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DISCUSSION REPORT (Papers by Mr. C. Martin and Mr. G. Daniel)

The factors bearing on the working of the Agricultural Protocol were set out as follows:-

1. lack of marketing information
2. lack of communication and storage
3. dual pricing policies
4. lack of coordination of production and marketing ends
5. lack of port quarantine facilities.

Further, the performance was affected by the inability of banks to finance capacity and by the impact of 'political' decisions.

The role of Carifta in economic integration was discussed: all West Indian territories have goal of self-sufficiency based on a policy of import substitution and export promotion. However, these goals are inconsistent with Carifta's goal of promoting intra-regional trade -- encouraging the smaller islands to produce these commodities in which they have a comparative advantage. The projected rationalisation study would not provide the answer -- the matter was quite complex. It would be extremely difficult, for example, to tell farmers what to produce even though the decision as to what they should produce may have been reached on the basis of the principle of comparative advantage.

There was an obvious need for an independent authority for exports outside the Region. Demand in the Region was not large enough. The impact of 'political' decisions might be important here. Have development objectives of Carifta been realised? Take export promotion and the impact on employment -- there is little evidence of success here. Import substitution is more likely to be successful in the short run.

Next discussed was the development in St. Vincent as a supplier of sweet potatoes to Trinidad. What was the importance of transport problems in the earlier days? Currently, were higher prices in Trinidad and Tobago encouraging local production there thereby eliminating St. Vincent's exports? With the high prices rising in the Trinidad and Tobago domestic production, and with supplies from St. Vincent added to local production, glut conditions were created.

Martin's paper was seen as a plea for diversification. Both papers argued for multiplying the number of crops. There was some discussion of forward linkages -- arrowroot packaging, plantain chips, ham and bacon and salted nuts.

The reintroduction of cotton in programmes of diversification was discussed. The estate structure might be appropriate for production but several problems would still remain such as pests and high cost of harvesting.