



GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Third Session of the Tenth Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday 12th August, 2020

Table of Contents

Attendance	3 - 4
Prayers	5
Minutes	5 - 7
Announcements	7
Papers / Reports	7
Questions	7 - 18
Statements by Ministers	18 - 37
Motions	37 - 39
Bills	39 - 58
Adjournment	58 - 74

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Attendance

Michael Pierre, MP, 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, Home Affairs, Information and Communications Technology, Finance, Planning, Economic Development and Physical Development
Honourable Gregory Bowen, MP (St. George South-East)	- Minister for Infrastructure Development, Public Utilities, Energy, Transport and Implementation
Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, MP (St. Mark)	- Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation
Honourable Alvin Da Breo, MP (St. John)	- Minister wrf Forestry and Fisheries
Honourable Peter David, MP (Town of St. George)	- Minister for Foreign Affairs and Labour
Honourable Yolande Bain-Horsford, MP (St. Andrew North-West)	- Minister for Agriculture and Lands
Honourable Oliver Joseph, MP (St. David)	- Minister for Trade, Industry, Co-operatives and CARICOM Affairs
Honourable Kate Lewis, MP (St. Andrew North-East)	- Minister wrf Youth Development
Honourable Pamela Moses (St. Patrick East)	- Minister wrf Tertiary Education, Skills Development and Education Outreach
Honourable Emmalin Pierre, MP (St. Andrew South-East)	- Minister for Education, Human Resource Development and Religious Affairs
Honourable Nickolas Steele, MP (St. George South)	- Minister for Health, Social Security and International Business
Honourable Kindra Maturine-Stewart, MP (Carriacou and Petite Martinique)	- Minister for Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs, Local Government and Legal Affairs

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Attendance

Honourable Delma Thomas, MP
(St. Andrew North-West)

- Minister for Social Development, Housing
and Community Empowerment

Honourable Anthony Boatswain, MP
(St. Patrick West)

- Deputy Speaker

Honourable Tobias Clement, MP
(St. George North-East)

- Leader of the Opposition

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

**Prayers
Minutes**

The Sitting of the House of Representatives began at 9:00 a.m.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, let us pray.

(House Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker:

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

(Sound of gavel)

Clerk Assistant: Item 3 - Oath of Allegiance or Affirmation of a New Member.

Item 4 - Confirmation of Minutes.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Honourable Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the House of Representatives held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale St. George's on Wednesday 29th July, 2020, be taken as read.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes taken as read.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Minutes

Hon. Anthony Boatwain: Am I recognised, Mr. Speaker?

(Inaudible comments by the Speaker)

Mr. Speaker: Oh, thank you. That was the microphone, sorry. Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the said Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the House of Representatives held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale St. Georges on Wednesday 29th July, 2020 be confirmed.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Representative for St. Patrick.

Hon. Anthony Boatwain: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do have an amendment to the Minutes and I'm wondering at what point should that be taken?

Mr. Speaker: Yes, let's do it before it is confirmed.

Honourable Anthony Boatwain: Yes, Mr. Speaker, under item Motions, the record will show that I did make contributions on that item but it is not reflected here and I spoke just before the Member for St. Andrew North-West, but it is not reflected that I made any contribution at all.

(The Clerk converse with the Speaker in private)

Mr. Speaker: Yes, Honourable Representative for St. Patrick-West, I have just been informed that this may have been an omission... an error in the omission which we will ensure it is reflected in our next minutes. Thank you.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Minutes

Announcements

Papers / Reports

Questions

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed as amended.

Clerk Assistant: Item 5 - Messages from the Governor-General.

Item 6 - Announcements by Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, just to remind us that a letter was sent to the Committee of Privileges in relation with the FROC and the membership of the FROC, and we have not yet gotten the response, so we pray that you would do that soonest. Thank you.

Clerk Assistant: Item 7 - Presentation of Papers and Petitions.

