First Series Volume 01-X/05/No. 2

GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Fourth Session of the Tenth Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday 2nd November, 2021

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Special Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Tuesday, 2nd November, 2021.

Attendance

PRESENT

Honourable Michael Pierre, MP, JP, MBE	- Mr. Speaker (In the Chair)
Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell, PC, MP, JP (St. George North-West)	- Prime Minister and Minister for National Security, Public Administration, Youth Development, Home Affairs, Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Management
Honourable Gregory Bowen, MP (St. George South-East)	- Minister for Finance, Planning, Economic Development, Physical Development, Public Utilities and Energy
Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, MP (St. Mark)	- Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, Climate Resilience and the Environment
Honourable Peter David, MP (Town of St. George)	- Minister for Labour, Agriculture and Lands
Honourable Alvin Da Breo, MP (St. John)	- Minister of Trade, Industry and Consumer Affairs
Honourable Yolande Bain-Horsford, MP (St. Andrew North-West)	- Minister for Sports, Culture and the Arts, Fisheries and Cooperatives
Honourable Oliver Joseph, MP (St. David)	- Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Business and CARICOM Affairs
Honourable Kate Lewis, MP (St. Andrew North-East)	- Minister within the Ministry of National Security, Public Administration, Youth Development, Home Affairs, ITC and Disaster Management wrf Youth Development
Honourable Emmalin Pierre, MP (St. Andrew South-East)	- Minister for Education, Human Resource Development, Information and Religious Affairs
Honourable Nickolas Steele, MP (St. George South)	- Minister for Health and Social Security

Special Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Tuesday, 2nd November, 2021.

Attendance

Honourable Tobias Clement, MP (St. George North-East)	- Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition

ABSENT

(Excuses tendered)

Honourable Pamela Moses (St. Patrick East)	- Minister within the Ministry of National Security, Public Administration, Youth Development, Home Affairs, ITC and Disaster Management wrf Needy Assistance, Uniform Allowance, Special Projects and ITC
Honourable Kindra Maturine-Stewart, MP (Carriacou and Petite Martinique)	- Minister for Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs, Local Government and Legal Affairs
Honourable Delma Thomas, MP (St. Andrew North-West)	- Minister in the Ministry of Health and Social Security wrf for Hospital Services, and Minister of Social Development, Housing and Community Empowerment
Honourable Anthony Boatswain, MP (St. Patrick West)	- Deputy Speaker

Prayers
Motions

The Sitting of the House of Representatives began at 9:02 a.m.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members let us pray.

(House Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: Let us join together as we say the Lord's Prayer.

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: Pray be seated.

(Sound of Gavel)

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 3 - Motions.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business. Honourable Members, if you must speak, you are free to remove your mask while you speak, because everybody else will be masked. I know it's not an easy thing to have to speak all the time with the mask. Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Motion standing in my name:

Resolution for the purposes of section 17 (5) of the Constitution of Grenada, which reads:

WHEREAS there has been a worldwide outbreak of the coronavirus disease, (COVID-19), and on the 11th day March, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a pandemic;

Motions

AND WHEREAS on the 22nd day of March, 2020 the Ministry of Health of the Government of Grenada confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in the State of Grenada;

AND WHEREAS on the 11th day of January, 2021 the Governor-General, by Proclamation pursuant to section 17 of the Constitution declared that a state of emergency exists in the State of Grenada, when Parliament was not sitting;

AND WHEREAS section 17 (5) of the Constitution provides that a Resolution of a House of Parliament passed for the purposes of section 17 of the Constitution shall remain in force for six months, or such shorter period as may be specified therein, provided that any such Resolution may be extended from time to time by a further such Resolution, each extension not exceeding six months from the date of the Resolution effecting the extension;

AND WHEREAS on the 15th day of January, 2021 a majority of the House of Representatives passed a Resolution that the declaration of emergency by the Governor-General dated the 11th day of January, 2021 be approved for the period ending the 14th day of July, 2021;

AND WHEREAS on the 27th day of January, 2021 a majority of the Senate passed a Resolution that the declaration of emergency by the Governor-General dated the 11th day of January, 2021 be approved for the period ending on the 14th day of July, 2021;

AND WHEREAS on the 21st day of May, 2021 a majority of the House of Representatives passed a Resolution extending the declaration of emergency by the Governor-General dated the 11th day of January, 2021 to the period ending on the 20th day of November, 2021;

AND WHEREAS on the 2nd day of June, 2021 a majority of the Senate passed a Resolution extending the declaration of emergency by the Governor-General dated the 11th day of January, 2021 to the period ending on the 20th day of November, 2021;

AND WHEREAS the Leader of Government's Business proposes that the House of Representatives make a Resolution to extend the Resolution of the House of Representatives dated the 21st day of May, 2021;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by a majority of all the Members of the House of Representatives, the Resolution of the House of Representatives dated the 21st day of May, 2021 approving the declaration of emergency by the Governor-General dated the 11th day of January, 2021, as set out in the Schedule to this Resolution is hereby extended to the period ending on the 27th day of May, 2022.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Resolution itself is extensive in its explanation, in the sense that the Governor-General made a Proclamation when the Parliament was not sitting. That Proclamation is of a much shorter duration. And when the House will meet and the Senate will meet thereafter, they will extend under the powers of the Constitution, the Resolution to some further date and these dates have been listed in the Resolution. But after one or two and the two extensions, the state of emergency will lapse on November 20, 2021.

This Motion, Mr. Speaker, is to extend the state of emergency until the 27th day of May, 2022, so that the restrictions required to keep our people safe can be lawfully implemented. Mr. Speaker, there is no better person in the House present today or persons to do this, one, by virtue of the position, the Minister for Health, and the other by virtue of her second, I would not say primary, but her second profession being a Medical Doctor. Mr. Speaker, they are the two fittest persons to give a further history and the state of why the emergency situation should be extended. And it is primarily a repeat, Mr. Speaker, to keep our people safe. Again, they two are the most fitting people to give us a chronology of the history on the state that we have been in. We left one, we went into the other. It was not a beautiful state.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I take the opportunity to compliment the Minister for Health and his staff, and in particular, Mr. Speaker, the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique for working with the Ministry, working with the Government, through

the Ministry, to ensure that we can move ourselves from a dismal position, two (2) to three (3) months ago to where we are today, Mr. Speaker, where the future is looking reasonable for us, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** Again, they will tell you, they will tell you why we should not drop our guards and why we should always be on the lookout, what the world has to offer, what is the trait of this virus?

So, Mr. Speaker, without going much into their contribution, I would recommend this Motion for approval by the majority of the House of Representatives. And section 17 (6) of the Constitution really indicates where the contents of this comes from, and we must remember it must be passed by a majority of the Members. That is why today, Mr. Speaker, you see just for two (2), although extremely important Motions, you see the majority of the House of Representatives is here, Mr. Speaker. And before I sit, Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence in advising that the Prime Minister, who is inadvertently absent, will be trying his utmost to be here with us before the Session finishes. I recommend the Motion for approval, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Leader of Government's Business. Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. George South.

Hon. Nickolas Steele: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this Motion, as eloquently put forward by our Minister for Finance, Leader of Government's Business and my dear colleague.

Mr. Speaker, why? Why so we need this Motion? Why do we need a state of emergency? Because COVID-19 still exists; because COVID-19 is still a threat; because COVID-19 is still real; because we haven't gotten to the level of vaccination, yet that we can, as a people say, we are not protected enough. We are getting there, and it is regrettable that we still have to extend this. But it is necessary and there are some out there who are challenging the use of this, the need for this. And if 198 deaths and 5,858 known cases is not an emergency, I am not sure what is, and that's just for Grenada alone. If 5,000,000 deaths, worldwide, is not an emergency, I don't know what

is. So, I do not think we are overreacting as a Government. I do not think we are overreacting.

What we have been able to show is that we understand this evil thing called COVID-19; that we understood and still understand that it will find any and every way to enter our borders, as it has done with every single country in the world. There is not a single country with length of quarantine, shortness of quarantine, number of tests, armed forces, GDP per capita, health systems, not a single country has been able to keep COVID-19 out. So, we understood that, as well. We understood, like other countries, that if and when it did get in, it would depend on community behaviours and habits that would dictate how it spreads.

