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OPENING CEREMONY

OPENING REMARKS

Mr. W.F. Dore

(Chairman of the Local Organising Committee and
Chief Executive Officer, The National Agricultural Corporation,
St. Kitts)

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellency and Lady Inniss, Honourable Ministers of Government and Religion, Distinguished Guests, Participants at this Conference.

My task is very simple: I am to welcome you here this evening. I recognise I have two kinds of people to welcome, those of you who are touching the shores of this State for the first time and those of you who live in the State but are participating in this Conference. In case you do not know it, you are actually functioning in what the Carib before us called Liamuiga the fertile island, St. Kitts and our sister island of Nevis. We both know mineral resources as some of the larger territories in the region. We, however, boast two special resources: one, our people, and two, our land; and we are of the firm view that these two ingredients can make the kind of pie which can in fact give a reasonably good life to the people of the State. The theme of the Conference is 'Utilising Agricultural Resources for Economic Well-Being' and I believe that this is within our capabilities.

For those of you who have come from the far-flung parts of the Caribbean, I don't know if you recognise it, but we here live in what can be called, quite truly, the international quarter of the Caribbean. Just next door to us, we have French territories and Dutch territories and territories belonging to the United States of America and you may wonder of what significance is that to us. They dwarf us; because if you pass through St. Maarten, Saba, St. Eustatius or the United States Virgin Islands, you can see development which comes not from the funds raised in the country but from the Metropolitan or whatever other name you want to call those countries. So that if you see an airfield being built in St. Maarten, very likely it is the European Economic Community's money, whereas, in St. Kitts, it would be construction being done by funds which the Government had borrowed to be paid back sometimes at a painful interest level.

Now whom am I welcoming here this afternoon? If you go through the list of participants who have come in from as far afield as Canada, you will discover that we have an array of expertise in agriculture and related disciplines. You will discover that, probably for the first time in the history of this State and maybe not again, we have a concourse of experts who are going to assemble here to put a scrutiny on the agricultural activity of the State and attempt to provide us with a blueprint for agricultural advance. I know you must have heard the various descriptions and definitions of experts. I will not bore you with any, save to tell you that these experts will produce some ideas, some plans, some pieces of paper and when they shall have done their work it will be the business of ordinary mortals like you and me to put those plans whether into policies or on the ground to make them fructify and produce the sugar, the vegetables and the meat which we need to feed ourselves leaving a small surplus, perhaps for export.

The State of St. Kitts, Nevis and Anguilla is a small State, but it is a proud State. It has a long history; we think it is checkered, but we think it is delightful. As I welcome you here, I should like you to savour all of the delights which come not only from your Conference and your participation with the delegates, but I should like you to visit the places of historic interest, and there are quite a few. I am quite certain when you return to your homeland, you will be the better educated for your visit here.

I find it peculiarly interesting that at this time in 1978 we are collecting a panoply of experts from across the Caribbean region who will be attempting to do in St. Kitts something which I imagine would have been more easily done had we had one solid Government in the region. We had one, we destroyed it, but we still need it. Organizations like the Caribbean Agro-Economic Society and several others which have gone before them - the Caribbean Union of Teachers - for one, which had been with us since the 1930's, are to my mind, the living links which still keep our peoples in the region together. I should like to suggest that those of us who are members of the Caribbean Agro-Economic Society be not weary in well doing but continue to strive, if not at a political level, at several other levels where it really matters to bring the peoples of the region together.

It will be amiss of me in welcoming you here this evening not to mention the labours of a hard working band of people called the Local Organizing Committee who have functioned to be able to present to you what we are going to have this evening and during the coming week. I do not intend to tell you about these people individually, nor do I intend to tell you individually about some ladies and gentlemen who will be our liaison officers during the week. We are not going to guarantee you bliss because this is not heaven. We are not going to guarantee you to solve your problems. What we will guarantee you is to assist you to surmount these problems and, if you cannot surmount them, to move around them. We have a Secretariat established and I think it is reasonably efficient. If you want something, ask there for the help which can be given.

