honourable Senator any time outside of this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. President, on the matter of education and children, I was horrified by the number of child abuse cases and how they have increased. The latest figure we have from the Commission's table for 2003, would suggest that by now at least one child is sexually abused every day in Barbados. This is so sad a statistic that we must bow our heads in shame. Children are being abused by their peers, parents, uncles, grandfathers, priests and neighbours. In some instances, the abuse is not recorded because it is part of a clandestine prostitution system, in which children offer their

services for fashion goods like brand name shoes. This sadly applies to both boys and girls.

Mr. President, we need to speed up trials involving minors and that of child abuse. The Commission has wisely proposed that, in all cases, where suddenly the child or parent is unwilling to proceed, that child or parent would be made a compellable witness. In addition, those who reject the order of the court, should be brought to justice for contempt of court, as well as public mischief, *et cetera*.

Mr. President, Chapter Two was perhaps the weakest chapter of the report. There was a comment that we are regarded as one of the leading developing countries, leading what? The report also said that we were a candidate for developed status within the shortest time.

Mr. President, I put it to you that we are a long way away from being a developed country. Our institutions have not yet developed to any point, where we can be sure even of their survival. Our attitudes are so anti-change, that it would be extremely difficult for us to develop if we do not have a seed change in popular attitude.

However, I proposed to address the matter of the Ombudsman, Chapter Two, Sub-section One. The Commission could get no further afield than the United Kingdom's version of the ombudsman. As is evidence of the word itself, "ombudsman" is not an original English word. It comes from the Swedish. The precise reason why it was used as a new word, is that Swedish tends to have words with several different meanings. It is a smaller language. The word means properly a combination of negotiator, advocate and representative.

Mr. President, the post of Ombudsman was devised by a very democratic-minded society, in order to preserve individual rights against the State. The Swedish Ombudsman is a very powerful figure, with the authority and independence of a judge. His or her post cannot be revoked by the Prime Minister. The Ombudsman is also taken seriously by the population at large, as well as by the political establishment. Sweden is a matured democracy with one of the highest ratings in the world, in terms of its Human Development Index.

Mr. President, it might be helpful to look at the Swedish version of the Ombudsman. It is not that we need other ombudsmen, it is that the post that exists, is not outside the powers of the Executive. The post must be one with a proper staff. The Ombudsman must be a leader whose salary comes from the Consolidated Fund and whose tenure, as the Commission proposes, is secure. I understand some politicians would consider such a development as a shrinking

of their power but power is properly the people's and, therefore, the individual or group of people should be duly protected from any abuse of their rights.

One final thought, Mr. President. I have to recognise that we are fortunate and that some of us live better than most people in the world. Sometimes I have also to realise that we are in a small tub with a hole in the side, not the bottom. There is an element of real danger there. We are not, as some of us believe, in a luxury liner with a mere scratch on its external paint. We should be forever mindful of that reality.

I thank you, Mr. President.  
4.30 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Sir John Goddard.

SENATOR Sir John Stanley GODDARD: Thank you, Mr. President. Sir, for all of us here, Barbados is our island home and we are fortunate and blessed to live here in a parliamentary democracy. Our form of Government has been evolving since 1639 and our legacy in governance has to be protected and preserved and never taken for granted. Sir, supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law form the foundation cornerstone of our stable society. Respect for them remains essential in order for us to sustain justice, peace and security.

Mr. President, the National Commission on Law and Order was appointed in accordance with a decision made by the Cabinet in 2002 and this Report dated June 2004 was subsequently laid in Parliament. It was composed of 14 members, representing a wide cross-section of the local interest. It was chaired by Sir Roy Marshall with Harold Hoyte as Deputy. As has already been said, there were public meetings, consultations with a variety of interest groups, formal written submissions, discussions with selected communities and various other forms of outreach.

Sir, carrying out the mandate required much time and effort and the Commissioners are to be commended for producing such an excellent report. Sir, that comment has been made by every Senator, who has spoken so far, recognition of what a fine report the Commission has produced. Each of the eight chapters of this Report is deserving of serious study. Throughout its 152 pages are many recommendations made by the Commissioners, as well as expressions of their support for recommendations made in earlier reports by the Constitutional Review Commission and the Committee for National Reconciliation. Sir, recommendations in these three reports relate to improving the Barbadian society.