We are very much aware that the only way, the only explanation for the spectacular increase in COVID-19 Delta variant, it was because of the activities that occurred in the first week of August. We are aware of that. We need to acknowledge it. It is our history. But, we are also aware that our understanding of COVID-19, how it spreads, why it spreads and the use of this Emergency Act in the weeks and months afterwards is one of the reasons we are here, now, with a series of dates in the last couple of days of zero cases and very low. We are now at a positivity rate of under 1% in most cases, most days. We understand that. But, we also understand that it is not just this Legislation and those people inside this House that are responsible for it; it is the people of Grenada. We took COVID seriously. We followed the use of these emergency guidelines that we put here. We chose to allow and give up some of our Constitutional rights, because we saw it necessary for the better good, we as a people. We said we would stay home, we would not come out on weekends. We said we would stay home. We followed, and therefore, we benefited. We need to be acknowledged for that, as a people. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, we are now in a period, some would say, and I would agree of relative calm. But, one of the reasons that we have been successful in this battle has been our ability to react in a timely manner. And that is why, although we are in a period of relative calm, we still say, that we need this, should the need arise. But as a responsible Government, we also say, that we look forward to the easing of the use of

this, and the possibility of us using less and less in this iteration, but that we would still need to.

If the level of vaccinations continues to increase, not just in Grenada, but worldwide, region wide and those travelling in and out are the fully vaccinated, at best, then we will see less and less of the circulation of COVID-19. If the other less fortunate countries, who are yet to have proper access to vaccinations get it and are able to vaccinate their population, then we will see less and less COVID-19. And therefore, COVID-19 will become less and less a threat. But rest assured it quite likely will always be a threat, but not an emergency. So, we look forward to that day, but right now, as we speak, and for this iteration, COVID-19 is still a global pandemic, and therefore still an emergency. But as in every iteration of this that we have done, we have clearly said and this time, again, truly hope that if within the timeframe, it is possible to put this to rest, then most certainly, we will and will celebrate doing it. But this is not the time as yet, and as such, all that is left for me to say, Mr. Speaker, is again, to thank the people of Grenada for their sacrifice, over the last couple of weeks and months of them allowing us to utilise the necessary tools to curb COVID-19, successfully, as we have done, with the most deadly and virulent version of this virus, but we got it under control. And to those on the frontline that actually did the work of getting it under control, that while we were restricted, they were out trying as best as possible, to save our loved ones, regrettably, not being able to save 198 of them. But, so many more, they were able to save.

We know for sure, you see health care is difficult, Mr. Speaker. It is difficult to measure successes. It is always easy to measure failures, because you count deaths, you count cases. But we know for sure, there were 5,850 lives saved, who were COVID positive. **(Applause)** And that's a testimony to the strength of the health team. That's a testimony to the time we took to restrict the travel, earlier, in the first iteration of this, of doing the unthinkable of even preventing our own Grenadians from coming home for a while, so that we could strengthen our health system and then allowing, and then allowing more, then easing more, then easing more, then easing more. But then when we get attacked, we know that we can react and we can deal with it, and now we are in

a period after that, and let us see how we can move forward. Let us see how we can live with COVID.

So, I offer gratitude to those who served; gratitude to the people who followed; condolences to those who have lost loved ones. And we all as a people, I ask that we join each other and looking forward to us moving on. Christmas is coming up for all of us. We are all Christians here, and we are looking forward to celebrating that, in the safety that we were accustomed to before 2019. And the only way we can do that is by making sure between now and then we do the right things; all of us. So, again, Mr. Speaker, I support the Motion. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Representative for St. Mark.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I follow your guidance in the matter of the wearing of the mask. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Resolution, as presented by the Member for St. George South-East and Minister for Finance.

Mr. Speaker, when Grenada saw its first case on the 22nd of March, 2020, I do not think anyone of us envisaged that we will be here going into two (2) years. Very soon, it would be March 22 before we turn around, and that we would still have to come to Parliament to deal with the Emergency Act. This has never happened in the history of Grenada, and I don't know where else it would have happened. I don't think it happened anywhere else that going into two (2) years, we are still dealing with a pandemic. And, Mr. Speaker, we have had our highs and lows and it has been well explained by the Member for the South, and I wouldn't want to go too much into that. But, some may be asking or some may be saying it's not necessary, or some may be asking, why is it necessary?

In recent days and going into weeks, we have had single digit cases; we have had zero deaths, zero new cases. In a very short time, and I need to go back a little bit, Mr. Speaker, because towards the end of August, about two months ago, Grenada was ranked as one of the countries having the highest infection rate in the world, not just in

the Caribbean, in the world. And when one looked at the graph at how we were going, it was a straight line. It didn't seem to be going up and down, as most graphs do, it was just climbing and climbing, and it was a time for great concern for us. And a few weeks before, people were saying, we don't have COVID, and some even accused the Government saying, the Government just want to restrain us, keep us down. Why would we want to do that, Mr. Speaker? Because it affects the whole functioning of Government, it affects the economy, it affects the revenues of Government, and it effects the revenues of each individual in this State, because whether it is restraint of people coming in, whether it's total lockdown as we have had to do for some period, in early last year, whether it is businesses that cannot operate or whether businesses, some businesses their hours of operations are restricted, it affects everyone in this country. Why should we want to do that? And I hope by now we have all found the answer to that and realised that Government would not want to, in any way, to create fear or to create restraint on our people, in any way that is not necessary, and that we want to see livelihoods back on track, Mr. Speaker. COVID has affected that tremendously. It has taken lives. 198 persons have gone and the families of these 198 and the friends and their loved ones have all suffered. And so we, as a Nation, we have grieved and we have moaned, and I hope we never have to go back to that time again.

But, Mr. Speaker, COVID is still very fluid. It has its ups and downs. Only yesterday, the 1st of November, the CDC, the United States Centre for Disease Control, they added some countries to their Category 4, which is the highest level. And for Category 4, you have to have 500 deaths, per hundred thousand. So, Grenada's population is about 100,000. If you reach 500 deaths, I think in a 28-day period, then you are considered Category 4. And Category 3 is between 100,000 and 500,000 per hundred thousand population and so on and so on. So, Mr. Speaker, it's a dynamic thing, and they're advising people where to travel and what to do and what not to do.

But one of the other criteria that they used too is that they also looked at what precautions countries take. So, the countries that they advised against travel, or the countries that they have advised that you could travel to, or they don't say anything, at

all, is because they have looked at what precautions the countries take and what precautions people who come into the country are required to follow.

So, therefore, it means then, that there must be precautions for our nation. All of us must adhere to certain precautions, because they realised that the precautions, like the masks wearing, the social distancing, the avoidance of crowding and crowd gathering and so on, that all of these things contribute to the reduction or the prevention of the transmission of the disease, so they also look at that.

And I am happy to see that a lot of our Grenadian people have adhered to these regulations, these guidelines, precautions, whatever we call it. Most people now, they are wearing their masks. I see a lot wearing their masks. But I still see too many not wearing their masks. Well, you don't see as much social gatherings, but I hear about social gatherings still that are advised against, that we are advised against, but people still do it. And they said, well, is our culture and is what we're supposed to do. But we have to balance these things, because what we are balancing is the difference between life and death, when we follow these scientifically proven guidelines, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

When we started to have deaths, more people wore their mask, more people wore their mask and more people wore it, appropriately. Many times before you would see it under the chin or somewhere so, or wherever, and some took the style of wearing it on their arm. But when that happened, a lot of Grenadians saw the wisdom in following the guidelines, the regulations, the policies, and these are proven scientific guidelines, in terms of the mask wearing and other things.

And in addition, they added to the response of the Ministry of Health, because without our Grenadian people complying with the guidelines, we would not be here today where we are with zero cases, with zero deaths, one case tested positive and all of that, and so I want to compliment Team Grenada for coming forward.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the two Ministers for Health and their team. They really galvanised into action, and several of them used all their knowledge, all their expertise, and they used it to protect and to defend this nation, Mr. Speaker. I want to compliment them. **(Applause)**

I know the Police, they were stretched to capacity, having to monitor and to look at what was happening and they may have had to impose some fines or whatever, as allowed under the General Law, or the Emergency Powers Act, so that certain persons can be restrained. But, from what I understand there were not many of these infractions and by-and-large Grenadians have complied with the guidelines that were set. So, Mr. Speaker, all of these role players they deserve commendations.

Mr. Speaker, our diaspora, our people in the diaspora, Grenadians have never failed us in great time of need. They do what they can on a regular basis, but when there's a crisis, like we have with Ivan and at this present time in the crisis of COVID-19, they came out. **(Applause)** Several of them left their homes abroad or their jobs, took time out and they came and physically assisted, and worked side-by-side with our local Grenadians here. Several of them who could not come, they asked, what do you need? And I hope at some time, the Ministry of Health would find the time to publicly announce or commend those persons who have contributed, because it made significant difference to the work of the Ministry of Health at the time, and I too, want to thank them.