Finally, I know that you will be regaling yourselves with a number of the various beverages that we have got in the region. Let me briefly tell you about one which you might try. My good friend, Sandy MacDonald, who is the Executive Secretary of the Association, had been visiting here over the last few months almost weekly and while we have been sitting at the airport in the lounge trying to see how we could while away the time, Sandy has discovered a new drink called Bing. Bing, you see, is made from Ting and Beer. Ting we have got from Jamaica. Now for those of you who want stronger beverages, I should like to suggest Bring, which is an amalgamation of Brandy and Ting. If you want something more potent, I suggest a Wing, which is a Whiskey and Ting. But if you do not like these powerful libations I should like to suggest that you take an ordinary Cola with Ting and make yourself Cing. Have a cup ... Thank you very much. This is a commercial you see. This is thanking in advance the local bottlers and brewers for the hefty cases of Ting which they will be giving to the Conference.

Have a happy Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen, deepening the friendships and attachments which you have had before, which you have made already, and which I am confident you are going to make during the week and widen the integration process in the Caribbean.

Welcome to St. Kitts, Nevis and Anguilla.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Dr. Basil Springer
(President, Caribbean Agro-Economic Society)

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Honourable Minister, Our Guest Speaker, Members of the Society, Conference Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Caribbean Agro-Economic Society, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Thirteenth West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference. The Society was very happy to respond to the invitation of the Government of St. Kitts/Nevis/Anguilla to hold this Conference, especially since it is the first time that a Conference in this series will be held in St. Kitts.

The marvellous co-operation that we have had from many individuals in both the public and private sectors in St. Kitts and Nevis, during the design and organizational stages of this Conference, augurs well for its success.

The theme of the Conference, 'Utilising Agricultural Resources for Economic Well-Being', was chosen by the host Government. The Society has assembled a programme designed to focus on a strategy for the development of the agricultural sector in St. Kitts and Nevis with particular emphasis being placed on the utilisation of the available natural, human, physical and financial resources for the optimal socio-economic benefits of the State.

A mere acquaintance with the history of agricultural development in the Caribbean will undoubtedly reveal that the slow rate of development of a successful production and marketing system for food commodities, compared with the system for traditional export commodities, cannot necessarily be blamed on the lack of input of financial resources. What is probably true, however, is that the allocation of these financial resources, within the agricultural economy, has not been as balanced as it could have been.

Moreover, a weakness in the development process has been the failure to develop, combine and maintain available resources in an optimal manner so as to provide the necessary balance of these resources required to create the nucleus from which the development process might evolve.

Being cognizant of the aforementioned constraints, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Society has prepared a programme around the theme of the Conference which exposes a full spectrum of issues for discussion of participants during the technical - both plenary and workshop - sessions of the Conference.

The topics to be presented and discussed at the Conference are not only those with specific relevance to proposing a strategy for agricultural development in the host country but also those of general interest in the agricultural development scenario in the Caribbean.

The general topics presented will include:-

- "Management and its Importance in all Aspects of Caribbean Agriculture";
- "The Role of Research in Agricultural Development in the Caribbean";
- "The New Role of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute";

"A Look at the Activities of Regional Institutions Associated with Agricultural Development";
"The Future of Sugar in a Small-State Economy";
"Alternative Uses of Sugar Cane"; and
"Motivating Forces for Self Employment in Agriculture".

Topics which are specifically related to the host country include:-

"The Policy and Institutional Arrangements";
"The Sugar Sub-sector";
"Production of Non-sugar Agricultural Commodities";
"Marketing of Non-sugar Agricultural Commodities";
"Changes in the Plantation System of St. Kitts and the Workers' Response";
"Constraints to Agricultural Development in St. Kitts/Nevis"; and
"Productivity, Efficiency and Marketed Surplus".

A background document containing factual information related to the agricultural sector in St. Kitts/Nevis has also been prepared.