Mr. President, better leadership is the essential ingredient for improving society as differentiated from more

effective management which is required for improving the performance of an economy. Sir, both leadership and management are important but it needs to be recognised that they are separate and distinct functions even though they often relate. Sir, leadership is doing right things but management is doing things right.

Mr. President, in Barbados, more emphasis has been placed in recent times on more effective management of the economy sometimes at the expense of dealing with many of our societal problems through better leadership. This is an imbalance that needs to be corrected. Sir, recognition of this is implied or highlighted in some of the recommendations made in the Report on a range of issues. In the book, "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People", published by Simon and Schuster in 1990, the author Steven R. Covey, an internationally respected authority and teacher, states that the basic task of leadership is to increase the standard of living and the quality of life for all stakeholders.

Mr. President, the statistics of Government clearly show that the economy has been expanding steadily over the last several years in terms of growth and GDP. They have declined in unemployment and for this we are all pleased and grateful. However, expressions of public concerns have also been expanding steadily on the ineffectiveness of the handling of Government of a wide range of social and infrastructural issues which relate to the quality of life. According to Steven R. Covey, no management success can compensate for failure in leadership. This is an opinion with which most of us can agree.

Mr. President, in the conclusion of their Report, the Commissioner stated that the machinery for justice, peace and security are in place and well-established in Barbados. Nevertheless, grave concerns were repeatedly expressed in public perceptions of deteriorating cultural values and norms and specifically an increase in deviant, lawless behaviour in our schools, homes, communities, workplaces and public transport.

Mr. President, all of us live here and this statement in the Report should come as no surprise or shock to any of us. It must surely bring to our minds some examples of the reported increases in deviant and lawless behaviour. Sir, reference to just a few of them would help to illustrate the point. Let us start with the schools. In schools there is increasing violence among students and more disrespect and violence between students and teachers which is something unheard of a few years ago.

Mr. President, in the homes there is more reported abuse and violence and increase in dysfunctional families. In the communities there is more immodesty in dress and immoral perversion. There are more songs with lewd lyrics

and more inconsiderate playing of music excessively loud and other forms of noise pollution. There is more vandalism of public property in schools and in the wider community. There is more indiscriminate dumping of garbage in gullies and on other unauthorised sites and more littering. There is increase trafficking and use of illegal drugs.

Mr. President, in the workplaces, there is the growing frequency of wildcat strikes especially in the public sector. Finally, in public transport there is the ZR culture and all the negative features that are associated with it. Sir, this is not a pretty picture and it must be of concern to all responsible persons. Much of the deviant and lawless behaviour that has been commented on, can be traced back to the use of illegal drugs and their harmful effect on those who use them or are otherwise involved with them. As a result, disgust with such deviant and lawless behaviour has caused the expressed public perception of deteriorating cultural values and norms referred to in the Report.

Mr. President, the Commissioners commented that:

"Emerging from the Commissioners' consultation is a holistic set of recommendations which taken together might form the basis of a multi-sectorial national strategy for crime reduction and ultimately for justice, peace and security in Barbados."

Mr. President, fulfilment of this important proposal so modestly expressed, calls for better leadership at all levels and in all sectors in our society. The final paragraph in the Report asserts:

"Working together we can 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."

Mr. President, this is an expression of hope which clearly calls for more enlightened and responsible leadership working together as a matter of urgency rather than of choice.

Mr. President, I move on to other reports related to this one. Other important reports have been laid in Parliament within the last decade. These include the Report of the Committee on National Reconciliation in 2000 chaired by Sir Keith Hunte, ...the report of the Constitution Review Commission, 1998, Chaired by Sir Henry Forde, and the Commission of Inquiry into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Chaired by Sir Richard Haynes.  
4.40 p.m.

Sir, in one way or the other, all of these reports reflect great respect for our Constitution and the rule of law. They also respect sound scholarship, a deep understanding of our

history, culture and the current needs of our society, as well as an awareness and sensitivity of a wide range of important issues.

Mr. President, conspicuously missing from this list of reports is the Report of the Advisory Commission of Inquiry into the St. Joseph Hospital. Work on that inquiry started in the mid-1990s but a copy of their report has not been laid on the tables of both Houses. Surely an official explanation to the public is long overdue.

