
THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1991 - 96

SENATE

Wednesday, February 17, 1993

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, February 17, 1993, at 11.15 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator M. deL. JORDAN, (President)
Senator J. J. PAYNE, (Deputy President)
Senator the Honourable L. V. H. LEWIS, G.C.M.,
(Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office), (Leader of the Senate);

Senator A. MORRISON;
Senator Mrs. V. C. FRASER, B.S.S., J.P., M.C.F.A.;
Senator A. J. N. PHILLIPS;
Senator the Honourable Dr. C. D. CLARKE,
(Minister of Labour, Consumer Affairs and the Environment);

Senator Dr. F. W. ALLEYNE;
Senator Miss Y. V. WALKES;
Senator Mrs. M. BARKER-WELCH;
Senator Mrs. A. STRAUGHN, G.C.M.;
Senator Mrs. M. WALCOTT, S.C.M.;
Senator W. LeR. INNIS;
Senator J. G. BELLAMY;
Senator J. A. F. COLE;
Senator T. E. BARKER; and
Senator T. C. BECKLES.

Prayers were led by Rev. Fr. Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, I am commanded to lay the following documents:

The Drug Abuse (Prevention and Control) Regulations, 1993;

The Drug Abuse (Notification of Addicts) Regulations, 1993;

The Annual Report of the Community Legal Services Commission, 1990-91.

MOTIONS

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Order 45(2) to enable us to deal completely with the Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill that is on the Order Paper for today.

The question was put and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, I move the First Reading of a Bill to amend the Co-operative Societies Act, 1990 in order to correct the errors which appear in the Act and also to include certain new provisions.

The question was put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO BORROW
1 400 000 ECUs FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr President, this Resolution is seeking authority to borrow the sum of 1 400 000 ECUs – 1 ECU is equivalent to BDS\$2.47 – to assist with the implementation of the Livestock Development Project.

The Livestock Development Project has among its major objectives the reducing of the dependence of Barbados on imported meat products by increasing the production of beef, sheep meat and pork and the revenue of small and lower income livestock farmers. It should be noted that the entire project will cost an estimated 4.487 million ECUs and will be implemented over a period of 4 years. The administration of the Project will be through a project management unit under the aegis of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.

On July 14, 1992, the Government of Barbados and the European Economic Community entered into a financing agreement to facilitate the start of implementation of this Project. Of the total cost of the project of ECU 4.487 million, the EEC will contribute ECU 1.075 million as a grant and ECU 1.400 million as a loan. The Government of Barbados will then be asked to contribute the remaining ECU 2.012 million for the total financing of the project. The Project is made up of 3 parts: grant funds, a loan, and out of the Consolidated Fund the Government of Barbados contributing the balance which is roughly about half.

The main components of the Project will consist of an investment component and this will include the refurbishment of building, the purchase of new vehicles and equipment and the establishment of new pastures. It will also contain a credit component and credit will be made available to the livestock farmers and will also include a technical assistance component. This will provide for the project management, the marketing and grading of meat and information transfer technology.

The purpose of the loan for the sum of ECU 1.400 million will be to assist with the implementation of the Livestock Development Project through the establishment of a credit facility which will be administered by the Central Bank of Barbados.
11.25 a.m.

Funds coming into the Central Bank for this project will be channeled by the Central Bank through the

commercial banking system and the Barbados Agricultural Society to eligible livestock farmers to facilitate the purchase of inputs, undertake small construction work and further assist the small farmers to purchase stock and fencing.

The amount owing on the proposed loan portion of the financing shall bear interest at the rate of 1% per annum to be paid bi-annually on June 1 and December 1. The loan will have a repayment period of 40 years including a grace period of 10 years. There can be no doubt that the terms and conditions of the loan are under very favourable and highly concessionary rates given a 40-year life, a 10-year grace period and a rate of interest of 1% per annum. But even of greater importance for us in this country is that the loan will be used for productive purposes.

As you are aware, Mr. President, and all other Honourable Members of this Chamber, are aware, or should be, this Government is seeking, as far as possible, to avoid the acquisition of foreign loans for other than productive purposes, that is, it is not prepared to seek foreign loans for consumption purposes but rather such foreign loans should be used more for investment purposes.

We do recognise, Sir, that foreign loans must be repaid in foreign currency and foreign currency will be earned mostly by the productive sectors. I am not trying to minimise the significant contribution made via unilateral transfers and I would hope we would get some more of these because we do not have to repay them.