The discussions and deliberations at the Conference will be condensed into a final presentation on the last day, when draft proposals for a strategy for the agricultural development of St. Kitts/Nevis will be presented.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Annual Conference is currently the only major activity of the Caribbean Agro-Economic Society. The objects of the Society, however, permit a wide range of activities in the field of agricultural development. Our efforts so far have been limited to this one activity partially because of the absence of a full-time professional Secretariat of the Society and also owing to the lack of National Chapters of the Society in each of the territories in the Caribbean Community to stimulate interest at times other than at our Annual Meeting. Efforts have been made to remove these constraints but the process is slow.

Some progress has been made in our efforts to publish a journal of the Society and the publication date for the first bi-annual issue is set for April, 1979. Another project which is likely to be favourably considered by a funding agency is a project to assess and review the body of information contained in the first twelve proceedings of the Conference series with a view to organizing, condensing, and usefully presenting this information in a single volume.

On behalf of the Society, Ladies and Gentlemen, I should like to take this opportunity to thank Rockefeller Brothers' Fund for providing a grant to the Society to enable it to establish a temporary Secretariat. Without this support, which allowed the Society to employ a temporary Executive Secretary and a part-time Secretary/Stenographer, the Executive Committee would have been extremely hard pressed to discharge, albeit only partially, the mandate from the members of the Society.

The Department of Agricultural Economics and Farm Management at the University of the West Indies at St. Augustine, who were the first sponsors and organisers of this Conference Series, continue to provide faithful support to the Society in publishing the Annual Proceedings.

Once again may I express the appreciation of the Society to the Government of St. Kitts/Nevis/Anguilla for their invitation and for their financial support.

The Local Organizing Committee in St. Kitts, assembled from several spheres within the community and under the Chairmanship of the Vice-President of the Society, had competently and freely made a tremendous effort to stage this Conference.

To the Chairman, Your Excellencies, Honourable Minister, we deeply appreciate your presence here this evening, which we interpret as a symbol of sincere support to the activities of the Society.

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen, we thank you all for lending your presence to this opening ceremony and may I invite all Conference Delegates, on behalf of the Society, to participate fully in both the technical and social programmes during the Conference Week. Thank you.

MINISTER'S SPEECH

Hon. E. St. John Payne

(Minister of Agriculture, Lands, Housing and Labour, St. Kitts)

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellency and Lady Inniss, Cabinet Colleagues, Dr. Basil Springer, President of the Caribbean Agro-Economic Society, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen. My first duty this evening is to welcome all of you officially, on behalf of the Government and people of the State of St. Kitts/Nevis/Anguilla, to this the Thirteenth West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference. We are extremely grateful for the opportunity to act as host to this Thirteenth West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference and it is our intention to ensure that everything which is humanly possible will be done to make your visit to these shores memorable and enjoyable.

One year ago, the Government offered and the Society accepted the invitation to host its annual Conference in 1978 in St. Kitts. It is my view that this Conference has come at a critical period in our economic and social development - critical because the Conference has been convened at a time when there is great public debate about the structure and function of agriculture in this State and in the Region. The discussion is concerned with the role of sugar in the economies of the Region, the use of sugar cane for animal feed and the possibilities of its future diversification and development. Some individuals have even questioned the usefulness of the industry and have challenged its existence.

The importance of the Conference also relates to the fact that Governments in the Region have been giving more and more attention to the need to develop a functional type of agriculture. It is recognised that there is no logic in trying to produce all the agricultural products which are possible within a given environment and that a certain amount of specialisation of effort is essential. I believe that it is in recognition of this that so much time and so much effort have been expended in the development of a Caribbean Food Plan and other similar exercises.

We in this country have always recognised the need to increase our local food production and to use what we produce. We have also recognised our failures and limitations in this area, and the sudden development of our tourist industry within recent times has laid bare the paucity of our situation for all to see. I believe that your Conference this week can help to provide the confidence which our people need if they are to grapple successfully with the task ahead.