Sir, the one significant weakness which the reports of Government-appointed Committees and Commissions seemed to have in common is the apparent lack of effective implementation or the limited implementation only, of their many important recommendations, and a Senator referred to that point a short while ago.

Mr. President, it seemed that this same said fate may have been anticipated by the Commissioners of the National Commission on Law and Order when they ended their letter of transmittal, dated June 20, 2004, to Honourable Mia A. Mottley, Deputy Prime Minister and Attorney-General of Barbados as follows:

“We look forward to the implementation of the plan and thank you for having given us the opportunity to serve.”

Sir, any delay or failure to implement the recommendation on law and order would be a tragedy, with likely serious consequences for Barbados now and for many years to come. Implementation means accepting responsibility for ensuring appropriate and timely action. It means getting things done on time. It requires commitment, discipline and the will to achieve the desired results. In the final analysis, it is the inescapable responsibility of the Government.

In order for our society to progress further, we really have to do more than just continue to talk. If I am permitted to use the vernacular, we do it very well, talk the talk. Busy persons with the necessary training, knowledge, experience and commitment would be far less willing to serve on national Commissions in the future, as well as governmental appointed bodies, if Government's disappointing record in implementation over many years were to persist. In this regard, the people of Barbados would be the losers and they deserve and expect so much better.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Husbands.

SENATOR Miss. S. C. V. HUSBANDS: Mr. President, I rise to endorse the Report of National

Commission on Law and Order. As I took the time to look at the report and read some of the recommendations, what particularly struck me and what I want to congratulate the Commissioners on, is the care that they took in terms of seeking to gather the necessary concrete information from a wide cross-section of the Barbadian public to try to bring a balance to the discussion on the law and order debate in our country.

The issue of law and order is not an easy one. As a matter of fact, going through the report, it touches on almost every element of economic and social life that is the underpinning of our State, and that its proper functioning is at the heart of the kind of society we are going to build.

Sir, I really appreciate the depth of information gathering and detail given to the various elements in seeking to bring to our attention the various issues that impact on law and order within our society.

Mr. President, I laud this against the background of the current trend in our national and social dialogue that seeks to dialogue without the necessary facts, preparation and research, when we bring conjecture, feelings, prejudices, *et cetera*, and treat them as though they are factual.

We have easily been able to shift from, we do not know what is happening to nothing is happening. We have been able to shift from several reported incidents, to this is the experience of everyone. This kind of irresponsible dialogue has created a picture of our country that is not necessarily a genuine reflection of the true state of the issues that are being debated. This is unfortunate because the end result of this kind of dialogue seeks to inflame the emotions and feelings of our citizens, and worst, it creates an impression about our country that is not necessarily true and which can have social and economic repercussions.

Sir, for example, we tend to hear extreme opinions expressed that all the land is going to foreigners, when in truth and in fact, between 5 and 10 per cent of the land is owned by foreigners. We also hear comments like, our children are all bad. People use these exaggerated terms, when in truth and in fact it is a small percentage of our young people who are not conforming. There is also a percentage of our adults who are not conforming. Mr. President, on the whole matter of the breakdown of law and order, the language that we use seeks to convey the impression that the entire society is dropping into pieces.

Sir, when we discuss institutions like the hospital, it is true that there are many occurrences that do not meet the standards we would like on an everyday basis, and some of the failures can result in loss of life or further deterioration of a person's health, but there are thousands of health

encounters taking place across our country that are resulting in the population receiving the kind of help that is necessary. However, we have come to a point where we no longer speak about what is working well, but speak only of that which is not working seeking to extract and spread it as a description of the whole.

Sir, I feel that as a nation operating in the 21st Century, we need to change that level of dialogue. I think we need to take the example of this Commission to get the information of informed dialogue to spread an accurate picture.

Mr. President, look at the impact of information, how it spreads easily from one place to another. There is no longer such a thing as private national dialogue, when you have a dialogue in your country and you say whatever you want, it is seldom private. Today, because of technology, that information spreads far and wide and impacts on potential investors, visitors and potential residents. It creates a repercussion that affects us at a social and economic level and which tends to hurt the same vulnerable people in the society, on whose behalf we believe we are putting these opinions out into the public domain.