Mr. President, it is not sufficient to state that a given project will save scarce foreign exchange. In my opinion, such a statement only tends to beg the question for there is but only one way for foreign exchange to be saved and that is, it must first be earned. In this project for which we are now seeking financing, the foreign exchange will be expended to import feeds, vehicles, equipment and fertilisers necessary to establish new pastures. The proceeds from the loan and grant will be used initially to offset the foreign components. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that eventually the servicing of this loan will require the earning of foreign exchange. It is for this reason, it is to be hoped, that the project administrators will seek to penetrate overseas markets for the products and so earn the necessary foreign exchange not only to service the loan but also to pay for raw materials such as feed, equipment and machinery which will be replaced over time and which will be required if the Project is to become and remain viable.

Mr. President, I do not think there is anything that should detain us too long with this measure. With

these few observations, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. President, again the Honourable Minister has spoiled what was a reasonable presentation by trying to hurry us out of here. We hardly meet so when we meet we have the people's business to attend to. We are not here to rush through what is very important business. We are serious people. We are on a serious mission. I wish the Honourable Minister would desist from making...

Mr. PRESIDENT: All right, Senator Barker. Get into your debate, please.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: I am into the debate.

Mr. PRESIDENT: That is not part of the debate.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: I am responding to what the Honourable Minister said.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No, no. That is for the President to determine. You will get into the debate. Do not give us a lecture on that, please.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, we are on important business on which I am not going to rush. In spite of what the Honourable Member said I am not going to rush it. I am entitled to speak for an hour and if I have to speak for an hour, I will speak for an hour.

Sir, Government is seeking to borrow money for the improvement of the livestock sector. On this side we have no problems whatsoever in supporting Government in this venture. We think it is a good venture. When we, meaning the party I represent, were in power, we started the whole ball rolling. We implemented measures to get the livestock industry to continue on a path of development by encouraging the industry. The improvement in the beef industry was due to our moves in the early 1980s so we have no problem supporting Government in trying to improve the livestock sector.

Sir, we are grateful that the EEC, in spite of the fact that this present Government almost soured our relationships *vis-a-vis* the Speightstown Project, is still willing to offer us, not only a grant, but almost a give-away loan because when we have a 1% interest rate, a 10-year grace period and over 30 years to pay the remainder it is, as the Honourable Minister said, at very concessionary rates and we are thankful for the EEC. All that is left for us to do now is to make good use of the 1.4 million ECUs they are lending us.

Sir, noting that one of the factors is the marketing and grading of meat, perhaps, the Honourable Minister in winding up could tell us what is the position with the abattoir. If you remember, Sir, we discussed that matter a year ago and up to now we have not heard anything concerning the abattoir, how far advanced the plans are, what is the likely date of the starting of the project and so on. Maybe the Minister in trying to rush through this presentation forgot to tell us what is the status of the proposed abattoir because if we are going to be talking about the marketing and grading of meat, especially if we want to get into the export market, we must have a properly functioning abattoir to help us in this regard. We are not going to improve the livestock sector substantially unless we get a proper functioning abattoir. So I am begging the Minister, when he comes to wind up to give us the latest on that project.

11.35 a.m.

Sir, in spite of the efforts that have been made *vis-a-vis* the livestock sector we are still in the situation where the cost of production for almost all types of meat is still, in my view, far too high because Sir, the pork processing industry has to import a portion of their raw materials because in order to compete they have to make use of cheaper inputs and they can get cheaper inputs from other countries in the region. I am not saying that our farmers are inefficient. I want to make this point clear that our farmers are not inefficient but the cost of inputs, especially the cost of feeds, is impacting severely on the cost of the product. It is not only the cost of feeds but the cost of energy and the cost of water are impacting negatively on the ability of the livestock sector to produce meat at a reasonable cost.

I want to state here that I am very impressed with the quality of lamb that we produce locally. The quality of lamb that we produce locally is far superior to that which we get from imported sources. The quality is there. The quality of beef, I am told, is also of good quality but the cost of production is a little bit out of line and this is something we will have to work on.