It is well-known throughout the Region that the Government of this State is second to none in its support for agriculture and agricultural development. The Government's spokesmen have on numerous occasions held to the view that agriculture is the most important industry in this State and in the Region. History will also show that the Government has not only talked about the importance of agriculture, but it has taken every opportunity which has presented itself to support agriculture using the limited financial and human resources at its command. With such a history, it is easy to understand the seriousness with which the Government and people of this country have taken the theme of this Conference, which, may I remind you, is, "Utilizing Agricultural Resources for Economic Well-being".

Insofar as this State is concerned, sugar is the mainstay of the economy. The Sugar Industry in the State reached its peak in the 1950's when 53,000 tons of sugar were produced, but declined all through the 1960's and early 1970's to a low of 23,000 tons of sugar.

The Industry provides approximately 40 per cent of the employment available, between 30 - 40 per cent of Government revenue and about 80 per cent of our exports. The Sugar Industry has served this country well. Nevertheless, it is my view and that of the Government that it is urgently necessary for us to try wherever possible to diversify our agriculture. We would, therefore, expect you, in your consultations, discussions and deliberations, to pay specific attention to the ways and means by which we may use the raw materials and other resources of the Sugar Industry in new and different ways to provide new avenues for employment and economic development.

Insofar as non-sugar agriculture is concerned, we have tried over a long period to diversify this aspect of our agricultural production. We have continued to produce food for the local market. Unfortunately, we have not been able to provide a consistency in quality and quantity throughout the year. Nevertheless, this is an area of production to which the Government is committed and in which it will have to renew its efforts. The latest trade figures show that 20 per cent of our imports are of food. Put another way, we imported into the State just over \$10,000,000 worth of food and food products. It is my view and the view of the Government that it is possible for us to find adequate substitutes and replacements at home. I would therefore expect that, as part of your activities this week, you will make it your duty to look at possible avenues and situations where import substitution and import replacement can be of use in a developing economy like ours.

It is clear that a serious approach to the job at hand must lead you into avenues concerned with marketing and transport of agricultural products. These two areas, together with the training and development of manpower, are probably three of the most difficult aspects of the Conference in respect of which you may be called upon to exercise your judgement during the coming week. We recognize these difficulties but hope that you will be in a position to make some recommendations as to how we may improve the situation.

As I understand it, the deliberations of this Conference will ultimately come to the Government in the form of a set of recommendations and advice. It is my hope that those recommendations will be useful, practical and to the point. I also hope that individuals here at this Conference and the Society as a whole will find it convenient to make their skills and/or resources available to us if called upon so to do. I, for my part and on behalf of the Government of this State, wish to make it perfectly clear that we take your offer to discuss our problems and to provide advice seriously. We are prepared to look at your advice and recommendations with an open mind and to adopt, amend or modify your recommendations to suit the circumstances of our situation. We believe that as responsible men of affairs in the Region you will do your duty to this country and to the Caribbean.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, my real function is officially to declare this Conference open. Before doing so, I wish to welcome you again and to hope that all our overseas comrades, friends and colleagues will feel themselves at home and conduct themselves accordingly.

I now have the greatest pleasure in declaring this the Thirteenth West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference officially open.

FEATURE ADDRESS:

MANAGEMENT AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN ALL ASPECTS OF CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURE

J.A. Bergasse

(Acting Executive Director, CARDI, Trinidad)

I am deeply honoured to have been asked to present the feature address at the opening of the Annual Conference of the Caribbean Agro-Economic Society. My address, as you are well aware, is on the subject of "Management and Its Importance in All Aspects of Caribbean Agriculture". This is a wide subject and, today, I will try to cover as much of it as I can. I cannot stress enough the importance of management and its applicability irrespective of the sector of any economy and/or sphere of operations. Statistics indicate that 80 per cent of the causes of business failures can be attributed to poor or inadequate management. To appreciate its importance one must understand what is meant by management and its various techniques. I am not an expert on it, as I am still learning but I can speak with some authority having been involved in it at the most senior governmental level for the past nine years. One should never be trapped into thinking that one is an expert and does not need to learn any more about a particular field. No one ever knows all that there is to know about any one subject. I am not here to *tell but to share* my experiences. In effect I should like to plant the seed. Hopefully, it will germinate and grow to full maturity and production.