Sir, a recent example is Denmark, what was being said to be untrue. Reports were published that were offensive to a section of the Danish community, but the way in which it was managed and handled inflamed thousands of Muslims across the world and has resulted in economic damage to companies in Denmark. Therefore, I want to encourage us as a society to have dialogue, to debate and to follow this Commission's example. Let us get the information, sit and engage in rational dialogue of how we are going to build our country.

One of the strong points of the report is the fact that in our society we have people with different expectations of what their lives ought to be, and that some of these expectations are not being realised, and because they have not been realised, people feel that they have the recourse to resort to breaking the law to achieve their expectations. Some of these expectations are reasonable but there are some that, in my view, are unrealistic.  
4.50 p.m.

There is a tendency to promote the feeling that the Government is responsible for everything. We have this tendency to believe that the Government is responsible for our housing, whereas, I believe that the Government is responsible for providing housing for the poor and vulnerable in our society.

There are people who feel that the Government is responsible for the cleanliness of the environment, instead of recognising that the cleanliness of the environment has to do with how each of us behaves and, therefore, we have a

responsibility to operate in a particular way, which allows us to keep a clean and healthy environment.

Sir, a lot of us believe that the Government is responsible for the elderly, failing to realise that the elderly people are the responsibility of families. They are our parents and grandparents and the fact that they do not have, does not absolve us from the necessity to help them and to work with them. This responsibility is still ours in the same way that our children are our responsibility and that the Government steps in where that system breaks down. We cannot have a situation where people just simply abandon their personal responsibility towards relatives and assume that Government is supposed to be responsible for taking care of what they do not wish to take care of, Sir.

Therefore, as I read and listen to others, what I see is that part of the contributing factors to the breakdown of law and order is the abandonment of personal and social responsibility, whether it is by the citizen, whether it is by social institutions, whether it is by the Government and whether it is by the private sector. Sir, by failing to play our part effectively, all of us at some level contribute to a loosening of the social values, the fabric of the society and therefore contribute to the breakdown of law and order in our society.

With your permission, Mr. President, I just want to read some of the points that were made by the Commission, which I thought were very useful, about the responsibility of the State, which is to protect and promote the economic and social rights of the people, including the right to work, the right to health care, the right to education and the right to public assistance, in cases of extreme need.

It goes on to talk about the economic interest of the weaker sections of the community to ensure that everybody is able to participate. It also talks about ensuring that private enterprise is conducted in a reasonably efficient manner, so that there is efficiency in the production and distribution of goods and services and to protect the public from unjust exploitation.

Further, it talks about:

- the operation of free competition;
- ensuring that the beaches and public areas are accessible to all;
- the preservation of the natural environment of Barbados;
- ensuring that land is made available, so that people can reasonably be assured of having some level of ownership.

Sir, what I find surprising in our social and national dialogue is that despite the evidence of our eyes, we still believe the emotive words that people play on our minds where for example in 2004, Mr. President, we had more than \$1.2 billion in mortgages by Barbadians going out to own their own homes.

We have the Urban Development Commission where, people in urban areas are able to purchase their house lots. A lot of work is being put into seeing to it that Barbadians have an opportunity to own a piece of the rock. Yet, if you listen to the dialogue, you feel that nothing is being done. I think that it is important that we balance our debate to give us what is the truth.

It goes on then to talk, not just of the responsibility of the State, it talks about recommendations concerning the inclusion in the Constitution of the responsibility of citizens that we, as citizens of Barbados need to understand that there is a role and a part that we have to play, in not only maintaining law and order, but in building a society that is just, peaceful and gives everyone the opportunity to participate.

It says that the responsibility of persons is to comply with the law, the Constitution, and respect for the ideals which are enshrined and the institution which it establishes; the exercise of one's right in a manner which respects the rights of others, cooperation with lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order; respect for the national anthem, the flag, the pledge and all national emblems; the defence of the country in rendering national service; appreciation and preservation of the rich heritage of Barbadian culture; creation and maintenance of a clean environment; participating in the economic, political and social life; contributing to the well-being of Barbados to the best of one's ability, making every effort to achieve excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity, so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement, as well as the promotion of harmony and a spirit of unity among all Barbadians.

Therefore, the recommendation of this Commission is that the responsibility is on both sides. The solution to the problem of the maintenance of law and order requires every Barbadian to play their part at whatever level of society in which they operate.