I want to suggest, Sir, that Government should again look at whatever taxes are paid on inputs because we hear so much about the New Zealand lamb and only recently I read that the chicken producers are complaining that they have so many chicken in cold storage and they are blaming the importation of lamb for part of their problem. Sir, we must remember that of late the housewife has been under severe pressure and faced with the alternative of paying over \$3 for a pound of chicken or over \$3 for a pound of locally produced lamb as against \$2 or \$1.99 for a pound of imported lamb. Even although it may be inferior the housewife, given the fact that her income is greatly reduced and given the fact that a lot of them are

unemployed and inspite of the fact that she may be putting Barbados first, it is a hard choice and a lot of them are opting for the cheaper meats.

Sir, I may agree with the Honourable Senator that it may be bad tasting but speaking from a position of a mother with 3 or 4 children to feed, little or no money coming in, they may have no option. Government may have to look at the tax structure on imported meat again. The Ministry of Agriculture may have to look again at using different types of feed. In other words, we may have to look at sugar cane as a sort of base for animal feed. I do not know what is the latest state of the comfith product. We have to look again at things like this in order to get a cheaper feed. Sir, those of us who know anything about rearing livestock will know that, take for example, Sir, things like chickens, the major thing with chicken is the feed. If we can get the feed down by 20 per cent well then we can seriously reduce the price of feed. I want, Sir, to again look at the feed issue and Government has got to see if they can find a way of reducing the feed. On this point I am a little bit sorry that Government has sold their shares in Barbados Mills because I always felt that the Government should be using the fact that they have a stake in that company to affect the operations of that company with a view to probably getting a cheaper supply of feed to our farmers. But the matter has been settled and the Government has already sold off their share in that viable operation so that they are not now in a strong position to affect the policy of that company. So I would encourage Government again to look at the feed problem.

Sir, I read only recently that one of the feed companies is seeking to reduce their price and they have promised that within a short time the price of feed will come down by a small amount so we want to see more progress in this important area.

Sir, I am glad that the project has as one of its objectives the establishment of new pastures. As we go about the country, especially in the Scotland area we see a lot of land which is probably unsuitable for sugar and so on. We see a lot of land going to ruin. I wonder, Sir, if Government could not use some of these funds in the Scotland area to make more pasture land available in the particular area. I know that Government owns a lot of land in the Scotland area - Bawdens and a few more plantations, right down to St. Andrew and maybe parts of St. Peter. Probably Government can use some of their lands to establish pasture land to help the livestock industry. Notice, Sir, that in Barbados we have the peculiar situation where a lot of our farmers are landless farmers. It is a fact of life that a lot of our farmers, with 3, 4 or 5 cows, do not have a square foot of land and they depend upon using government lands and other lands, sometimes legally or illegally for their animals.

Sir, they are doing the country a service. The lands are not otherwise being used so if they are using it I have no problem. What I have problems with is if they are using other people's land. But I believe that Government can use the acreage - in the Scotland area - to further develop proper pasture land.

Mr. PRESIDENT: All right, Senator Barker, you continue. Do not be distracted. Go ahead.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, I am not distracted. That is an area which Government has to look at.

Sir, there is an issue which I have raised and that is, we have to make a good distinction between land for agriculture and land for other purposes. The problem with Barbados is that there is not always a clear demarcation. I make this point, Sir, because the cost of land being what it is in Barbados is prohibitive when it comes to farming. It is pushing up the cost tremendously to the farmer and land, as we know, is one of the basic inputs in any farming operation especially when we talk about dairying and cattle rearing. So, the erosion of this line of demarcation between agricultural land and land for industrial and housing purposes tends to push up the cost of agricultural land because we know, Sir, land for industrial and housing purposes tends to fetch more on the market than land for agricultural purposes.

11.45 a.m.

I have always called, and will continue to call, for a proper land use policy so that the line of demarcation will be clearly drawn, with one part of land being primarily for agricultural purposes, another for industrial purposes and yet another for housing purposes. You will not get the merging of the sectors, as happens now, with the subsequent effect of pushing up the cost of land. If we can get the cost of land stabilised for the agricultural sector, that would mean a lot, especially to those who now want to get into the industry. We would then have a way of reducing the cost of production, because at the end of the day, with all the money we are putting into livestock development, we want to be in a position where the locally produced meat is around the same price as that from other sources, because the days of protectionism are coming to an end.

We have to ensure that all our industries are given the necessary help to make them competitive. As I said before, our livestock industry is not competitive, because only a few months ago when the Government was unwisely allowing the two fast food restaurants to import chicken, I am told that they were getting their chicken, having paid for it and having paid the necessary duties, at \$1 a

pound less than they were getting from the local processors. That is significant, because it means that the housewives and the consumers in Barbados are paying approximately \$1 a pound more for chicken than they could have got if they had imported chicken.