We all talk very loosely about "management" and "managers" but do we really know what these words mean? The dictionary defines management as "an act of conducting and/or administering by the skilful use of the means and techniques available" and a manager as one who carries out the above function. What exactly do we mean by that? And what precisely does a manager do? To arrive at an answer it is useful to distinguish between a businessman or entrepreneur and a manager. A businessman is essentially the man or the small group of men at the top of any company who personally takes the financial and/or legal responsibility for the success or failure of the company. He sets policy, that is, he decides the purpose of the company and how it is going to achieve that purpose. I have used the terms "businessman" and "company" but the same analogy would apply to governments and/or institutes. Now, many of these decisions are moral and/or political ones and are made on the basis of personal feelings. No science on earth, no mathematical equation and no management technique can tell a businessman/politician whether his decisions are right or not, for they are moral and/or political and not always logical. Management techniques cannot handle these kinds of decisions. These are the *most difficult* kinds of decisions.

A manager, on the other hand, is paid to achieve the ends set for him by the entrepreneur, i.e. to decide upon the most effective action to achieve an objective and to see that the action is carried out as *efficiently* as possible. I should point out, here, that one man can be both the entrepreneur and the manager at the same time. This is particularly applicable in the agricultural sector of our economy where we have owner/operators of farms. To enable him to do that, there are management techniques that he can use.

Every book on management extols the virtues of management techniques and/or practice; every speaker at a conference recognizes that the greater use of these techniques could almost overnight improve the efficiency of every organization - large, medium or small - by leaps and bounds. Everyone recognizes and pays homage to their power and potential - but no one seems to have said what a management technique is. A management technique is a method of analysing or solving a management problem in a detailed systematic way. There are many techniques and it would be impossible for me to cover them here, but let me stress again that all techniques, no matter what, depend on a systematic approach. There is no place for hunch, snap judgements, jumps to conclusions, wet fingers in the wind, feelings in your bones. There is, of course, a place for flair, judgement, perspicacity and entrepreneurial wisdom but these must be used alongside management techniques. Almost anyone who has ever had anything to do with management techniques agrees that the efficiency of any organization can be improved by their use. The experts in these like to give the impression that they are considerably above the average intelligence. They like to stand on their pedestals surrounded by a fence on which are hung notices such as "Keep out - High Intellect" or "Danger - Genius at work". Every manager who has ever read a book or been to a lecture has had the embarrassing experience - and this has happened to yours truly - of being made to feel inadequate. As an example, an expert in Costing Systems was writing an article which was to be illustrated at a certain point by means of a graph. He asked an assistant to draw this for him. When it was submitted he said to the assistant, "Yes, that illustrates the point exactly but I see only two curves on the graph. It looks too simple. Put another curve in somewhere - you know, make it look really scientific". That is a true story.

There is though, nothing woolly, abstract or frightening about management and its techniques. It is really like a box of tools. An engineer can tell at once which tool to use to tackle any given situation. So it should be with a good manager. *We all manage in our daily lives - what is so different about projecting this into our business lives?*

I have used the word "problem". This simply means the various situations that occur in which a manager has to take action and make decisions. Any manager, as long as he is in a decision-making position, faces or has to tackle a large number of these in the run of a day, whether he is the Chairman of General Motors or the groundsman at a golf club.

Basically these are six steps that should be applied:

- Step 1: Identify the problem
- 2: Select the techniques to analyse or solve that particular problem
- 3: Learn about it
- 4: Decide if it is worth applying
- 5: Use the technique or have it used
- 6: Check the results

Depending on problem, this process can be done mentally or require a detailed approach.