They also drew attention to another element that I think is critical to the heart of what is happening, in terms of the breakdown of law and order. They spoke about the fact that when people develop unrealistic expectation, it is because they do not understand the process by which things work, and that people equate equality of opportunity to be equal to equality of results, so that everybody will end up at the same place, having the same things.

Sir, what it is saying is that all we can do is provide equality of opportunity but how that opportunity unfolds, depends on how the individual grasps the opportunity, utilises it and seeks to maximise whatever is in front of you to advance yourself. Sir, we cannot necessarily think of it as we should have the same result as anybody else, without necessarily wanting to make the same level of sacrifice and input. I feel this is a message that is very important to be communicated to all of our citizens so that they understand it is very important that we do all that we can to help ourselves.

Sir, part of the reasons given why some people break laws and threaten the public order is when they experience high levels of frustration with their human condition and, in particular, if they feel that they are not able to advance at a financial or economic level.

The Commission pointed out that one of the pressures that is impacting on the population of Barbados, more so today than, perhaps, 30 or 60 years ago, is the pressure of materialism. They stated that the pressure of materialism and the influence of the local and international media together, foster the idea that it is the right of everyone to enjoy modern lifestyles, which are constantly being highlighted, and that this often leads to involvement in criminal activity, including participation in the trade of illegal drugs. Sir, this is one of the major social challenges which we have, the pressure of materialism and the internalisation of the concept that, I have a right to be able to emulate the lifestyles of what I see on television and if I cannot do that, I can then categorise myself as poor and oppressed.

Sir, looking at the whole issue of poverty in Barbados, poverty is a multifaceted thing. Poverty can be described on three levels. You have absolute poverty. This is where your social and economic conditions are so bad in the entire country that there are no opportunities for you to be able to make a living. There is no health care, education or housing. There are no job opportunities. There are no opportunities for entrepreneurship.

Many countries across the world experience absolute poverty. There are people across the globe, in Latin America, Africa and Haiti who have to live on less than \$2 a day. This is not the truth for Barbados.

Countries like India and China whose economic growth now is reaching phenomenal proportions still have problems with the distribution of that wealth and they still have millions of people who are living in absolute poverty.

The other definition of poverty is relative poverty. This is where you have very wide gaps between those who have, people at the top who live very lavish lifestyles, in

comparison to other people who are not able to live at that same level. This is where people will describe themselves as poor, in relation to the fact that they cannot command the lifestyle of the people at the top. Therefore, what happens is that there is a bottle-up frustration about not being able to move to the next level. I believe that is what we have in Barbados. We do have gaps which are not excessively wide because we have a very large middle class. However, it is in comparing ourselves with others that we feel ourselves to be poor.

5.00 p.m.

Mr. President, within the concept of relative poverty there is also a thing called cultural poverty. Cultural poverty is where the society at large does not have a great deal of lack. The social services and the economic opportunities are there, but by the way in which an individual lives his life or how he chooses to exercise his options within that society, he unwittingly creates poverty around himself because he has failed to make the choices that he needs to make, in order to take advantage of what is happening in the society, in order to gain for himself the things that he wants to enjoy. Therefore, cultural poverty can be created by how individuals choose to live.

Mr. President, one of the things that is of great concern to me in terms of the issue of cultural poverty in Barbados is that there is a phenomena going on in homes which comes from how we have been bringing up our children and how we have been treating to the issue of materialism. We have a phenomena where people are living in a home but they are not contributing to its upkeep or to their own maintenance. They are taking their monies and spending it on material things without regard to looking at what repairs are needed in the home, to help with the light bill, the water bill or the food bill and to help with what contributes to their own personal maintenance.

Mr. President, many families seem to tolerate this type of behaviour on the part of certain members of their immediate family who live in that home. This results in severe hardship on those who seek to keep things together. This is very unfair. This situation can start from the time a child is in the teenage years, now starting to work and that can go on all the way up into their 40s, where they are not contributing to where they live, thereby putting tremendous pressures on elderly parents who get a pension or are getting a little welfare help from Government.

Mr. President, there are people in the home who are working and their money is spent on 'bling' and on clothing and trying to acquire a particular lifestyle without regards to the economic hardship that they are creating within the home. This has been extremely difficult for Government to separate out these behaviours.