Item 8 - Presentation of Papers and Reports from Select Committees.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the following Papers be laid on the Table:

- The Report of the Public Accounts Committee for the period March 2020.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, Paper is so laid at the Table.

Clerk Assistant: Item 9 - Unopposed Private Business.

Item 10 - Questions.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Questions

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition and Parliamentary Representative for St. George North-East.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under questions, I do believe that there were a number of questions that was submitted and there are still on the Order Paper awaiting answers.

Question No. 1: Can the Minister of Finance provide to the House a detailed breakdown of the COVID-19 Stimulus Package as follows: the list of companies and the amount they received, the list of people receiving and the amount received.

Question No. 2: What was the amount in spending for each constituency Office for the last two years? Can you provide the details of the contract that was signed between the Government of Grenada and the Contractor who is responsible for the Constituency Offices? Can a detailed breakdown be given of payment of staff, rental, utility and office supply for each office?

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Minister for Finance.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I just want to report, the question being asked requires lots of detailed research and information. In fact the first question requires the Audit, they need to examine those numbers against the reality. Because anytime you present something to Parliament, that's it, these are facts verified. So it's taking lots of time. I do also just want to urge, Mr. Speaker, this COVID time requires Public Servants to do a lot of work and I am concerned about the level of questions that are being asked of them to provide information, to drop their work to serve people and to spend time and a lot detailed information, it's asking a lot. I just want to make this point and both questions, Mr. Speaker, I just want to make this point. In due time they will but the work of the Government and serving the people will be the priority of the Government of Grenada.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Questions

Mr. Speaker: So then I take it that written answers will be prepared and be submitted at a later Sitting?

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want to say at the next Sitting.

Mr. Speaker: No, no, no, I said at another Sitting.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Ok, yes.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Minister for Finance that according to the Standing Orders, he still have 30 days and with your leave he can have more time to answer the question, so it's not an urgent question, so it is there. So, Mr. Speaker, I now move on to **Question 2:** Can the Minister for Foreign Affairs provide to this House a list of all Diplomatic status given by the Government of Grenada, their names and place of birth?

Mr. Speaker: Honourable...

Hon. Peter David: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the last occasion when we met a short time ago, I indicated to the House and to my distinguished friend that the matter is being taken care of. There is no back date on it so I have to go through an abundant amount of files, so that is being done. In fact his question coincided with a review we were having of all the persons in that position. I think you did indicate that we have some time that, given the fact that it is not an urgent question. And I do assure the Member that the information gathered is not only for his question but also for our own records that we are in the process of reviewing. So I should be

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Questions

able shortly to give him a written response with all of the names and dates of birth and so on that he is asked for. But I do ask his indulgence and your indulgence, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have three questions here for the Minister for Infrastructure Development and Member for St. George South-East.

Question 1: Can the Minister for Infrastructure Development and Member for St. George South-East under whose Ministry the Houses of Parliament was constructed provide a copy of the floor plan to show designation of the office space provided and the purpose?

Question 2: Can a list of Government assets, buildings and lands that were listed or sold from February 2013 to present be provided to this House?

Question 3: In the area of the land slippage in Molinere, a large building was constructed before the land slippage - Did the Physical Planning Unit grant permission to the owner of that building and if yes, can you provide to this House a copy of the document granting permission to the land owners?

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Leader of Government's Business. Could you take your speaker off please? **(Indicating to the Leader of the Opposition)**

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in response to the Leader of the Opposition, as I indicated at the last Sitting, those questions require cross-ministerial interaction and we have commenced, Mr. Speaker, so both Ministries... three Ministries have embarked upon the search and we note one started since 2013. And the second point, Mr. Speaker, is that we have come back here at a very short notice, two weeks and we plan to do every two weeks, so we will be back

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Questions

here on the 26th. And so we anticipate that as soon as the information is ready and then they would have to be checked again even with the designers because you have drawings, Mr. Speaker and you have as-built drawings. So what is proposed there may not be exactly what is there, so we still have to with your permission come into this Ministry with the contractor and with the drawings to show that... to be ensured that the drawings that we have is exactly what is built. So we are working assiduously, Mr. Speaker, on providing the information.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Representative for St. George South-East.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Next question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister for Education: Could the Minister for Education provide to this House a plan for the reopening of school in September if it is prudent to do so; and

Question No. 2: have additional monies been budgeted for the safety measures to be put in place for the reopening and if so what is the amount?

