

Opening of the Debate for Motion 12

By

Senator Norman Washington Grant

On September 12, 2014

Mr. President,

It is my distinct pleasure to present today for debate, support and passage motion #12 standing in my name. I would like to further dedicate this motion and debate as a salute to the work of former Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Hon. Roger Clarke, who died on August 28, 2014. Mr President, later in the debate, I will seek an amendment to the motion and will also ask that the sentiments of the Senate be shared with his widow Mrs. Sonia Clarke.

Mr. President, please allow me to read the motion into the record:

WHEREAS the Jamaica Agricultural Society (JAS), on November 25, 2003, under the patronage of the then Governor General, His Excellency, the Most Honourable Sir Howard Cooke, launched the *Eat Jamaican Campaign* under the theme *Grow What We Eat, Eat What We Grow*, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MOAF), aimed at sensitizing the nation on the important role of agriculture to rural, national and economic development;

AND WHEREAS the JAS, the MOAF and over 230,000 farmers of Jamaica are of the view that this campaign has served as a direct means of contributing to the nation's cuisine culture and rich heritage, increased food production, reduction of imports, import substitution, job creation, reduction of poverty and consequently

the growth in Jamaica's economy;

AND WHEREAS this November 25th celebrated under the patronage of the Governor-General, His Excellency, the Most Honourable Sir Patrick Allen, represents the tenth (**to be amended to read the 11th**) anniversary of this campaign;

AND WHEREAS this campaign has resulted in the reduction in the weighted average imports of goods from US\$100M per annum from 2000 to 2002 to US\$60M per annum from 2003 to 2012, **(2013)** and the increase in domestic crop production from 491,473 metric tonnes in 2003 to 610,138 metric tonnes in 2012; **(414,912 metric tonnes in 2013)**

AND WHEREAS the MOAF, in collaboration with the JAS, has declared November 2013 *Eat Jamaica Month* and the JAS will launch a zero hunger programme for Jamaica, in keeping with the FAO framework;

AND WHEREAS the MOAF has tabled in our Parliament a *Food Security and Nutrition Policy for the country*;

AND WHEREAS the preferences of the Jamaican population need to be influenced during childhood toward our Jamaican foods; the JAS, in collaboration with the Jamaica 4H Clubs, will launch the *Farm School Gardening Programme*:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate commends and supports the MOAF, the JAS, the farmers and related agencies and stakeholders for this effort to grow what we

eat.

Mr. President, I seek an amendment to the motion as follows:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate salutes the work of the Former Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, the late Honorable Roger Harold Clarke for his endorsement and support of the ‘Grow What We Eat’ Campaign and for his transformational leadership of the agricultural sector in Jamaica and the region.

Introduction

Mr. President, in 2003 when I became President of the Jamaica Agricultural Society, I decided that the time was right to launch a national campaign to grow more food locally and to get more, if not all of our people to eat Jamaican food rather than the imported food.

Mr. President at that time our food import bill increased from over US\$ 200 million in 2000 to over \$400 million in 2002; this was growing rapidly. I approached then Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Honorable Roger Clarke with the intent to launch the campaign with the following objectives:

1. To re-establish the fact that Jamaica is an agricultural country; that our richest heritage accrues from rural farming communities; that all our best attitudes and values are to be found in the traditional Jamaican ‘country life’; and that central to our Jamaican culture is the food that we produce and the ways in which we prepare them.
2. To remind those who have forgotten and inform those who are too young to know, of the dimensions of Jamaica’s farming sector, the colourful threads of this broad fabric... from the small subsistent farmer to the

- large farming operations; the economic importance in terms of jobs and income generation; the success stories, as well as the struggle for survival.
3. To celebrate the glories of Jamaican cuisine culture, many examples of which are the heart and soul of Food Festivals.
 4. To lift the morale of our farmers and their communities, re-awaken their appetite for production, while, at the same time, attracting new and young farmers to the sector.
 5. In this process the JAS itself should be repositioned as the viable and relevant farmers' organization adding value to its membership by helping to create an atmosphere where wealth can be generated for all through the influencing of policies that will benefit the sector.

Mr. President, the Minister was not only excited about the concept but he supported it and asked me to have discussions with both our then Governor General, His Excellency Sir Howard Cooke and Prime Minister, the Most Hon. P J Patterson which I did and He, Sir Howard Cooke and I, as President of the Jamaica Agricultural Society, launched the Campaign at the Denbigh Showground on November 25, 2003 with me outlining the reasons and objectives of the Campaign. The Governor General issued a proclamation allowing us to celebrate and recognize 'Eat Jamaican' Day on November 25th annually and Honorable Roger Clarke gave the first keynote Address and launched the campaign as the JAS and Agricultural portfolio Minister. So it is fitting today, as we look back on the success of this campaign and the expansion in the agricultural sector and debate this motion, we do so in salute to the work of the longest serving minister of agriculture, since our Independence, in which position he served for over 12 years.