I am all for protecting local industry, but there comes a time when we have to ask the question: "Are the benefits derived from protection substantially less than the cost of the protection?" I believe in giving benefits in the short run, in helping industry in the short run, but not perpetually. You give them help, but at the same time you want to ensure that somewhere down the line as a result of new strains of cattle or whatever, better management and other practices, that they can get their prices in line with what obtains in the international community. That should be our goal and that is why I am glad the Government is borrowing money and is getting a grant in order for us to realise this goal. It must be the medium term goal to keep costs to the housewife down.

Sir, with those few words I want to support this Resolution and at the same time urge Government to keep on doing what they are doing, and even more, to make sure that the livestock industry remains viable, because it is to the benefit and advantage of all the citizens of Barbados.

Thank you.

SENATOR Dr. F. W. ALLEYNE: Mr. President, in rising to support this Resolution, let me say that I have a difficulty with some of the submissions made by Senator Barker. I want to make it clear that in the Government's agricultural policy, livestock being one part of it, crop production another part, I believe the Government has to draw a very clear line between policies to improve crop production and policies to stimulate livestock production.

What we have been seeing in Barbados is that some areas of livestock production, particularly poultry, have been doing well and have done well over the last 10 to 15 years. The same cannot be said for crop production. In fact, some of us have gone so far as to define agricultural production to include lands allocated for things like horse racing development, breeding and so on. While that is important for the economy, I do not consider that part of agricultural development.

It is my view that Government policy should set out in very clear terms the number of hectares of land which should be kept under crop production and how much should be kept for livestock production. The two should not be in competition although they are mutually supportive. They are mutually supportive in the sense that crop

production can provide the raw materials for livestock production, and livestock production in turn can provide the manure fertiliser for crops and we should not have a competition.

Let me say I have a difficulty in understanding the argument advanced by Senator Barker about reducing our dependence upon imported livestock products. It is all right to talk about this goal in a blanket fashion. If we look at Barbados and examine our food imports, we will see that about 70% are in four areas – cereals, meat and meat preparations, fish and fish preparations and dairy products. It is not accidental that this is so.

It does not make sense to spend a dollar in foreign exchange to save \$2.00 in foreign exchange. It is a basic fact which persons concerned with project selection have to take into consideration. Let us not try to produce another pound of mutton or pork and save a dollar of foreign exchange but in the process spend \$2.00 in foreign exchange to save that dollar. It just does not make sense. Our planners in Government and technical advisers have to be cognisant of that fact. We must not get into this business of import substitution unless we do the arithmetic. We have to get down to that and not be carried away by this populist notion that we are saving something because we are producing and not importing. Let us try and find out those areas in which we have a definite comparative advantage.

I have not done the numbers, but it would seem to me, Mr. President, that Barbados has an advantage in the area of the black belly sheep. They thrive in our conditions and the logical thing to do is to push resources behind the development of this particular area of our livestock.

Senator Barker spoke about the cost of inputs in livestock production and he pointed to this as a critical bottle neck in livestock development. This is a point with which I agree. It is a very critical constraint in livestock development, but the larger question has to be asked when we do the numbers as to whether livestock development is one of the critical areas into which Barbados should be putting its resources. Having resolved that question, then we start to subdivide the areas and decide which one of the areas we should get into.

11.55 a.m.

We link this matter of the cost of production with price. I want to say without any apology whatsoever that no country can talk about cheap food and at the same time hope to have a thriving farm sector. The days of cheap food are over. I do not know where Senator Barker got the notion that in Barbados farmers have to bring down prices in line with international world prices. We have to

ask ourselves what do international prices represent. Do they represent the true cost of production? On the basis of information available to me they do not.

What we in Barbados benefit from is a lot of the surplus production of New Zealand, Australia and Latin America which for them has a zero price. If they did not get rid of the commodity they would have to dump it. We cannot say that because we import the commodity at a particular price in Barbados that it represents the world price. What that represents is the price of dumping. If they did not put it off on us the return to them would be zero. In fact, in some cases, the return to them might be negative because it is the cost of disposing of it. If you store, there is a cost; but if you dispose of it, there is also a cost. We have to be very clear on that.

Access to these cheap meat imports may benefit the consumer in the short run but in the long run it is a serious brake on the development of your indigenous livestock. This business of using the import price to judge the efficiency of our farmers is something that we have to be careful about.