Mr. Speaker: Unfortunately the Minister for Education is not here at this time so if she comes in while we are on, we will ask her to respond.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, because I do believe two weeks before school open or so, it's a very timely question. The next question for the Minister for Health: could the Minister for Health and Member for St. George South provide statistics on COVID-19 in Grenada as it relates to the following:

- (a) The amount of test that was done;
- (b) The number of positive cases found; and
- (c) The amount of test that is available.

Question No. 2: is there any plans to test the entire population, and;

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Questions

Question No. 3: how long has the Perseverance Dumpsite been burning; was any action taken to extinguish the flame; was an analysis done of the ambient air quality in the area?

Mr. Speaker: Let me also say that the Minister for Health, the Honourable Minister for Health and Parliamentary Representative for St. George South is not here at this time. But we have the Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Mr. Speaker, I was not intervening with respect to answering the question, just for your guidance and ruling on the Standing Orders. I think the Opposition Leader has read the question over in the last sitting and it is common practice with your ruling, Mr. Speaker, maybe at the next Sitting we can confirm that with the Leader of the Opposition that he simply says question one in my name, question 2, question 3 etc. We will seek your guidance on that for this and the other Sittings, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Mr. Speaker, the next questions were sent to the Minister for Agriculture that is in terms of the questions here, question 1, 2 and 3. I do believe that she might have some communiqué on this.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Minister for Agriculture and Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew South-West.

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: Mr. Speaker, most of the answers were submitted to the Clerk, we are still doing some research on some of the other areas that he has asked.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Questions

Mr. Speaker: Thank you.

(The Acting Clerk converse with the Speaker in private)

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the answer to those questions were submitted to you, if you have any...

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in relationship to questions that was submitted to the Honourable Member for St. Andrew South-West, which has to do with the Ministry of Agriculture here. I see here on the Paper and I will take it in the order...

Can the Minister for Agriculture and Member for St. Andrew South-West provide a detail to the House of the assets and liability of the GCNA and the GCA organisations and what are the names of the companies and people owing monies to the organisation both foreign and domestic? Mr. Speaker, just for clarification I noticed here that we have assets and liability of the GCNA and in that instance I do not know if I am very correct. I see here for assets 57 million three hundred and ninety three thousand, eight hundred and forty eight dollars, that is assets. And on the next page you got liability 57 million three hundred and ninety three thousand, eight hundred and forty eight. Mr. Speaker, in terms of exact numbers to the dollar, we have a company here where the assets and liabilities is the same amount 57 million three hundred and ninety three thousand, eight hundred and forty eight dollars for assets; for liability 57 million three hundred and ninety three thousand, eight hundred and forty eight dollars. And I do not know if that is an error in terms of judgement, so I will just need some clarification on this.

Another thing that I will need clarification on, I asked for people and companies that are owing both organisations. In the instance, Mr. Speaker, yes there is a table that is given for people owing the GCNA and I see here we have forty-four (44) people and organisations within the country owing the GCNA but I also see that we have forty

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Questions

seven (47) foreign entities owing GCNA. But what is missing from here and maybe the Minister might be able to correct me or give additional information because the monies owing to the GCA was not provided here. The only thing that I saw here is that GCNA probably owes the Cocoa Association \$500,000.00; that is on the first schedule paper. So I would like some clarification, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the questions were asked and answers were given. So if there are further information or questions that you need to ask to get clarification on the responses that you get, you can ask those questions. Honourable Prime Minister.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, a Point of Order really. I think... GCNA and GCA are not Government Corporations. I think that point needs to be made, so the Government cannot hold itself responsible for any data provided by these organisations, directly so. So I think there needs to be an understanding of the correctness of that question being asked, it's like asking a question about Huggins or other Corporations. I don't know that is the Government's responsibility to provide those specific information because we cannot take responsibility for it. The Government does not own those Corporations.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Minister for Finance.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: I just want to make that point for what it's worth.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Mr. Speaker, I have...