The volunteers, locally, they came out. And, while I have no doubt that we would mount a response equal and above the attack of the COVID disease, I was impressed with the number of persons, who came out on a weekly basis, Mr. Speaker. The number of persons, who took time out to educate the public on the ills and the evils of the disease and what we must do and so many people came out.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am troubled that so many people came out of 100,000 population. But, Mr. Speaker, persons, who should be persons of influence, persons who are supposed to be leaders, or aspiring leaders, I heard nothing. They did nothing. I didn't hear anything, because something like that, you heard about the people who came out, who are in leadership positions. We heard persons who are in leadership positions, a few may have said something. But so many, when 198 people were dying, said absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker. And I think I have said it in this Honourable House, the mark of a leader is when that leader comes forward to defend the lives and

the interest of the people of the country, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** And I am wondering where some of these leaders were, or where they still are, because the fight is not over.

We have had respite, and we thank God for that, but it is not over. All of the science is telling us, all of the experts that we are in what they call an endemic. It means, it's low now. Maybe for some days, you will be on zero and I understand that we had ten, I haven't seen the last dashboard, but you could go from zero to ten. You can go from zero to fifty, anything can happen. And therefore, the team spirit, the patriotism, the working together, still has to be there. Regardless to what other philosophies we may have, or other persuasions, when it comes to the lives and the interests and livelihood of our people, I think every leader, who considers, or every individual, who consider himself or herself a leader has to say something.

The vaccine, vaccination has been proven to save lives in every country. And while we have had a low uptake of the vaccine, still the thirty, how many thousands that took the two shots and the seven thousand plus, who would have taken the first shot, Mr. Speaker, they made a difference to what we're seeing now, the zero and one, because those who were vaccinated either the disease was prevented, it was prevented from really taking over their body, and of course, if you don't get it, if the vaccine prevents you from getting it, then, obviously, it prevents you from transmitting it because you can't transmit an infectious disease that you do not have. And therefore, the vaccine has proven that it works. And, Mr. Speaker, we have to continue that. Our numbers are no way near to put us in a safe mode, in a safe scenario at this time with COVID, but it is still significant to some extent. And more and more we try to open up, and every two weeks, or so we do here.

And I want to urge our Grenadian people, do not take it as a signal that there is no COVID and that there will not be, but take it as an opportunity to maximise your businesses. Whatever you can do safely, let's do it and let's try to come back to, as far as possible, the normal, well, it is called the new normal, because there are differences. We still have to wear masks, we still have to observe distancing and so on, but we still have to do what we have to do.

So, coming back here is not a signal that we want to constrain people and to limit them from doing things. Coming back here, Mr. Speaker, is complying with the Law and the respect that we have and a demonstration of the respect that we have for COVID and the havoc that it has wrecked worldwide, and what it has done to us in this country, to lives and sicknesses, what the physicians would call morbidity; so you don't die, but parts of your body are affected in a very negative way.

And therefore, we expect to see some cases on and off. We expect to see it climb up. We expect to see it go down. But I hope we never get back to that point where we lose these numbers of people and that we never get back to that point where this infection rate incapacitates so many people. Doctors were out of commission. Nurses were out, the Police and so on, and therefore the whole functioning of this country was affected, and I hope that we can get to that. **(Time Bell Rings)**

Mr. Speaker, I heard the bell, and I just want couple seconds please. I just want to say that what has been proven worldwide, to be effective against COVID, we need to do it. We should not need the regulations, if we follow the teachings of the scientists, what they're telling us to do, because we should not have to come here to regulate, social distancing and masks and other things, and don't gather and have fetes and things like that, inappropriately, but that we should have some level of entertainment, but it must be done, specifically. And if we learn from them, then the Police would have, maybe no work to do, or less work to do, because there are always other things that the Police have to deal with. And our healthcare professionals, the fatigue that they have gone through, in the last few months, they will get some rest, because they are human beings and they do deserve it.

So, Team Grenada, compliments, through you, Mr. Speaker, all of those, locally and abroad, who have come together, all of our friends, who have helped, I want to say, thank you in this Honourable House. And I want to say, let us continue our vigilance, because the war is not yet over. We have won a battle, but the war is still on. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Representative. Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

(The Leader of Government's Business rose)

Mr. Speaker: Oh.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a very important point, not controversial, at all, of Order, Standing Order 34 (3): "***An amendment to a Motion may be made and seconded at any time, after the question upon the Motion has been proposed by the Speaker***." Very important, Mr. Speaker.

In the Resolution itself, when we look at the date that we want to extend the Resolution to, it says, up to the 27th day of May, 2022. The '7' should not be there. It should be the '2nd' day. The Constitution provides for six months extension by the Parliament from the date that it's passed in the House of Representatives. So, recognising this error, so that the debate can now be in line without going extraneously, into whether it should be the '2nd' etcetera. So I crave your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, so that the question can be put for the amendment, from the '27th' to the '2nd' day of May, six months from the 2nd of November, that we're here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, an amendment has been proposed by the Leader of Government's Business to change the date for the Resolution to the '2nd day of May 2022,' instead of the '27th day of May 2022.'

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence of the Legal Department here. If you look at the history, it always goes one day before, so is the second to the first, etcetera, etcetera. Maybe, where I could confer, and I see the note, yes. So, the six months will start on the 2nd and finish on the 1st.

Mr. Speaker: So it should be the first day of May?

Hon. Gregory Bowen: So, it should be the first day of May? Let me just look at it. So, so be it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, that amendment should read, the '1st day of May 2022.'

Question proposed for approval of the amendment.

Amendment approved.

Mr. Speaker: So, the Motion is amended to read on the last line: "the period ending on the 1st day of May, 2022." So our debate and presentation should take into consideration the 1st day of May, 2022. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution for the extension of the state of emergency, because of COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, you can recall, in this Honourable House, when the pandemic just started, I went back into the history, because I did a little science, too, not much, Biology, Molecular Biology and so forth, and I also had the opportunity to study the Spanish Flu, or the Swine Flu of 1919, so the history is not no stranger to me.

It is said that pandemic and diseases of this nature usually change the history of mankind. 1917, or thereabout seems like the Germans were just getting ready to go on a major offensive, World War I, and the pandemic, the Swine Flu broke out on both sides and everything came to null. It went on for a couple of years, Mr. Speaker, and it ended at the time, because maybe they did not have the knowledge in medicine. But it is estimated that about 60 million people died, worldwide, because of the Spanish Flu, the Swine Flu. We are quite fortunate today, that medicine has come a long way and our understanding has also been enhanced. But, Mr. Speaker, I spoke about wave one, wave two, wave three, and in my mind, here in Grenada, probably we have had just the first wave.

Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 is still around, and when I read and I said that if it is somewhere, we have to treat it as if it is everywhere. We get rid of COVID-19 in Grenada, maybe we can celebrate a little bit. But, what about some African country or some South American country where it is still? It only takes one, Mr. Speaker, only one case to go somewhere, and everything breaks loose.

But, Mr. Speaker, our people must be made aware that we cannot at no point in time in our history now, now to let our guards down, whether it be the wearing of masks, whether it be vaccination, whether it be just be staying home. I saw an advert that says: ***"Home Alone is a Good Thing."*** And, this is the attitude that we have to develop. But over the past few months, we have seen some attitude developed where people figure that they could continue to do what they want, and maybe Government is restricting them and so forth and so on. But, is that restriction necessary?

Mr. Speaker, you know, I was troubled by a couple questions that were asked of me and I pondered and I hesitated, and I asked the question again. In some jurisdictions, they're almost making vaccination compulsory, a must, not here in Grenada. And a gentleman stopped me and he said to me: "Mr. Clement, I have a question for you." I said: "Are you behaving yourself?" He smiled, and he said to me: "Mr. Clement, I've been thinking. I am trying to behave myself. I am not vaccinated." And, I asked him: "Why don't you get vaccinated?" And you know, with all the naysayers and so forth. But then he said something to me that that made me think. He said: "Suppose I am in my place and the Police Officers come to rub me down, as they usually will do every now and then, and one of the Officers has COVID and I catch it from the Officer, what do I do?" Because they come to carry out their duty, but yet, it is possible… (that was the time when a few Officers had COVID), that they could have spread it to the population, or give somebody else.