Mr. President, the challenge then that the Government, the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission may have is that someone would say that their home needs repairing but when you go and do the assessment, you then realise that there are big children living in the home who are working but they are not helping in the home.

Mr. President, what do we do? Do we facilitate that behaviour on the part of children by providing a home for their parents that they are going to be sheltered in? This is part of the challenge. How do we get people to assume responsibility? How do we get parents to understand that it is important for them to teach their children from the time they are small that they understand the responsibilities that they have to engage in and that they must play their part? This is very important. We need to deal with this as a society because the pressure of materialism and poor parenting is contributing to the cultural poverty in our nation.

Mr. President, the Report pointed out that this frustration with materialism is what fuels the drug trade. This is a very grave concern in our society. There are a number of people out there who feel that there is no problem with marijuana, because to them it is no different from cigarettes and alcohol. My position on it is that we have already made mistakes with alcohol and cigarettes, so do not let us add another mistake to the whole mix, where we are going to destroy the next generation with the use of drugs that cannot possibly build them up and help them in any way to become better citizens or help them to move on in their lives.

The challenge is how are we going to break through the mind-set that says to them that it is okay to get involved in marijuana. How are you going to help them to understand that it undermines the economic and social fabric of the society, that it damages the brain and therefore does not allow the person to become the best that they can be? How can we have a sensible and rational dialogue?

Mr. President, the other thing we have to look at is where there is hypocrisy in our own behaviours as the mainstream. We have to address those issues so that we are able to set the kind of example that they can follow and not create the avenue for them to point to our behaviour in order to be able to justify theirs.

Mr. President, there are people who are making unstinting efforts to help battle this whole notion of the drug trade. The Report of National Commission on Law and Order spoke a lot about the work of the Police and about the attitude of some of the 'boys on the blocks' in relation to this matter and the whole thing of illicit drugs, how it

can undermine even your judicial systems, your social system, *et cetera*.

Mr. President, there is another side to the fight which is prevention. The National Council on Substance Abuse has been working assiduously for a number of years in trying to work towards reducing the use and preventing young people from getting involved in drugs. This is by no means an easy task. Government has been extremely supportive of the work of this organisation. Mr. President, it is a tiny organisation, but it does phenomenal work by using innovative and creative ideas to try to instill within our young people an understanding of the social values necessary for building an effective life and helping them to understand the part that illegal drugs can play in destroying their chance of a healthy and satisfying life. They have a number of programmes that are being used on a daily/weekly basis to seek to encourage students and people in the community to take another look at their attitude towards drugs and their abuse of this substance. While it is by no means an easy task, I really have to commend the Council for the tremendous work which they do.

Mr. President, they have a team of people who when you stop to talk with them about their work their eyes light up. They would talk to you passionately about their programmes in the community and in the schools. They have a cadre of volunteers who give of their time and energy to participate in these programmes to reach our young people. Just recently, they had a march up Broad Street and close to 700 school children carrying placards left Queen's Park and walked down the Wharf and came up the centre of Broad Street with their slogans, demonstrating that there is a generation here that has heard the message and wants to commit to a healthy lifestyle.

Mr. President, over 2 827 students between the ages of five and six were exposed to programmes helping them to identify and evaluate healthy and unhealthy substances. Between the ages of six and seven, 2 800 students were exposed to the same programme trying to help them to understand from early that there are some substances that are safe and that there are some that are unsafe.

Mr. President, I know that we talk a lot about the negative behaviour of young people in the schools, and that is there, but we also have a lot of very positive behaviour taking place in the schools. Six hundred and ninety-one students participated in the National Council of Substance Abuse Positive Peer Pressure Programme. That programme is based on the fact that sometimes, as adults, we are not able to use the language, we are not able to think in the ways and terms in which other young people think or identify and put on messages in ways that they can relate to, but another young person like themselves can do that. They have to be young people across the entire school system who have a

commitment to healthy living and who have a passion to want to reach out to their fellow students to encourage and to influence them to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Therefore, our Positive Peer Support Programme is one that helps the children to be able to utilise their personal influence with their colleagues and friends and help them to develop things like leadership and communication skills to be able to build resilient skills to be able to share and influence others.

Mr. President, I am really proud of the efforts that are being made, working with the peer support groups helping them to be able to make a difference in schools.  
5.10 p.m.