I do not believe that it is possible in a country like Barbados to stabilise the cost of land. I have listened to people with very little schooling and the advice which they give is if you have money to put down you should not put it in the bank but buy a piece of land. Land does not spoil. It will always increase in value.

I would like to know from Senator Barker how on earth you can stabilise the price of land. You cannot do it for the simple reason that the supply of land does not increase over time. The total supply of land in Barbados for all the competing uses is not going to increase, whether it is recreational, industrial, agricultural or residential. The total supply is not increasing but the total demand upon it is. Therefore, the price has to go up, bearing in mind in Barbados that the increasing demand on that land will not only come from those who live here but there are people outside of Barbados who will intervene and increase that demand. I believe that the wise thing for Government to do is to avoid meddling. I am not saying the Government is doing that at present. I would not like to see any Government in Barbados meddling in the business of controlling the price of land. Let the market determine what the price is.

I have said before, Mr. President, that I would wish to see a policy in Barbados where non-residents have access to land in Barbados on a lease basis. It could be a 99-year lease which is renewable as long as that land is used for productive purposes. The business of coming into Barbados or staying out of Barbados and buying large

tracts of land as land banks and leaving them I am totally against.

Mr. President, this Resolution before us, as Senator Barker has said, is one which we can acclaim. It is not contentious. It is in the interest of Barbados. Senator Barker focuses a lot upon feeding stuff and the cost of feeding stuff, but I am sure the experts in the area of livestock development will also point to other critical constraints such as the timely provision of veterinary services and medicine.

Research is very critical. Fortunately, Barbados has some excellent people doing research on animal diseases in the laboratory at the Pine. I am sure all of us know that from time to time some diseases and pests have threatened to wipe out the livestock population. At present, it is the Bont tick which is threatening to wipe out the livestock population in certain parts of Barbados. Some years ago it was Swine fever. Fortunately, in Barbados we have researchers in this area, some of whom have received international acclaim to the credit of Barbados.

I would like to think that these resources which are made available to the Government will be used to support the areas of livestock development which have potential for future development, that we will not just take this money and throw a little of it across the place in the way one would throw scratch grain to fowls in the yard.

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

SENATOR Mrs. M. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I would like to say how welcome this loan plan is. I admire the attractive terms which have been obtained. The standard of meat in Barbados is highly improved and I think we can be proud of that too. It is very encouraging to think that this investment and development can be used to improve the products of the land.

What worries me and has for a long time is the way in which animals are brought to the abattoir. I am wondering if proper vehicles or proper transportation could not be arranged. I have been quite sick to see on the road a young bull being pushed into a tiny truck and electrical encouragement being used to get him in there. He screamed, and when he got in, there was still no room for him. I think this cruelty to animals is not desirable and I hope that something can be done to improve that part of the industry because this is what it is for since the animals are being reared for meat production.

I am also glad to see that the Barbados Agricultural Society is brought into the plan because they deal with small farmers and are already dealing with loans and

they provide marketing and advice. I am sure their know-how will help use this money wisely. Right now I understand they do not have many bad debts and this is encouraging to think that we are borrowing money and it is being well spent.

When I was checking on this Resolution, I understood that previously there was a land development fund of some million dollars and previous to that CIDA provided a dairy revolving fund. What I would like to know is whether money is still in these funds and if they will be incorporated into this new investment and development plan for livestock in Barbados.

With those few remarks, Mr. President, I support the Resolution.
12.05 p.m.

SENATOR Mrs. V. C. FRASER: Mr. President, I am particularly happy, despite all the adverse comments, that nobody would help Barbados at this time, we are seeing that some people feel Barbados deserves assistance. I particularly want to congratulate the European Economic Community for assisting Barbados in this particular venture which is so necessary.

I should like to point out to Senator Barker that the European Economic Community has not only been assisting Government but it has been assisting private sector persons like the National Development Foundation both in grants and for on lending especially in the area of farming and also to people who are involved in the small agro-processing business.

I am very interested in the point made about animals being taken to the abattoir. That is why I stressed the need for training farmers and the various people who sell the meat. All these people should be properly trained. I think the people who transport the animals and the farmers from whose places they come should be taught how to handle the animals properly and what sort of transportation should be used. This is something I have voiced in other areas and I continue to voice it. I am not satisfied that the best thing is done. I too see some of them suffering from shock when they reach the abattoir. Sometimes, because of that shock, these animals may even be disqualified by the veterinary surgeon who examines them before they can be slaughtered to see whether they have any diseases or anything like that. That can affect the heart, as I have been told by the veterinary people. Whereas the animal could be quite healthy but because of that heat on the street, plus the shock the animal can suffer, it could cause the animal to be refused. If we want this to be realistic, we must look at all aspects of the development of the livestock industry.