Mr. President, it was after this launch of the JAS ‘Eat Jamaican’ Campaign in November 2003 that the BUY JAMAICAN Campaign by the JMA was launched in February of 2004, followed by the BRAND JAMAICAN Campaign by the JEA and JAMPRO in June of 2006.

Tributes to Roger Clarke

JAS and Farmers’ TRIBUTE

Mr. President, The Late Hon. Roger Clarke was an exceptional Jamaican, who will be remembered as a man completely dedicated to public service, agricultural expansion and integrated rural development. He was a defender of the powerless, a hard working and committed parliamentarian, stalwart and of course an agricultural hero and a champion farmer.

In his passing, we have lost a true veteran leader who worked for the greater good of those he served, the farmers and the people of Jamaica Land We Love. Ever a jovial spirit, the Hon. Roger Clarke was also known for speaking his mind. He was a giant for justice and fairness and a unifier.

Honorable Roger Clarke was born in agriculture, grown in agriculture and died as the leader of the agricultural sector in Jamaica. As a youngster his responsibilities in the home, as he would gleefully tell us, included taking care of his parents’ livestock and accompanying them to their farm where they grew a variety of domestic crops.

Today, we can concede that he was being prepared for his life’s work - he rose from the cane field to Cabinet.

We are comforted by the memory of his full and inspiring life and are proud of his devotion to helping others, as he sought to transform the agricultural sector for the better. At the time of his death, he was working towards two clear and distinct goals in the agricultural sector; these were to assure food security for the nation and to increase production at reduced costs so Jamaica can be competitive and retain pride of being the leading agricultural producer/exporter in the Caribbean. The Eat Jamaican Campaign provided a platform for us as a people to reduce the approximately US \$1 billion being spent on foreign food annually.

The JAS Honoured Honorable Roger Clarke

The JAS honored him with the presentation of the JAS Gold Medal for his support to the Grow what We Eat Campaign launched by the JAS in 2003 to reduce our food import bill and after not missing some 18 Denbigh Shows he was honored at the 62nd staging of Denbigh on August 1-3 with the Presentation of the Denbigh Lifetime Achievement Award. He also supported the other Agricultural Shows, such as Montpelier, Hague, Agrofest, St. Mary and St. Ann.

Mr President, I would like the Senate today to join The Board of Management of the Jamaica Agricultural Society (JAS) and staff, the over 220,000 farmers island wide and our Commodity Associations, The Jamaica 4 H movement, agricultural stakeholders and in-fact all Jamaicans here and aboard in saluting this great son of our soil, who has given his entire life to the service of this country.

Interestingly, Minister Clarke also served as a president of the St. Elizabeth JAS/ABS for eight years, and a JAS Board Member for six of those years. He was

the undisputed Champion Farmer as he was the Champion Farmer among many champion farmers!

His policies and programmes provided the foundation for advancement that helped the nation to grow: evidenced by his leading the recovery of the agricultural sector following the ravages of Hurricane Sandy in the 4th quarter of 2012 and unprecedented droughts in close to 100 years. Under his leadership the agricultural sector grew in the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2013 to record a .8 percent growth for the calendar year 2013 and the momentous growth continued in the 1st and 2nd quarters of 2014 of just over 20 percent and 12 percent respectively to assist the country with 5 successive reviews under the IMF program. The sector also continued to employ approximately 200,000 persons representing just under 20 percent of the labour force and contribute approximately 7 percent to GDP based on primary production.

His relentless support to the Jamaica Agricultural Society and our 220,000 farmers, the Jamaica 4 H movement and the 87,000 clubites and 5,000 volunteers was deep, lasting and motivating.

His commitment to fight the \$6 billion cancer of Praedial Larceny in the sector, his push for expansion of production in the agro-parks and by small, medium and large farmers alike, his support for marketing agricultural produce, his international negotiations that has brought funding to the Jamaican farmers and the economy from international organizations such as IDB, EU, USAID and his push for rural diversification made him an exceptionally good Minister.

The Hon. Roger Clarke was born, lived, farmed, lead and guided, by his motto “*be decisive in whatever you do,*” was a stunning example; from his political legacy and condemnation of violence and division to his stellar contribution and commitment to Jamaica’s agricultural industry and food security. He has left us to carry on his work; as for us in the Senate, the JAS and the farmers are committed to carrying on that mission for a better life in Jamaica through agricultural and rural development.

Mr. President, in his memory the JAS will launch a **Plant A Seed Program** and will be asking all Jamaicans to plant a tree or a seed on September 13th in his memory.

The JAS at our Board meeting held on September 3rd gave tributes in his honor and also opened a condolence book at the Head Office. The JAS and the Ministry will seek to formulate a structured way to Honor him and his work to the sector at the Annual Denbigh Show and other agricultural events across the country. Today as we speak farmers are at the Showground paying their tribute to him.

THE JAMAICA 4-H CLUBS SALUTES HONORABLE ROGER CLARKE

Mr. President, The Jamaica 4-H Clubs, through its Board of Directors, Management, members of staff, Clubites, Leaders, Voluntary Arm and Stakeholders salutes the work of Agriculture & Fisheries Minister, Hon. Roger Clarke. Minister Clarke was not just a man who loved agriculture he was also dedicated to the role of youth in agriculture and their contribution to the development of the sector.