There is also a Drug Education Programme, a holistic programme which deals with refusal skills, decision-making, critical thinking, conflict resolution and communication. Sir, close to 4 000 students were exposed to that programme last year.

Mr. President, it also addresses one of my favourites, "Children Are People Too." This seeks to address some of the fundamental issues that impact on children. Sir, all of the societal pressures mentioned in this report, which impact on the teenagers, young adults and adults in the society, also impact on the children. Children too have to face violence in the home, they too have to face levels of lack and they too have to face pressures.

Sir, "The Children Are People Too" programme is aimed at children ages five to twelve. This programme helps children to cope with pressures associated with trying drugs, as well as living in a very complex society. It seeks to teach children how to communicate more effectively their thoughts and feelings about living in a family or in a society, realising they are not alone in facing life's challenges. That programme seeks to provide children with the opportunity to comprehend their particular life and home situation and to explore the options that are available to them to cope.

Sir, very often these children are the targets of the violence and the abuse perpetrated by adults in the society and in their homes. Therefore, the work of the National Council for Substance Abuse is a vital tool in seeking to maintain the fabric of law and order within the society of Barbados.

Mr. President, the work of the National Council for Substance Abuse does not stop there. One of the things that we have put before the Government, which we hope to get a very positive response, is that of a Barbados National Drug Plan. Presently, in terms of dealing with law and order, there are a number of different institutions all working on an individual plan, with some of these institutions duplicating

efforts, while others duplicate resources. Therefore, as a result, we are not getting a comprehensive integrated programme that takes all the efforts of the society and use it in a targeted and rational way, to help us deal with the breakdown of law and order in the society and in particular, in terms of dealing with drug and substance abuse in the country.

Mr. President, therefore, a comprehensive plan has been put, to take all the stakeholders who fight in that realm, to look at how we could create synergies across these institutions, so that we could work more effectively. Sir, I am hoping that it would get favourable consideration from the Government and that we would have the support for it, to be able to put it in place, so that we could do a more effective job.

Mr. President, despite the negatives that we are hearing and seeing daily about the breakdown of law and order, I am here to report that I am also seeing some encouraging signs of the society seeking to take back up responsibility for itself, with citizens recognising that there is a contribution they each have to make, in order to make the society work.

Mr. President, I was pleasantly heartened when I had the privilege to chat with a gentleman, who lives in Queen Mary Road, whose wife has a small business, while he works elsewhere. Sir, this couple has such a commitment to the society, especially to the young boys, that, over the years, they have given thousands of dollars out of their own personal income, to supply a group of young boys with the opportunity to play football, where they can have the opportunity to work off their energies. Mr. President, unfortunately this past year, this couple were unable to do it, and if only you could have seen how crushed that man was because he was not able to meet that responsibility that he had set for himself.

Sir, I want to say that I admire the spirit and commitment of that couple to this country and to those young boys, to see to it that they can get the right direction in life and can get his support.

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

SENATOR Miss S. C. V. HUSBANDS: Mr. President, in wrapping up I want to speak to all of us as Barbadians.

We have to take back our responsibilities. We cannot take the fact that we want to achieve something in life and make it an excuse for breaking the law. We have to recognise and to understand that the law is put in place to safeguard the society, and that any time an individual thinks about doing something, that individual must think about the fact that were everyone else in the society allowed to do that very thing, then we would see the chaos that would be created.

Mr. President, I know that in trying to maintain law and order, it can create a hardship. For example, the challenges the taxi drivers have at Lower Broad Street and the challenges the vendors have at Swan Street and Bridge Street. Sir, I can appreciate those challenges because these people want to make an honest living but at the same time, they cannot break the law in so doing because if people are allowed to break the law, we would be creating chaos in the society.

Mr. President, one of the things I want to offer Government, is that the Small Business Association stands ready to be able to work with them and those groups. While those groups might not be members of the Association, we are quite prepared to work with them, to come up with solutions that can transition them to a position where they are operating within the law and can still make a living. We want to make that offer to Government and to those groups. We hope they would take us up on it, so that we can play our part, as small business people, in maintaining the fabric of our society.

Mr. President, I am obliged.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that further debate on this Resolution be postponed.

*The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Honourable Senate do now adjourn *sine die*.

*The question that the Honourable Senate do now adjourn sine die, was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.*  
5.16 p.m.

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