The livestock industry, to my mind, Mr. President, has great potential for Barbados. I think in the years we have been able to be self-sufficient in pork products, and we have such a factory that is turning out all the various pork products, sausages, *et cetera* that were dreamt of in Barbados years ago, we never were able to get down to this kind of processing.

I think somebody like Mr. John Gray should be congratulated because he did work very hard in getting this idea across to the people of Barbados. You can make your own sausages, bacon and hams. I was happy to hear that last Christmas not one ham was imported from anywhere. They were all local. It shows you the potential. We are exporting some things to Trinidad as well. I am saying this because if people feel there is no potential in this, there is.

We have to think about the farmers. It is all right to say we are buying New Zealand lamb. Have we counted the cost in terms of seeing what we are buying for our hard earned money? We have done several exercises in the Nutrition Centre where we have removed the fat and bone and weighed it to see what was left. In fact, what are you paying for? Nothing really because there is very little meat. If people would do some of these exercises they would realise if they are getting value for money. It is all right to say how cheap it is but what are you buying?

When you buy fresh black belly lamb you know you are getting a good fresh product. You also know you are getting meat to eat. Now, if you buy the one for soup, that is a different cut. If you buy a nice piece of mutton, it is tasty, good and fresh. It is very nutritious but that fatty lamb surely is not nutritious because you are going to eat all the fat and when you eat the fat there is no nutrition but getting fat. If we want to protect our people through this particular industry we have to give them quality.

As far as I know, the persons at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, people like young Michael Hunte, are working very hard at producing quality animals. We have had geneticists from Ireland who have been looking at cross-breeding to get the best quality. They have been very satisfied. I attended a seminar right here in Barbados at the Hilton Hotel where they were all very satisfied with the quality of animals we have been able, with limited resources, to produce in this country. They think the Barbadian black belly sheep, which is supposed to be unique, has some characteristics. Although other people have tried to copy and take our black belly sheep, they cannot get it work like ours so God has blessed us with something that is pretty unique. I agree with Senator Alleyne that we need to pay more attention to that particular aspect of meat, that is, mutton. It is nutritious and it is good for people who are not going to eat red meats.

Also, I am sorry we are not able in this particular case... I have not seen it mentioned but the rabbit industry can be a very healthy one. They multiply very rapidly and the cost of feed is very cheap – green bushes in the main. Rabbit meat is very costly in the supermarkets. I think we should be aiming at pushing along with other livestock like rabbits and ducks. They do not need any high-cost feed to keep them looking good, as you know.

Duck meat is also very expensive as well and is a kind of livestock for the hotel industry. Rabbit and duck are treated very high class especially for certain restaurants which serve duck with orange and so on. People who come from various places and they know you have nice duck and orange would very much want to take it from you in your hotel industry in Barbados. I hope some consideration would be given to rabbits and ducks in this process.

A lot of publicity has gone on pork and pork products and I think we are fairly well on that. What we need to do is to look again at the river tamarind, confith, urea, molasses and all these various things that some small farmers are doing right now. We need to look at it again so we can cut down on our feed cost. We need to look at corn. There are several things in Barbados of high protein content which our animals can be fed on and we do not have to import the large quantity of feed which increases the cost of production.

I do not particularly agree with the statement made here today. I hope I did not get the wrong impression. But it was implied that we should import everything and forget trying here. To me that would be the biggest foolishness.

I am not saying anything about you, Senator Barker. I think I was a little bit disagreeing with Senator Alleyne.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Do not address Senator Barker.

SENATOR Mrs. V. C. FRASER: I was addressing you, Mr. President, and not really him. I was just saying I was not sure I understood that because I feel that if your country makes something a dollar more... It seems we are only concentrating on the gaining of foreign exchange but we must also concentrate on the saving of foreign exchange. This is a very important point. Everybody, as you talk to them, seem to be getting all caught up with the making of foreign exchange. But what about the saving? If the merchants can sell something that is local (because a lot of the supermarkets sell local vegetables and local meat (different things) they do not have to import it. So even a dollar more that dollar is going to pay the cost of plucking the chickens, the people who are

preparing them for the supermarkets and the people in the supermarket who are selling. It is keeping those people employed. But when we import things it is keeping the other people employed. We have an unemployment situation in Barbados and we must be realistic. Therefore it means that we must look in every corner to see where we can save foreign exchange in the country and stop it from going out.