But you know what was interesting? A couple of days after, a young lady asked me the question, that school was scheduled to be opened. She said: "Mr. Clement, are you vaccinated?" I said, "Yes, I am vaccinated. My entire household, except my nine year old is not vaccinated." And she said to me that: "I am also vaccinated, because I

have my children at home and I have to work, so I have to protect them." And, I said: "You did the right thing."

I am vaccinated, because I have to make sure that I protect the young ones, protect the old ones and protect people, who I come in contact with. And I said to her, I said, "Vaccination is something that we are accustomed with." I think, even before the COVID, I went to the Ministry of Health and took some vaccination in the Ministerial Complex for Yellow Fever, me and my family, so I went and vaccinate. But then the young lady said to me: "Mr. Clement, I am going to send my child to school, as it is opened. Are the teachers vaccinated?" And, she asked me the question: "Suppose a teacher has COVID and gives my child COVID, and my child suffers from Asthma, what do I do? Who is responsible for that?" I mean, I can ask the question, in terms of the Public Service. If we are working in the Public Service, and we have to give service to the public, what level of vaccination is required?

Mr. Speaker, my child, and I take it to my child, goes into the classroom. He is attended by the teacher and the teacher is not vaccinated and the possibility exists, if the teacher contracts COVID, can the teacher spread it to the children? The lady asked me the question that I could not answer. She does not know if the teacher is vaccinated. Should I send my child to school? Mr. Speaker, remember I said I hesitated. I did not know how to answer the lady. My question is, can anyone here answer the lady?

We have to start thinking and acting, as the lady says, as leaders and leaders must lead, not just when things are going good, and when things are nice and saying nice and fancy words. You know, one man said to me: "Young men know words and old men know the meaning." And you know, Mr. Speaker, this thing about leadership talk came up in the last Parliament, and I sat here and I just smiled and I laughed, because when it was time to lead, especially with this NNP Government now, my question is, where were they?

Mr. Speaker, you will remember, I was almost a child then, but I stood up alone in Carriacou; that was leadership, not when things were nice, Mr. Speaker, through you. Mr. Speaker, you know that too, you are there. But, Mr. Speaker, this COVID, and

when I say to people, that in some instances, this COVID-19 would strip a lot of us to our bone bare, and people would see us for who we really are, in terms of caring for people, in terms of country and in terms of development.

You know, I had the unfortunate experience to deal with a few people and their family who had lost their loved one, and I think, even the latest. I have my niece, who lost her uncle. And I grieved, because I looked at some of the older folks from Carriacou, who I knew very well, who were near and dear to me. There was an old lady. She was about ninety-nine (99). I used to trouble her in the market all the time. I bought from her. And you know, when I heard it, you know, it is far and it is deep in terms of COVID. And we are here today to extend that time, in terms of the emergency, so that we could continue to protect our people. And that is necessary, Mr. Speaker, because, as I said, we are still in the middle of COVID-19, and it can raise its ugly head again. But we must do what it takes and what is necessary. And I would ask our people, as our people were commanded to behave themselves and to behave themselves, because you have your family to protect, you have your neighbours to protect, you have your friends to protect, and you have yourself to protect.

Mr. Speaker, as I said before, I went around and spoke to people about being vaccinated and talking about vaccination. And the latest was that I asked an elderly gentleman to get vaccinated, because, I mean, you have your family and he still told me, he is waiting and see. And I asked him: "Wait and see what again?" Look at the point where we are. Should we have a new wave again, to come through that people are stimulated to get vaccinated?

But, Mr. Speaker, I looked at the numbers, 198 deaths, and the Minister said, 5,850 cases. And, at 198 deaths, if you calculate it, it says that this would be about between 3 to 3.5%, thereabout, in our community. But the science tells us that in the cases of death, it's between 1.5% to 2%. So, are we different in Grenada that we have a higher rate of death than the rest of the world? I think not. We are not so different. I put to you, Mr. Speaker, that, yes, it is between 1.5% to 2%, just as the rest of the world, and not 3%. My contention with these numbers, Mr. Speaker, 5,850, that is what was just reported. It must be more than that. And if you extrapolate the numbers to the

per cent, between 1.5% to 2%, that will take you around 10,000 to 13,000 people with COVID-19; that will give you 1.5% to 2%. But to tell me that we are so different than the rest of the world that we're up to 3% mortality, no, no, we are not that different. As a matter of fact, I believe our Grenadian people do have a sense of resiliency. But even so, even so, that the fight is on.

Mr. Speaker, I would continue to urge our people to follow the facts and follow the science, because I did, I did earlier up and I will continue to do that. And if the science tells us that we are not yet out of the woods, and that possible, there could be a second wave and if we are careless, there could be a third wave, because that is what happened in the past, with almost all countries, and some countries in our world today have had their second and third waves already. But we, Mr. Speaker, we must behave ourselves and behave ourselves well, if we have to come out of this thing, as a sound minded people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. Patrick West.

Hon. Anthony Boatswain: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my full support to the Motion as presented by the Leader of Government's Business and strongly supported by the Member of Parliament for St. Mark and the Member of Parliament for St. George South, who is the Minister for Health.

Mr. Speaker, the case for extending the state of emergency was well made, first by the Leader of Government's Business, and again, supported by the two Members. I wish to say, however, Mr. Speaker, that how long the state of emergency will exist or how often it will be extended, it will depend entirely on us. When I say, "us", I mean the citizens of this country.

Mr. Speaker, what occurred over the past three to four months where almost 200 of our citizens died, should be a warning signal that what we are experiencing now, where there has been an improvement in terms of the reduction in the number of positive cases, the reduction in hospitalisation and the number of deaths, might just well

be the eye of the storm. And therefore, we are not entirely out of the woods as yet. And therefore, this is not a time for us to throw caution to the wind. Mr. Speaker, we have to be on our guard.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to look at the demographics of the COVID. To date, we have, roughly, 30,000, 31,000 persons, who have received their two shots, and about 7,000 yet to get their second shot. Mr. Speaker, this is below, well, if you add to that what you call your natural immunity from having been affected, some will say that we might be about 50% at immunity level.

But, Mr. Speaker, this is still below, significantly below the level that should allow us to become comfortable and complacent, because the historical Benchmark or the International Benchmark is about 70/80% to achieve Herd Immunity, and we are way below that. And it means, Mr. Speaker, that notwithstanding the need to create that easement, we cannot be too complacent, as to how far we go with that level of vaccination.

It means therefore, that the focus must be on increasing vaccination uptake. That has to be, because it has been proven that this is the most effective weapon. It is only when we achieve that level, Mr. Speaker, of Herd Immunity, then we can we can feel more comfortable in opening up and restoring normalcy. Although it is said, and I do believe that this virus will be with us for some time. And what we will achieve is not the restoration of normalcy as before, but what we are calling a new normal, where we will have to adapt, where we have to coexist, because lives and livelihoods are important, Mr. Speaker. We have to protect lives but at the same time, we have to ensure that we do have livelihoods. We have to survive, Mr. Speaker, economically and otherwise. But when we look at the figures of the 30,000 or let us say 30% vaccinated, the demographics, who are they? Where do they live?

Mr. Speaker, the demographic evidence will reveal that the majority of our people who are vaccinated come from a particular geographic area, for a particular social and economic classification, well I say, more the middle upper class. And 80%, Mr. Speaker, of that 30% vaccinated, 80% comes from that particular area and that demographic class. The majority of unvaccinated, Mr. Speaker, they reside in the rural

areas, the poor and the vulnerable, and when you look at the deaths, 97% of those who died were not vaccinated. And if we link that to the demographic and the geographic, it will tell you that the majority of people, who have died and who would die will come from rural areas from the poor and vulnerable class in society.

It means, Mr. Speaker, that we have to look at certain educational programmes, if we do not believe in this concept of mandatory vaccination. How do we reach those people out there, because they are the most vulnerable ones? What type of programmes can we put in place? And a strong case can be made, Mr. Speaker, to look at the Educational Outreach Programme. How can we reach those people, because they are vulnerable to all kind of anti-vaccine propaganda, very vulnerable, very susceptible? But it means that we have to counter that, Mr. Speaker. And I am hoping that in moving forward with the state of emergency, we do have a more rigorous education programme to reach the poor and vulnerable rural residents, because they are the ones, Mr. Speaker, who are at the highest risks, the elderly, those with underlying conditions.