His love for the activities of the Jamaica 4-H Clubs was without question, as despite his hectic schedule, he always found the time to celebrate with the organisation, particularly at its Parish and National Achievement Expos and in the Youth in Agriculture component of the annual Denbigh Agricultural and Industrial Show.

Not only was he always encouraging Clubites and Youth in Agriculture participants, but he always batted for the Jamaica 4-H Clubs, while encouraging initiatives to push the work of the organisation forward.

He believed in the mission of the Jamaica 4-H Clubs and had a great understanding of its work. We will remember him as a champion who made his mark in youth development.

His last public appearance with the Jamaica 4-H Clubs was launching the annual National Achievement Expo on the grounds of the Jamaica 4-H Clubs Headquarters on April 1, the organisation's 74th anniversary and he was sharing the thoughts of celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the 4 H Movement in April 2015. True to his usual humorous self, he always joked that he and the Jamaica 4-H Clubs shared the same age.

No doubt, the Jamaica 4-H Clubs will find a way to recognize Minister Clarke during these celebrations.

Some of the major policies implemented by him are:

Among his top policy priorities was that of enhancing Jamaica's food security and

making farming viable for the thousands of farmers and Jamaicans engaged in the sector. He conceptualized, championed and energized the initiation and implementation of a wide range of agricultural policies, programmes and legislation including:

1. The Agricultural Development Strategy, developed in 2005 to facilitate increased production and product expansion; increased land access; increased youth development; improved access to agricultural credit; improved marketing ; expanded extension services; research and technology development; and improved infrastructure
2. The Food Safety Policy and Implementation Plan approved on February 25, 2013 by way of Cabinet Decision #8/13
3. The Food and Nutrition Security Policy was approved by way of Cabinet and tabled in the House of Parliament in May 2013
4. The Agricultural Policy Framework for the medium term (2001-2014)
5. National Forestry Policy (2001)
6. National Land Policy

Programmes

1. Agricultural Support Services Programme through which several farmers' co-operatives were established
2. Agro-Parks Development Programme – establishing 9 parks in 18 months, with \$1B of Infrastructure
3. Creation of a modern Apiculture Industry
4. Development and operation of Pre-Clearance Export Facilities at both airports
5. Food Safety Modernisation Programme

6. Food Security – to include self-sufficiency in pork, chicken, eggs, Irish potato, pepper mash
7. Introduction of the National Animal Identification and Traceability Programme
8. Modernisation of Systems to manage and allocate conch resources
9. Modernisation of the Veterinary Services
10. National School Feeding Programme
11. Sugar Transformation Programme
12. The National Fruit Tree Planting Programme
13. The National Irrigation Development Programme – commissioning of 6 irrigation schemes at Hounslow, New Forest/Duff House, Pedro Plains, Seven Rivers, Colbeck and Yallahs
14. And of course the motion we debate in his honor today, the support and leadership role in the Eat Jamaican Campaign.

Mr. President, the Legislations, Acts and Regulations promulgated include:

1. The Aquaculture, Inland and Marine Products and By-Products (Inspection, Licensing and Export) Act, 1999 and regulations as well as amendments thereto
2. The Agricultural Produce (Amendment) Act 2004
3. The Conch (Export Levy) Amendment Act 2013
4. The Animals Diseases Control Importation Amendment Regulations 2000.
5. The Fishing Industry (Special Fishery Conservation Areas) Regulations 2012.
6. The Fishing Industry (Spiny Lobster) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

Mr. President, he has left some Work In Progress for us to complete, these include:

1. The Veterinary Act
2. The Coffee Industry Board Regulation Act
3. The Facilities for Title Act
4. The Agricultural Credit Board Act
5. The Animal Diseases and Importation Act
6. The Plants (Quarantine) Act.

How the JAS will salute the Minister -

The Jamaica Agricultural Society will seek to salute the late Hon. Roger Clarke in the following ways:

1. On Wednesday, September 3, 2014 during our Board of Management Meeting at JAS Head Office, 67 Church Street, Kingston members paid tribute to him.
2. A condolence book was opened
3. We are seeking to establish a memorial in his honour in the form of scholarship to be presented at Denbigh.
4. We will celebrate the 11th Anniversary of the 'Eat Jamaican' Month and Day in his memory.

Mr. President,

We express condolences to his wife, Mrs. Sonia Clarke, his son and daughter, as well as his wider family. In their own ways, they are all a tribute to him as a husband, father and a decent human being.

Mr. President, because of his outstanding work, The Jamaica Agricultural Society and the Jamaica 4 H Club will be recommending to the Government of Jamaica that he be honored with a posthumous order of the Order of Jamaica for his outstanding contribution to the food security of Jamaica and that this be given received by his wife Mrs. Sonia Clarke.

Mr. President, I submit this motion to you for the support of the Honorable Senate.