A knowledge of techniques is no guarantee of success. They are merely tools to assist. The qualities of inspiration, leadership and the ability, responsibility and accountability to make decisions are still paramount. Decision-making is one of the toughest areas of management. Too often managers lack the guts to make decisions because they are afraid of the

consequences if they should be wrong. It is better, believe me, to make a wrong decision than no decision at all. Nothing will wreck a business and/or morale faster than indecisiveness. My philosophy is that I will make decisions until someone tells me I cannot.

You are probably saying, "What has all this talk about management and techniques got to do with me and with agriculture?" It has a great deal. It is a cold, hard, cruel world out there where making a buck is the name of the game. Despite opinions to the contrary, private enterprise whether in the form of a cooperative, shareholders or worker management is still the way of life in the free world. Agriculture today is as much an industry as retailing and manufacturing and as such needs management if it is to succeed and assume its rightful place in our economy. It does not matter whether you are running a five-acre or fifty-thousand acre farm. The techniques still apply. The magnitude and scope will vary. Crops have to be properly scheduled and marketed to avoid gluts and shortages. Proper records have to be maintained. *Particularly financial ones.* Gone are the days when records could be kept on the back of a packet of cigarettes. Apart from everything else so few people smoke today. Most operations fall down in this area. Proper and efficient market research has to be carried out so that we are growing crops for which there is a market. Farmers have to become flexible in their outlook and cater to the requirements of the consumer even though this may mean going away from traditional crops.

There must be an integrated production and marketing system. We cannot all have processing plants. Let us not get carried away by yields. There is no point in growing something just because the yields are very good if there is no market for it or *you cannot make money* from it. Let us look at increasing productivity and the economic return to the farmer. *That is the name of the game.* This, gentlemen/ladies, is all part of good, sound management.

Agriculture is a very valuable, renewable resource. People, in the final analysis, are our most important resource, however. We are particularly fortunate in the Caribbean in that there is still land available for agriculture. Urbanization has not gobbled up the best land. Progress, though, has been slow and it will continue to be slow without sound management practices. As I have said before, this is applicable throughout the system. Not only must the resource be properly managed but the individuals involved in it *at all levels* must commit themselves to applying management techniques and practices.

Managers at all levels must learn and/or be taught techniques of management. *Decision-making must be delegated to the lowest practical level. If all decision-making is retained at the top you are almost guaranteeing that progress will be retarded.* This practice is very prevalent in the Caribbean where, unfortunately, decision-making of just about everything is made at the highest level. A good manager will delegate authority because he realizes the danger of bottlenecks if he does not. It will also develop the management potential of the lower levels of management. This approach is very important if you are going to develop a middle management level. This level is the backbone of any operation. A word of caution though. Do not confuse delegation of responsibility with abrogation of responsibility. Also, with delegation of authority, comes accountability.

This a rapid changing world and agriculture must keep pace if it is to progress. Never before have managers had at their disposal so much information on management techniques and how to improve overall performance.

Shakespeare said, "Some men are born great, some achieve greatness, others have greatness thrust upon them". This is equally applicable to managers. Some people are born with a flair for managing. Most of us, though, have to learn - sometimes the hard way by making mistakes. Again I quote - P.T. Barnum this time: "Anyone can make a mistake but only a fool makes the same mistake a second time". A manager does not, though, always have to have detailed knowledge of the field in which he is. By this I mean that it is not necessary to have a doctor manage a large hospital. Techniques of management are the same - the situations differ. Too often people fail as managers because they are put in to manage an operation on the basis of their technical knowledge in that field. Also we tend in the Caribbean to place far too much emphasis on academic qualifications rather than experience. Academic qualification can be bought, experience has to be earned.

We face a great challenge today in the Caribbean. Agriculture can and should be one - if not the - major sector of our economy. We have the tools to effect this. One of them is good and efficient management. Let us use it effectively to manage the utilization of this resource.

I am certain that a greater understanding of the importance of management at all levels will lead to higher efficiency which, in time, will lead to a higher standard of living and economic return to those in the agricultural sector whose rate of growth has for so long lagged behind that of other sectors of the economy.