Mr. Speaker, when I think of what happened at the Hilarion Home, in Sauteurs, it hurts my heart, Mr. Speaker, where fourteen of our senior citizens died, because the appropriate measures were not in place to afford them that level of protection.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to having a well-structured and well-directed educational programme, we have to look at how we can strengthen the health infrastructure in the rural communities. We have to look at how we can improve the outreach programme. And I want to commend the Minister for Health and all the volunteer workers, who've been out there on Saturdays and Sundays, testing and vaccinating our people in the rural areas; that has to be strengthened, Mr. Speaker, that cannot stop. And the programme has to be intensified and it has to be more on a house-to-house method in all the different villages, because when you speak to some of our people, Mr. Speaker, they're not hostile. They are not hostile towards taking the vaccine, you know, the fact is that, they do not have enough information. And when you really try to convince, they say, "Oh, you know, I really didn't know that. Okay, I'll go and take it." We need more, this is more hand-to-hand combat, you know, Mr. Speaker. We have to be out there,

one-on-one with our people. We cannot take a one-shot-it-all approach. We have to be more selective. And I am pretty sure that if we take a more selective approach in our educational programmes, we can have many more of our citizens being vaccinated.

I heard the Member for St. Mark, making reference to community leaders. They are not coming out; that is where we need them. What contribution are they making towards achieving that objective of getting our people vaccinated, knowing that unless we reach that benchmark, it will be difficult to restore the kind of normalcy that we want to restore, Mr. Speaker.

So I am saying here again, let us look at targeting the educational programme. Let us look at strengthening health infrastructure in the rural areas, let us look at the continuation of the outreach programme. Because we have achieved zero deaths and few positive cases that does not mean we should stop. It does that mean that the programme should cease. I think now is the time for us to intensify it, and do that educational programme and convince the people, as to how important it is for them to be vaccinated.

The anti-vaxxers, some of them are having their field day. They are taking advantage of the vulnerable. We have to counter that, Mr. Speaker. We have to counter that. And to be honest, I am not satisfied that that programme is strong enough; the educational programme is strong enough. And this is the point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, improve the educational programme, strengthen the health infrastructure in the rural communities, and continuation of the outreach programme in terms of having the pop-up clinics in every village; that should not cease, Mr. Speaker. I thank you very much. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Parliamentary Representative for St. Patrick West. Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew South-East.

Hon. Emmalin Pierre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise just to support what is before us, particularly for the reason that I am fearful, that complacency

is stepping in. One or two of my colleagues pointed to this, and I just want to reiterate that concern.

Mr. Speaker, but in doing so, allow me to join with my colleagues, who went before me expressing condolences to all of the families who have lost loved ones, unfortunately, during this period.

Mr. Speaker, commending all of our frontline workers, our Nurses, our Doctors, our Police Officers, our volunteers, all of those who have been on the frontline, and I want to also commend the leadership of the Ministry of Health, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, added, I want to commend and recognise all of our religious leaders, who have been part of this process through prayers, because I do share, very strongly, the view that faith plus works give us the results that are desired, and all those who have joined during the process, Mr. Speaker.

The hard work of our frontline workers cannot be underestimated. And again, I want to make the point, Mr. Speaker, that we need to continue to give them all the possible support, the COVID-19 Committee and everyone who has been so actively involved in this process.

Mr. Speaker, the main point, as I said, why I am standing this morning, is that during the consultation leading up to the reopening of school, the question was posed as to when we should reopen schools, if we get the clearance from the Ministry of Health and the technical persons, our readiness and our preparedness to return to school. And, Mr. Speaker, I noted very, very carefully, some of the feedback that we had, particularly from persons who felt that it was necessary to do so urgently.

I was rather shocked, Mr. Speaker, that there are many persons, who are expecting a major spike during the month of December. I was shocked that there are many persons, who are expecting that we would have another lockdown in January. Mr. Speaker, that worries me. I believe very, very strongly that every person has an individual responsibility in the fight against COVID-19, every person. This is not just a job for the Government of Grenada; it is not just a job for the Ministry of Health and the frontline workers. Every person has a role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, I am firmly of the view that if every person was to

play their role, we are going to take control, total control of the situation, if everyone would do what they have to do. Everyone would sanitise and wash their hands regularly, everyone would maintain, to the best of their ability, physical distancing. Everyone would take responsibility once they are within the age to be vaccinated. Mr. Speaker, I am convinced we can conquer this.

But, Mr. Speaker, my colleague who shared the concern that we seemed to be very reactive, when it comes to this virus, so our behaviour coincides with the level, the number of cases the number of deaths, unfortunately. So whenever there is a spike, you drive around and everybody is trying to wear their mask. Everybody is trying to behave a particular way, which is what is dangerous, because, Mr. Speaker, we don't know when. We don't know who. And so, the minute we let our guards down, we are opening up and we are making a way for the spread of this virus, which is why I emphasise.

Unfortunately, you listen to some people and you get the impression that the solution to this virus and keeping it under control is solely a responsibility of the Government of Grenada, and that is a mistake we're making. Every person, from the smallest child to the oldest adult, every person, has a responsibility. It is the only way, Mr. Speaker. When each one of us takes sole responsibility, full responsibility, we are going to address this in the way we need to.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we have continuously recognised all of those persons, who have contributed, continue to contribute to the fight against COVID-19. I want to especially recognise, Mr. Speaker, this morning, the leadership of this country. There's so much we take for granted, Mr. Speaker. And I want to take this opportunity this morning, to recognise the leadership of Dr. Mitchell, the leadership of the Ministry of Health, the entire team of Cabinet Members. **(Applause)** We take so much for granted, Mr. Speaker, that sometimes we miss important elements.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about leadership. Leadership in crisis, Mr. Speaker, is what I believe needs to be measured. When things are well, or there is nothing, leadership becomes insignificant, in terms of its competence and ability. And, Mr. Speaker, that is why this morning, I am taking this time to say that this team, this

Government, should be recognised, in addition to everyone else that has contributed to where we are today. I am within and I see the sacrifices. I see the hours. I saw the tears in some cases. Mr. Speaker, this is not easy, and that is why I said, it is not a fight for the Government alone. People in this team make serious sacrifices. People outside of this team make probably even more sacrifices, our Nurses, our Doctors, what they go through, can't see their families, our Police Officers. People make sacrifices.

But, Mr. Speaker, I say this morning, every single person in Grenada needs to take responsibility and to act accordingly to ensure that what is anticipated to happen in December will never happen and the lockdown that some persons are expecting in January, that that too never happens.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that this team that has taken us through many crises before will take us through, successfully, this one. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew South-East. Parliamentary Representative for St. George, North-West and Prime Minister.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And first, let me apologise for my lateness. I couldn't, of course, miss this important Session. And to say, I firmly support the extension of the state of emergency. And clearly, as I am sure the speakers would have demonstrated, this is no fun for us. It is not something we enjoy doing. But as responsible leaders, we do what is best for the country.

There are some who are of the view that this might cost. The continuation of the emergency, I've heard it said, might cost us political problems. Well, let me say this. This group of leaders did not come into Government just for political success and to have power, Mr. Speaker. It's not about power, Mr. Speaker, it's about service. It's about love for people. You have to love people to be in politics, and what you do is about service and you must have a history of service, and the service must not come from the top. It must come from the bottom up. Mr. Speaker, that's what it's all about.

But anytime you see service want to come from the top, there's something about that service. So, we are taking the decision to protect our country. I've had to tell a

number of people on a number of occasions, it may cost us some political votes, some of the decisions that we are taking, but, so be it. We should be more concerned that it saves lives, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** And even if it's one life for 100 votes, we are going to do just that. One life lost is too much.

Mr. Speaker, in that sense, therefore, I want to compliment, and I am sure I heard other Members did it, the team in the Ministry of Health, led by the Ministers, who have been working night and day, and sometimes I had to caution them about protecting themselves, to ensure that we keep Grenada safe as possible. Because whilst the Ministers and the staff and the Government have been urging people to protect themselves, even when people do not necessarily agree, and there might be noises out there, there were others in our country, who were urging them to disobey the Government. In other words, urging them to do things to damage themselves, because they knew better; some of them who were in fact giving the impression that it's oppressive to ask people to vaccinate or to wear their mask, they themselves went and got vaccinated very early and you would have seen them with their masks all the time. So it was not about love for people. It was not about service, it was about power. Mr. Speaker, that's really the point that we have to drive home.

So many times, and the Member for St. Patrick West, when I was coming through, I heard him speaking to that point, it hurts me and hurts those of us, particularly those of us, who come from communities where poverty was on display. It must make us feel a sense of lack of satisfaction, because most of the people that are unvaccinated are the poor and vulnerable people.