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Questions

Mr. Speaker: Please switch on your mike.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question here for the Minister for Tourism and Member for St. Mark. **Question 1:** is the Annandale Waterfall leased; if yes how long is the lease arrangement for and to which entity was it leased?

Question 2: is the Concord Waterfall up for lease, and;

Question 3: is Sandy Island in Carriacou for sale or for lease?

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is a question on the Order Paper, it's the first time she has the time to answer it.

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

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, even though the questions have been very recent I will endeavour to answer most of the questions, if that's ok with you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Sure.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: In terms of the Annadale Waterfall, this RFP's or Request for Proposals was sent out quite some time ago. An entity was selected; there were three proposals and an entity was selected based on the proposals received and the weight that a Committee of persons in the Public Service had... was set up to peruse the proposals and to make recommendations. And so therefore that entity which is a couple called Fiona and Ziare Mohammed, these are young Grenadians with much experience beyond their years in the Tourism Industry who came up with a very, very good proposal to improve, especially to add new experiences to the Annandale area. Mr. Speaker, we are well aware of the potential of Annandale and that is why we believe that it is time that we sought to explore and to seek persons who could utilise the setting of Annandale to give pleasant experiences to Tourists, bearing

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Questions

in mind that... and also locals, also nationals because we are well aware that nationals do use our environmental assets and whenever anything is done, it is always done with locals in mind as well as visitors.

We are well aware, Mr. Speaker, that we're in a highly competitive region and worldwide Tourism is competitive and therefore over the years we have not been able to achieve much in terms of improvement, variations in terms of creating the... or following the modern trends that Tourism is demanding and visitors are demanding of us. And that was the reason why we felt that it would be better... the matter will be better dealt with or managed in private hands and that is where we are at this time.

The lease is being arranged with the Ministry of Legal Affairs, and, Mr. Speaker, since that has not been finalised I would rather leave this period until that lease is finalised and I will give answer to the Leader of the Opposition at this particular time if that is ok with you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Mr. Speaker, just in terms of the other questions...

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order...

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Prime Minister.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, the question is, is the Annandale Waterfall for lease? You cannot lease the Waterfall, so that question should not... it's unfortunate. You could lease the Management of the... but not the Waterfall. So the question should have been, unfortunately, not answered.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Questions

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Thank you Honourable Prime Minister. Honourable Minister for Tourism.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for St. George North-West for making this very important clarification because all waters belong to the country, to the nation and I really appreciate that intervention. So details of that... the lease would be passed on in writing to the Leader of the Opposition. And, I just wanted to add, Mr. Speaker, that we are in the process of doing some consultations or broader consultations. Some consultations were held, but we believe that it was limited and based on questions that are being asked by the residents, we are in the process of organising a meeting with the residents in the immediate environs of the Annandale Waterfall and I'm sure that they would be pleased with the fact that as per Government's directive, an agreement with the Developers, priority will be given to persons in the area for jobs and so on.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will just ask your permission again, to respond to the other parts of the question, regarding the lease to be put in writing. The other two questions can be dealt with very quickly. Is the Annandale Waterfall leased? The answer to that is, no, Mr. Speaker. And, the Concord Waterfall, in the same manner, sorry, no, not the Annandale, the Concord Waterfall, I dealt with Annandale, the Concord Waterfall is not lease, and the Sandy Island in Carriacou for sale or for lease, the answer is, no. Mr. Speaker, just to... To be abundantly cautious, I have asked my colleague, the Member for Carriacou and Petite Martinique, she is not aware of that and certainly the Ministry of Tourism has not been involved in any discussion of this kind. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Representative for St. Mark. Honourable Representative for St. George North-East and Leader of the Opposition.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Questions

Statements by Ministers

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a question here for the Member for Carriacou and Petite Martinique and that is to do with the Port facilities. I do believe that she might move in terms of the answer.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Honourable Representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique and Minister for Legal Affairs.