12.15 p.m.

We have to look at this in the tourism industry and I have noticed and must say, congratulations to those hoteliers who are serving the Barbados Black Belly lamb and who are buying the local beef rather than imported beef. You have to take your hats off to those hoteliers who are buying the local chicken and the local lamb and utilising them in the tourist industry which is so important to the country. If the cost of the meat to the hoteliers is reasonable (and I believe it is reasonable since I have not heard any complaints) they know they will use 6 ounces per person or whatever and they work out all their costs. And if they are buying the commodity it means that it is redounding to the good of keeping the workers in the hotels, because if you have not got any people coming in to buy food (which is about 50 per cent of the hotel costs) and if you cannot make back that 50 per cent and you cannot make it back by buying local meats because most of the people look for meat on the buffet table, then it means in fact that you are not making any money and you will have to turn off those people from the kitchen and then what you may well do is offer a room and that is all. Now we do not want to see that in Barbados. We do not want to see good chefs and kitchen workers who are valuable to this economy going home. We want to see them employed. Therefore it behoves us to look at small efficiently run livestock industries, get a number of people who are retired, who have been schooled, or who have had the experience in the area of agriculture and livestock to assist these small farmers to help them to know when to de-worm their sheep, how to look after the after-birth and things like that. These are things that we must help each other with. So we need a cadre of people who do not necessarily have to come from anywhere else in the world. For God's sake let them be a cadre of Barbadians who will volunteer their services in the various country districts around the island to assist people. Practical training is what we need. I heard one fellow on the radio saying that he mixes a feed and he has been going around selling it to other small farmers. I thought that was an excellent idea. With his molasses and his cane tops and different things which he puts in it, he has been showing other farmers how to do this mix and it has been working very well for him and for them. We saw some of those animals at different shows. I am saying that the same way, he as a small individual, is doing that to help small farmers I think we should look at it in its totality and have an agency assign people. Now he is not doing it for money.

There are people who have knowledge and they want to help but they are never asked. So it might be nice to ask Mr. So and So who is retired and knows a lot about agriculture, "Would you like to come and help to talk to these farmers out here?"

And, most of all, we want to see that the livestock farmers get themselves involved in co-operatives because there are many advantages in the co-operative movement. I think that is one of the things Barbadians who are into agriculture need to do so that we can buy together, we can learn and share our experiences together as a group and we are doing this for the upliftment of Barbados.

Mr. President, I feel, Sir, that this is as good a time as any for us as Barbadians to realise how important the livestock industry will be and has been for this country. I am looking forward, Sir, with great pleasure to the further development of this industry through this loan and I support it in totality.

I am proud to see that Barbados would have shown initiative in order to get the EEC to lend them money because you do not get that money easily. I know because I have gone in search of it and was successful in getting it. I know it is not something you get except they check and see that you can really utilise their money to benefit your country.

I want to say we should thank them graciously and the money should be utilised properly. I hope that we do not tax our farmers too heavily and that the interest rates on loans to farmers might be fairly reasonable since we are going to get this money at very low interest rates and we will have a moratorium as well.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Clarke.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Thank you, Mr. President, just a few observations I want to make. I believe it was Senator Barker who raised the question of the abattoir and I believe it was about a month or 2 ago that the Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office gave a lengthy discourse on the state of abattoirs in Barbados. I would not want to go over that ground at this point in time.

Senator Walcott raised the question of the dairy revolving fund and as far as I know this was being administered by the Barbados National Bank of Barbados and I believe it is still in place. Some farmers who had used the services of it have not really made repayment on

a timely basis and this has always created problems for revolving funds to continue revolving but as a matter of policy I think it is still in existence.

Just with those 2 observations I would like to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Phillips you may not speak after the Minister.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 3 – TO MOVE THE SECOND READING
OF A BILL TO AMEND THE CO-OPERATIVE
SOCIETIES ACT, 1993

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Lewis.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, this Bill before us today comes at a time when there is much movement towards the development of co-operatives in this country of ours.
12.25 p.m.