Mr. Speaker, I did inform Members of Parliament on "Our Side" of the House, that with the hundreds of road gangs of people working, almost 3,000 people every fortnight, and they are very happy for it, and this goes right into the Christmas period, to go out and meet with them and, Mr. Speaker, I've done it last week, in my own constituency. So, every road gang I meet, I stop and pull them together with a certain distance, myself and my team walk with masks. So the minute they see me, who trying to put all sorts of fake masks on, but they do. Many of them had their mask, but some were not wearing it properly. But we provided them with masks and gave them extra,

because we had, thank God, as the Ministry of Health announced, we have quite a lot of mask available.

And it's very interesting, Mr. Speaker, to find out in most of these gangs, out of seven persons, maybe three, maximum four are vaccinated. In some cases, you had two or one. So, we spoke to them about wearing the mask, protecting themselves while they work together. But at the end of it, I say, I am not here to force you and mandate that you wear mask. But I am here to tell you what is best for you. I am here to tell you, the protocols are important, but the best thing to do is to do the vaccination, it will protect you. Of course, also they got the chance to ask me all kinds of questions, and in fact, some cases saying: "Doc, you're sure you take the real thing." They asked me that. So I had to explain. I said, first of all, I don't like needles, so I will not go and let somebody put a needle on my body and not do it for a reason to protect myself, to fake. Of course, they understood what I was saying.

But the fact is, most have not done it, because a lot of it has to do with the misinformation out there. And it's unfortunate, because we have leaders in this society, at various levels; you're not hearing enough voices. The leaders in all sectors of the business community, a few are doing it. But all them, their voices must be heard, because if you have a business, the less immunity you have in the country, the less antibodies around, is the less activity that will be in the commercial sector. So even if you're thinking selfishly, it's important for you to advise your people to do so. And that goes to all sectors. The church leaders have to do the same thing, because that is our responsibility, and more so with church leaders, because I have seen Pope Francis took a strong position on the Catholics who are refusing to vaccinate. But their leader has, in fact, shown his leadership, and many of the church leaders are doing so, but members are still refusing and claiming religion. They're claiming it is religion, but the Head of their religion has vaccinated and telling them to vaccinate.

Mr. Speaker, I heard it said by the Leader of the Opposition that the leadership is weak in demonstrating weakness. Mr. Speaker, I've been accused of a lot of things. In fact, the general accusation is that I am a dictator. Over the years that was being spread. Dictators are not known to be weak. But the Member knows, when he asked

me to do something, I didn't show weakness. I said, no. That's not a weak person, that's no weakness.

Let me make it clear, Mr. Speaker. As Chairman of the OECS, we had informed, legal opinion, as far as mandating vaccination is concerned. So, there's not a legal issue. And regionally and internationally, every case that goes to Court with workers looking at overturning mandatory vaccination has been lost. In other words, there's no issue, no point going to Court, anywhere, and saying that vaccination is illegal and they cannot force you. Mr. Speaker, that is clear. And therefore, those who say that it is my right not to vaccinate, I accept that, you know. But, it is also my right not to be infected. So, where do we go? So, I think the issue of legality doesn't come in. That is clear, and I've stated this. There's no weakness there.

Mr. Speaker, if you want something to be done, what you want is the result. If by going to Parliament and mandating people to vaccinate you get more resistance and less vaccination, you achieve your objective? Now you have power, power, I am the big man. I can pass Laws. But the fellah sits down and he says: "Oh let him pass his Laws. We are not worrying with him." And sometimes you get more resistance and less impact on the results, it's the result.

There are some countries, Mr. Speaker, that went to Parliament, passed Laws and their vaccination level is less than 10%. There are several examples of this. The bigger countries are in a stronger position to do this and mandate it. They are in a much stronger position. We are in a much weaker position to do so. So the result is not about weakness, it's about achieving a desired objective. That is what it's all about. So, if you want to term that to mean… we will go to Parliament tomorrow, if it is understood that we will get the desired results, which is, people will vaccinate. But I would advise the Leader of the Opposition that; I understand, I didn't hear the announcement that he joined another Political Party whom he has chivalrously opposed for a lot of years. He has joined them.

(The Leader of the Opposition rose)

Hon. Tobias Clement: Mr. Speaker, on a Point-of-Clarity.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Tobias Clement: The Member is stating that I joined another Political Party. He has no evidence of such. So, why is he making this claim in this Parliament?

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: ***(Laughter)*** Mr. Speaker, did you hear my claim? I said, I heard. So, the Member said he didn't join it. Well no, he didn't say. No, no, no, no, no, oh, yes, yes, yes, he's right. Let me use the right language. He is saying, I have no evidence, I didn't see him signing the paper, but, he has not denied. That is significant. So, since he has not denied, I am still not saying he has joined. But I suggest that he speaks to that leader about his position on vaccination and that he makes a statement to that effect. That's where I say, that is strength. **(Applause)** That is strength. You're coming up with new leadership, new vision, new vision for Grenada.

I am thirty-seven years in this ballgame; it taught me a lot of lessons. Some people will have to learn some serious lessons about politics. They would learn, they would learn. It might be easy to buy a Political Party, but it is not easy to buy the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. **(Applause)** Let's get it right. That one is difficult.

This coming Election Campaign will be most likely my last, not most likely, it will be. But it might be the most interesting and fascinating one for the Member for St. George's North-West. I love it, because I have confidence in the Grenadian people. I have confidence that they know what's best for them and they can see something, when its face is clear. I have no doubt about this. So, all I tell my friend, get the leadership of the friends that he has, to speak out, as he appears to have done today on vaccination, because we have no difficulty in doing this. But, we will only do it, mandating it, if we think and believe that it will have the desired results. That's the only reason we will do it, because we're using moral suasion and everyone should be doing this, and everyone should be joining in this whole exercise of saving this country.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would say a lot more at the right time. This is not a time for it. I am just saying, I am looking forward to… they have now given us some appetite for the politics, some appetite. And the Member knows when I am on my game, when I enjoy it, when there is some kind of incentive, he can't find someone better.

Mr. Speaker, I support this extension of the emergency for this country to protect Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Thank you. **(Applause)**

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

(Laughter)

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend all the Members, including the Leader of the Opposition for supporting the Motion, with respect to extending the state of emergency, until the 1st of May, 2022. Nearly all the Members, Mr. Speaker, indicated why we should do so. And we are looking forward to continue our significant drive and significant improvement with respect to the control of the Coronavirus. In this context, Mr. Speaker, all that I have to do now is to commend the Motion for its approval. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: I would state therefore, that the majority of the House of Representatives, the Members of the House of Representatives have answered "Aye." If there is any "Nay", please indicate. **(There was no objection)** So, it's unanimously carried.

Motion approved as amended.

Motions

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the questions and the way you put it. So I am sure now that the Clerk can record that fifteen Members, including the Leader of the Opposition, supported the Motion. Very important, Mr. Speaker, because the Constitution requires a majority of the Members, not those present, so we must have at least eight (8). And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I propose that the Clerk records, as you put it, Mr. Speaker, unanimously, fifteen Members supported the Resolution. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. The next Motion. Senator Steele.

Hon. Nickolas Steele: Mr. Speaker, I rise to move a Motion, standing in the name of Leader of Opposition: **Resolution for the purpose of section 4 (3) for the Quarantine Act Chapter**…

(Leader of the Opposition rose)

Mr. Speaker: Oh, just one moment.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Mr. Speaker. He rises to support the Motion, not in the name of the Leader of the Opposition, but Leader of Government's Business.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you for the observation.

(Laughter)

Motions

Hon. Nickolas Steele: Leader of Government's Business. Thank you.

Resolution for the purposes of section 4 (3) of the Quarantine Act, Chapter 271

WHEREAS it is provided by section 4 (1) of the Quarantine Act, Chapter 271 (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") that the Minister may make regulations, as respects to the whole or any part of Grenada, including the ports and coastal waters thereof, for preventing —

(a) danger to public health from ships or aircraft or persons or things herein arriving at any place; and

(b) the spread of infection by means of any ship or aircraft about to leave any place, or by means of any person or thing about to leave any place in any ship or aircraft;

AND WHEREAS it is provided in section 4 (3) of the Act that regulations made under section 4 (1) of the Act shall not have any force or effect until confirmed by Resolution of the House of Representatives;

AND WHEREAS on the 4th day of September, 2020 the Minister with responsibility for Health made the Quarantine (COVID-19) Regulations, 2020 and on the 11th day of September, 2020 the House of Representatives by resolution confirmed the Quarantine (COVID-19) Regulations, 2020;

AND WHEREAS it is now expedient that the Quarantine (COVID-19) (Amendment) Regulations, 2021 attached hereto as a Schedule be confirmed by the House of Representatives to amend the Quarantine (COVID-19) Regulations, 2020;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that pursuant to the provisions of section 4 (3) of the Act that the Quarantine (COVID-19) (Amendment) Regulations, 2021 be now confirmed by the House of Representatives.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Representative for St. George's South.