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the answers to these questions were submitted to the Clerk of Parliament, on the 4th of August, 2020. So, I believe that the Leader of the Opposition has those answers with him this morning.

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

Hon. Tobias Clement: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I have them.

Clerk Assistant: Item 11 - Urgent questions under the provisions of Standing Order 20 (1) - Notice of Questions.

Item 12 - Statements by Ministers.

Mr. Speaker: Just switch off your mike please. Statement by Ministers. Honourable Minister for Social Development.

Hon. Delma Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as Minister for Social Development, Housing and Community Empowerment, it is important that I speak to the whole psychological effects that COVID, the COVID-19 pandemic is having on our people and how we are addressing it as a Ministry and advice to our people as we go through this very tough period, Mr. Speaker.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of months our Ministry has been involved in making a number of social interventions and the issues out there are real. It stems from housing, mental health issues and a number of different issues, Mr. Speaker, that need urgent attention from not only the Ministry, Mr. Speaker, but I also say from communities and families and faith-based organisations as we strive to deal with the whole issue of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To address some of the social issues and challenges that confront us, it is important that we make necessary intervention to curb them and thereby building community resilience. We are of the view that our nation wealth is its people. As a Ministry, we are in the process of finalising a number of additional programmes. So, we have the Counselling Unit, and that is ongoing, where we have a hotline that provide 24 hours counselling. But, Mr. Speaker, we realise in this time, we need more than just that 24 hour counselling, we need intervention at the level of the community. And very soon we will be launching two very special programmes, additional programmes in the Ministry to assist in coping at this very critical time.

One of the programme is Our Sisters Keepers; it's a psychosocial intervention, treatment for child sexual abuse. Mr. Speaker, during the COVID period, we have a number of cases of child sexual abuse, and we as a Ministry and Child Protection Authority and the police have to address those many issues, removing children sometimes from their biological homes. And therefore, our Sisters Keepers, which will be launched soon by the Ministry will assist young girls who have been sexually abused in dealing with that particular issue.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard of many issues that confront our men and boys at the level of the community as it relates to that period of the COVID pandemic. And therefore, as a Ministry, we are also launching the Men Box, which will assist our men in coping in this period. This project will provide targeted community members with essential skills to navigate complex situation, to facilitate community members' capacity to reframe negative responses into more positive and meaningful ones, thereby reducing the issues that we're seeing happening at the level of the community; to

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

reduce the amount of young men entering the Court System, to empower our young men with the necessary life skills, training to reduce negative interpersonal responses, to strengthen and train women and girls to manage violence in their homes and communities, to empower women and girls to protect each other, to build a community spirit by standards mobilisation.

Mr. Speaker, social connection and mental health. Mental health involves all of us, we all have our part to play. It is the way we think, feel and behave. Good mental health is crucial to our survival and is as important as physical health. During this COVID-19 crisis, we were called on even more, to pay attention to our mental health by learning how to manage stress and adapt to the present changes; the new normal, Mr. Speaker. Many of us struggle with the new physical distancing, Mr. Speaker, and, I want to say physical distancing, Mr. Speaker, is not always social distancing. And while we have protocol in place, we must balance the boat. So, when we say physical distancing, and you adhere to the protocol of six feet and wearing your mask, it doesn't mean that as families, you cannot come together, following the protocol. We realise that this period, we must balance ourselves. We have to encourage our families and friends to have social sessions, while adhering to the protocols, you wear your mask, you stay six feet away, it doesn't mean you can't stay 6 feet away and sit down and talk, have a drink, even have dinner together, Mr. Speaker. I think this period, Mr. Speaker, we have to encourage our family and friends to get together sometimes, not big band of people, Mr. Speaker, but family and friends, getting together to deal with those issues that confront us. Those social issues, Mr. Speaker, because we were not made to be locked up, and we understand what we are dealing with at this period, and therefore, we have to protect our health and our people, but in our normal sense, Mr. Speaker, we were made to be together, to interact and therefore, we are seeing that there are a number of issues at the community level, and therefore, people are dependent on having social contact with and the support of immediate family and friends, colleagues, neighbors and the people they meet through various interest, and leisure activities.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