It will be recalled, Mr. President, that in 1990 Parliament passed the Co-operative Societies Bill, 1990–23 which was subsequently assented to by the Governor-General on 6th August, 1990 and gazetted on 13th August, 1990. However, that piece of legislation has never been proclaimed. Indeed, Mr. President, since the passing and gazetting of that Co-operative Societies Act, a number of omissions and errors have been discovered in the Act and were brought to the attention of the Attorney General's Chambers. The consequence is that we have before us today this Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill which seeks to correct those errors which were made in the original Act, and also, at the same time, there is included certain new provisions.

The errors were in the main minor in nature and relate to several sections. These sections are 7, 27, 34, 35, 85, 87, 88, 89, 113, 115, 129 and 130. In most cases the amendments are simple amendments, some are obviously typist's devil. In one case the word "is" is deleted and the word "in" substituted.

There are other amendments which relate specifically to new subsections, as in the case of section 3 of the Act in which at subsection(1)(a) there is a new subsection (2), which provides that subsections 211 to 217 of the Act shall apply to all societies referred to in subsection (1). Then after section 10 there is inserted a new subsection 10A which makes provision for amendments of by-laws of a registered society. This insertion is considered necessary

so that co-operative societies may properly amend their by-laws and submit them to the Registrar of Co-operatives. There is provision for an appeal against the refusal by the Registrar to register any amendments and there is provision that where the Registrar registers an amendment, he shall issue a copy of the amendment, certified, to the co-operative society requesting the amendment. This is an important requirement and provision.

Section 55 of the principal Act is amended by deleting certain words referring to the bonus or dividend appearing in paragraph (a) of subsection (5).

Section 56 of the principal Act is amended by the deletion of certain words in the fourth line of paragraph (d) of subsection (1), by deleting subsection (3) and substituting a new subsection relating to the by-laws of the society, which shall provide for a rotation of directors and no director to be elected for more than two consecutive terms. This is considered to be a very necessary provision to ensure that persons do not entrench themselves as directors of co-operative societies and remain in those positions for indefinite periods, and indeed for extended periods, to the detriment of the society.

Section 95 of the principal Act is also amended by inserting after subsection (4) a new subsection (5) which provides that where the Registrar does not approve a by-law the society may appeal to the Co-operative Societies Appeals Tribunal within such time and in such manner as may be prescribed.

There is also provision, Mr. President, for an amendment coming immediately after section 164, which has several subsections. There is a new 164A which provides for the power of the Registrar for the inspection of books, records, papers, securities, *et cetera* of co-operative societies, and there is provision also that every officer is required to furnish such information in regard to transactions and workings of the society as the person making such inspection may require, and there is provision that persons who refuse or contravene subsection (2) will be guilty of an offence.

By proceeding with these amendments, Mr. President, and indeed by also bringing before Cabinet the regulations under the Co-operative Societies Act, we are now at a stage which will permit for the amendment to be gazetted, for the principal Act to be proclaimed and for the regulations to come into force. This will now permit the full implementation of the revamped co-operative societies laws of this country, which have been long in coming, but which are indeed an absolute necessity if Government and its agency, the Co-operatives Department, is to respond to certain published alleged infelicities relating to the activities of at least two co-operative societies, the members of which are persons who serve in the public sector.

Co-operatives in Barbados, when one considers the existing state of the economy, provide a grand opportunity for small persons and individuals who are involved in business to form themselves into co-operatives in the livestock sector, as was debated earlier this morning in relation to livestock development. This is an avenue through which livestock farmers may bind themselves together. It provides an opportunity for persons who are into fishing to develop their co-operatives under these new regulations and, indeed, it provides for an activity recently floated, that of the co-operators general insurance organisation, and it provides also further opportunities for the farming community to become involved in co-operatives, and I think especially of certain overtures which are being made to see whether or not co-operatives may not get involved in agro processing activities within this country of ours.

It is with my knowledge of these concerns, Mr. President, that it gives me pleasure to move the Second Reading of this Bill to amend the Co-operative Societies Act. I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

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

12.35 p.m.

COMMITTEE

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 10 were called and passed.

Clauses 11 - 21 were called and passed.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Senate do now adjourn *sine die*.

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

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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ALLEYNE, Senator Dr. F. W.
BARKER, Senator T. E.
CLARKE, Senator the Hon. Dr. C. D.
FRASER, Senator Mrs. V. C.
LEWIS, Senator the Hon. L. V. H.
WALCOTT, Senator Mrs. M.