Hon. Nickolas Steele: Mr. Speaker, the Schedule reads as follows:

WHEREAS in the opinion of the Minister there is the imminent threat of the community spread of COVID-19 as a result of the numerous cases present in countries neighbouring Grenada;

AND WHEREAS it is necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19 from persons arriving at any port by land or water;

NOW THEREFORE the Minister in exercise of the powers conferred on him by section 4 of the Quarantine Act, Chapter 271 hereby makes the following Regulations:-

Citation

1. This Regulation may be cited, as the Quarantine (COVID-19) (Amendment) Regulation, 2021, and shall be read as one with the Quarantine (COVID-19) Regulations, 2020, SRO No. 58 of 2020 hereinafter referred to as the "principal Regulation".

Amendment as follows: Regulation 10 of the principal Regulations is amended in sub regulation (1) by deleting the number "$405.00" after the words "PCR Test is" and substituting thereof the number "$135.00".

So, Mr. Speaker, in this instance, we are changing the cost of that PCR from EC$405.00 to $135.00, Mr. Speaker, for those coming in. This is the test that is used to clear quarantine. Individuals arriving in Grenada are tested at the Airport. They would pay for this test, because they are traveling and the cost, many have complained why the Government is not subsidising it? Why is the Government charging what it actually cost? Why doesn't the Government do like other Governments and subsidise the cost of this PCR test? As such, we are now taking those necessary steps in this instance, Mr. Speaker. It comes at a significant cost. But again, it is in the balance, as best as possible to find that balance between lives and livelihoods, that the cost sometimes affects livelihoods, that the cost sometimes results in individuals choosing not to come to Grenada, that the cost for those who must travel becomes very prohibitive and prevents them from doing other things, especially those who are traveling for medical reasons or coming back for bereavement. So, we have found a way and means and we

are going to subsidise as best as possible. It comes at the expense of something else. But we truly do believe that at this point, there is a balance that we can maintain.

Mr. Speaker, as we proceed, I want to also just touch on the whole issue of quarantine, and it has served us and it has served us well. But it is not the only thing that will protect us from COVID-19. There are some out there, who believe that all we need to do is keep everybody else out. All we need to do is have as long as possible, a quarantine. The longer the quarantine, the more Grenadians have to interact with those in quarantine to feed them, to police, to clean, to look after. So, the risk on that side increases. The longer the quarantine the more chances of individuals breaching the quarantine. And there is no country in the world that has shown that a lengthy quarantine protects you from COVID-19. It's one of the measures. It doesn't prevent COVID-19 from coming in. Countries have had twenty-one days of quarantine. Some countries still have fourteen days of quarantine, and they're all dealing with community spread of COVID-19, all, with much greater resources than us to police the said quarantine. It is not simply about quarantine. It is your local epidemiological risks. It is the habits of your community. It is the level of vaccination. It is in testing. It is in the global risks. If individuals coming in are vaccinated, their risk is significantly reduced.

And I want to touch on that issue that was raised by the Leader of the Opposition, implying, somehow, that without doing proper research, that there needs to be some investigation or concern, as to why the death rate in Grenada is so much higher, that the international rate is 2% and that we are 3%. A little further down reading or research, or a little more time research would have shown, he would have learnt that COVID-19, the deadliest variant of COVID-19 is the Delta variant, that the Delta variant is 130% more deadly than any of the other variants that have existed, that an unvaccinated person has 11 times more chance of death from the Delta variant than the other variants, chance of death from the other variants, yes, but 11 times more with the Delta variant for a non-vaccinated person.

So in effect, according to the science, the death rate in Grenada should have been not 3% but 33%. And therefore, I thank him for raising the point, because it really does help put forward the tremendous job that the Ministry of Health and those frontline

health workers have done to keep that death rate as low as possible. **(Applause)** According to the science, it should have been much higher. And they need to be recognised for the work they have done. Dr. Dolland Noel, Dr. Tyhiesia Donald and their team, those who visited, those who came in from our diaspora, from Mexico to help save those lives, the nurses, Nurse Wall, Nurse Bhagwan, those individuals are the reason why it's 3%, Mr. Speaker, and not 33%.

Mr. Speaker, we do hope that with this amendment, life is, again approaching a little more of a balance of easing, that individuals recognise that it is a full combination, testing on arrival, vaccination, and most importantly, as we have proudly done over the last couple of weeks, what we do as a people, collectively, that is what would get us through COVID-19, not any one of them individually, not quarantine on its own. Definitely not quarantine on its own for those who think that that is the only solution here. But what we do collectively, with all of these measures, Mr. Speaker. This is why I commend this to the House and look forward to the support from the Honourable Members of this House. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. Mark.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Resolution, as presented by the Member for St. George South.

Mr. Speaker, this Resolution, in addition to the quarantine it also deals with the cost of the PCR test. And I want to applaud the Government for taking this initiative, because in some instances the cost which was in excess of $400.00 made it prohibitive for some persons to come. It may appear insignificant for one individual, but when an individual is traveling with his or her family, that is when it became a significant issue. And so, in the first instance, we're looking at the Grenadian family that want to come back, come and visit. It did make it difficult for them, because I had some complaints in that regard. And I am happy that we could do that, so that there's more possibility of access for persons wanting to come in. But also, on the tourism side, which, whether

we like it or not, contributes significantly to the economy of this country. It also made us uncompetitive.

When we did an investigation to what the other Islands, other countries were doing, we came out dismally, dismally uncompetitive in that regard, because we were pretty much the highest. There may have been one or two countries that were similar to ours, but most of our neighbouring countries either did it free of cost, or a minimal charge. And therefore, people look at these things.

Nowadays, and we are told by surveys done in the Industry, that there are a number of things that people look at. People look at the cost, more than ever before. They also look at the level of safety, and I said it before, what you are requesting that visitors do. So, even when we do have some measure of quarantine and restraint, people appreciate that when they are coming into the country, because they believe that they will be safe. And therefore, if we say to persons, for example, Grenadians can come in, regardless to their status of vaccination. But visitors, foreigners, we can call them, but I like to call them visitors, to our shores must be fully vaccinated. They're asking us, when you ask us to be fully vaccinated, what are you telling the people in the industry, the people on the tours, the taxi drivers, the vendors, what would be their status of vaccination?

So, it is not an issue of just mandate, but it is an issue of reciprocity or however we want to call it. If you're making that demand, and if we're making it, and quite rightly so, then our people have to be vaccinated. It's not an issue of mandate. The scientists are telling us that this is a pandemic of the unvaccinated. So COVID, it is not the vaccinated against the unvaccinated, it is the COVID disease.

(Cell Phone Rings)

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. It is the COVID disease against the unvaccinated. And I would like all Grenadian people to understand that, because sometimes, if you say, okay, to go to cricket, and it will be coming up, because we are in a good position for the Test Matches against West Indies and

England, and we had some cricket recently, and we were mandated from outside. If you are going to host these Matches, then persons coming into these Matches must be fully vaccinated.

So, I want to send that message to our people. It is not a competition between the Grenadians who are vaccinated and the non-vaccinated; it's a competition between you and the Delta variant and COVID-19, in general.

All statistics worldwide would show us, and statistics in Grenada, and it was said before, so I wouldn't go into it. But the statistics show that the unvaccinated suffer, disproportionately, from COVID. And it is not just getting the disease, but now they're talking about the prolongation of the disease. So even when you leave the hospital, you go home, you have to buy tanks of oxygen to have there. You have to use oxygen still, because the lungs are not functioning in a manner to support the needs of the body. And they're talking about the post COVID syndrome. So, COVID not finished with you when you leave the hospital. COVID is attacking your liver and you get diabetes, when you didn't have precondition before to get diabetes. So everybody talking about underlying conditions, we're going to see underlying conditions if we do not improve on our vaccination. It wouldn't be the Government mandating. It wouldn't be anybody imposing quarantine or other measures. It would be the havoc that COVID-19 would wreck in us. And as a Nation, I would like us to be conscious of that and do what we have to do.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, as we look at the quarantine, I know that there's going to be an easing and easing of the… well, of course, we now are in the 48 hours for those who are fully vaccinated, and we are in the seven days, I think, the Ministry has it, for persons who are unvaccinated. And people going to say, it's not fair, but COVID has not been fair and COVID doesn't spare anybody. And therefore, we need to be conscious that this disparity in the quarantine is just to ensure that the person who comes into the country is safe. But very importantly, that we minimise the spread, we reduce the spread, so that our people can be safe. We have had incidences where a few have broken out of the quarantine.

However, Mr. Speaker, we have had very few incidences of that in recent time and I hope that will be a thing of the past and as more of our people come in fully vaccinated, we would not have any disparity in the quarantine. As a matter of fact, as more people are vaccinated in Grenada, there will be no need for quarantine, because countries that have attained a high level of vaccination, they have moved away from the quarantine, even when their numbers are growing. Even when the number of cases are growing, the persons are still safer, the disease is much easier on the persons, who are vaccinated and the deaths are even less, the percentage of deaths, the rate of deaths is less. And so, they feel empowered because of their level of vaccination, to waive quarantine in a lot of instances or to reduce the quarantine. And therefore, what the Resolution speaks to, hopefully, should be a thing of the past, very soon, if we attain that level of vaccination. The medical centres are offering it. The Ministry of Health still has enough vaccines for us to continue and it is free of cost. It is available in most instances especially in recent times; it was available seven days of the week in villages. It was brought to doorsteps. And again, I just want to appeal that as we look at the vaccination as an extremely important mitigating factor, and one which would influence to have quarantine, or not to have quarantine. I want to recommend that our Grenadian people look at the benefits of vaccine.

As said before, by another Member, also the education, we need to step it up, all of us, the Ministry and we too, need to lend our voices and educate people, because we have been hard hit by the anti-vaxxers. And our poor people, even when they do not understand what it is, but the fear has been instilled. And therefore, it is incumbent upon all of us to distil that fear, get our people vaccinated, so that they can, first of all, live safely in Grenada, and if they have to travel, they can travel safely as well. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. Mark. Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't going to make any statement on this, but I do support, especially the drop in the quarantine, not the quarantine, but the PCR price from $405.00 to $135.00. And if you could recall, I raised this in the Parliament before. But there is something else, Mr. Speaker, that I would raise, remember, sometime earlier this year or last year, we also talk about the geofencing watch. I do not know if that is still in use. And I know sometimes, some of our people may have had to pay for it.

But the question, well, I cannot ask that question here yet, Mr. Speaker, but the thing about it, a lot of the people are asking did the thing ever work. I don't hear anything again about geofencing. But I am sure that maybe Government did pay or contract somebody about this geofencing watch. I do believe that we have had maybe a case or two with geofencing that maybe we have lost in Court because the thing never worked.

But I am happy, because I know, even I have had friends, who would come every Christmas to Grenada and they decide, because of the position they're not coming, even in terms of the curfew and quarantine. And I am glad to see the easing, so that… because some people you book your vacation already for Christmas and probably we waited a little when people have already booked out to different countries with less restrictions. And so, I know some of my family would not come, some of my friends would not come. Some people that I know would come to Grenada every year. And so we have to continue to weigh what we sell to people out there, because as the gentle lady from St. Mark said: "Tourism is still important to this little economy." And, for now every soul that we can invite to our country as visitors will help and it will help a lot. So, Mr. Speaker, I am happy that we are getting there. But, even as we get there, I will continue to urge our people that COVID is still around and as they say, behave yourself, because it is up to you as an individual to make a difference for yourself, for your family and for your friends and for this country. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. George South.

Hon. Nickolas Steele: Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank the Member from St. Mark and the Leader of the Opposition for his endorsement and support granted from the Leader, Mr. Speaker. It always comes with a caveat, but I will take the endorsement and acknowledgement.

Mr. Speaker, throughout this journey, we brought various things to the House, we've made various amendments, so, too, as almost country in the world. There has been no roll back. In the beginning, the only way to get to Grenada was with a chartered flight, and when you came to Grenada you couldn't stay at any hotel, or home quarantine, you had to go to the sites that we had arranged, which was SGU, Grand Anse Campus, and others, for strict observation. And we learnt more, and we were able to ease more and you can now quarantine at a hotel or at your home and now it cost less to do that test.

And believe me, Mr. Speaker, my colleague from St. Mark and myself, we look forward to working together more and seeing as the epidemiological situation allows, for us to find, as my colleague from St. Patrick would say, that balance between life and livelihoods, which is most essential in leadership. But an important point again, on this whole quarantine and for those who believe that what we should continue to do is lock others out, including our own. I saw comments on Social Media from people saying, while we were in the heat of our community spread, people saying: "Look at Grenadians in Miami for Carnival. They better make sure they don't come back." No, Mr. Speaker, that's not how this disease, this COVID-19 thing works.

The US is largely open and in most cases where the crowd is fully vaccinated, the risk is minimal. And if we are to ever, again, have to adopt a policy simply because we see other Grenadians out there carrying on with life as normal, because in the communities that they live, there is a higher level of vaccination, and therefore, the ability to get back to, or closer to a life of norm, we would not have had, in the last several weeks. Grenadians like, Nurse Sarana Margaret Hector, coming in to help us and convincing so many others, on her own, to be vaccinated; Dr. Lambert Pitt, who came; Dr. Lisa Radix, who's staying up there but is making her contribution. Dr. Philip Bonaparte, Dr. Keston Nedd, Dr. Michelle Friday, Dr. Carina David, Dr. Molara Alexis,

these are sons and daughters of the soil, who came and came willingly, when we were in our darkest hours. But who were only able to come because we were also able to relax and have a 24-hour quarantine that some still seem to have a problem with that they think that that is the beginning and the end of COVID-19. No. These people were able to serve. These people go back, where they go back to, they don't have to quarantine and their world doesn't fall apart. Their communities don't fall apart. Their communities have learnt to live with COVID and we are learning to live with COVID. We have to make sure that we prevent as best as possible deaths from COVID. But it is going to be the same way, as we progress that we prevent as best as possible, the deaths from cardiovascular disease, the deaths from hypertension, the deaths from any other disease, communicable or not.

What we want to make sure is, never again, will our health system come under threat of being inundated by any disease, COVID-19, or any other. And that we must do the required things, vaccinate, make the required adjustments to make sure that this does not happen; that we convince as many people as possible to be vaccinated; that we get as many people as possible through that position of safety, relative safety; that we do like we see with the rest of the world. So, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Members for their support and I commend this Resolution to this Honourable House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolution approved.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 4 - Request for Leave to move the Adjournment of the House on Matters of Urgent Public Importance.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, the Leader of Government's Business had to move on urgent matters, and so he had to leave us. Senator Steele.

Adjournment

Hon. Nickolas Steele: So, Mr. Speaker, I will try to fill, as best as possible. I move the Motion for this House to be adjourned ***sine die***.

Mr. President: You didn't try, you did well.

(Laughter)

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Just before I put the question, let me join with all Parliamentary Representatives, who continue to mourn the loss of members of their constituencies and their relatives, especially we had our Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew South-West. We had our Parliamentary Representative for St. George South-East and any other that I may not have remembered. Those two have lost their brothers, and I cry with you, I mourn with you, but I pray that God will give you the strength and the wisdom to know that he is in control and He takes. As Job said: ***"The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh. Blessed is the name of the Lord."***

Honourable Parliamentary Representatives, I know you're trying, that you have Parliamentary Representatives out on the street, approaching people while they work, to beg them and urge them and encourage them to take the vaccine. Vaccine is what is going to take us from the point where we are, to where we want to go.

I have learnt that there are Members of this Honourable House who are moving towards getting their Booster. And I am waiting to know if Boosters are available, so that, I too, can get a Booster. We need Boosters every now and again, and I can do with my Booster myself. So, as soon as that is available, I would communicate regularly with the Ministers for Health to find out when I can get my booster, because there is a lady who is very close to me, and she asked me to enquire about this Booster shot, because she wants to get her Booster. And so, I urge every Member of this House to please be careful. As you go about urging others, as you go about trying to help others,

do not expose yourselves. Please be very careful, because your loss is the loss of your family and is the loss for the entire country.

So go out there, encourage others, but please safeguard yourself. I know you are vaccinated and getting ready to get your Booster, but even the vaccinated could become infected. You may not be so affected that you would spread the disease or you would get sick and go to the hospital and so on, but you might be able to transmit that to somebody very close to you. So please, please be very careful.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourns sine die at 11:15 a.m.

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