Social contact is extremely important for our physical and mental health. Research shows, Mr. Speaker, that social groups contact may help reduce stress, depression, anxiety, isolation, as well as promote our empathy, self esteem, normalcy, general well-being and actually improve our immune system. Good social support provides us with feeling of predictability, belonging and purpose, as we continue to battle the COVID-19 pandemic. We are exposed to the potential negative consequences of having a lack of social contact and support, with some groups being more affected than others.

The elderly, Mr. Speaker, persons with chronic health conditions are some of the most affected by reduced social contact. We cannot at this time lock ourselves indoors with no social connection. We must strive by finding ways to adjust and cope. It is important that we socialise as a small group as I said earlier on, as highlighted by the Ministry of Health protocols. This is the time when we all have to get aboard, recognising the need to safeguard and promote good mental health.

Mr. Speaker, many people are struggling with financial problems, grief, lack of housing, fear for dying, the struggle of caring for older adults, chronic illnesses and many other issues which make them prone to depression, anxiety and other mental health disorders. Mr. Speaker, while as a Government we are committed and as a Ministry we are doing our part to assist, we appreciate that as a Government we cannot do it alone. We are aware that while Government prioritise, and this is a priority for Government, we are also aware that at this present time, Government revenue is cut by half, so we are receiving a lot less than what we budgeted for. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I call on the community, I call on our Faith-based organisations, I call on the business communities, I call on families and friends to assist in this difficult and trying period.

Mr. Speaker, I will want to give some guidelines as we try to assist our people in coping in this difficult time; limit exposure to news and listen to the news from credible sources, Mr. Speaker. Too many times we listen to news site that is not credible or to persons who are not credible, and have their own agenda, Mr. Speaker, that can even

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

affect us even more in this difficult period. I urge us to listen to credible news sources, not Facebook at all times, because there are some people on Facebook who want to discredit for political and other reasons, and therefore, will create a problem for our vulnerable population, Mr. Speaker. And therefore, I urge our population to listen to only credible sources. Establish a new routine in the chaos and stick to it; use relaxation techniques, deep breathing, yoga, meditation, connect with family and friends via Whatsapp, Facebook, and other forms of social media; eat healthy and stay hydrated; find ways to exercise daily, Mr. Speaker. It is important in this difficult time because we can stay home, lock up, eat and eat and eat and all of us will be looking as rosy as many of us inside here because yes, we're exercising, but we eat a little too much. So I urge us to exercise daily. Get enough rest, find projects around the home to engage in, example, agriculture. I've seen as many persons involved in agriculture during this period, and many families now are producing for themselves, Mr. Speaker. Even at my home, Mr. Speaker, behind our house is green with every vegetable you could think about and within my entire community, Mr. Speaker, we have seen a number of families are now planting. And, Mr. Speaker, you can eat some, you can give away some, and you can even sell some. Spend extra time playing with children and create a sense of safety, engage in positive thinking; I can handle this. Use prayer to engender hope; be kind to others. In this period, Mr. Speaker, we have to be kind to others, because we do not know what people are going through. And therefore, what we say, Mr. Speaker, what we do, can affect our individual people, Mr. Speaker. Find a lesson in the crisis, look for the positive, seek professional help when needed. And, as I said earlier, we do have a 24 hour service by the Ministry and you can call 440-4787 to get professional counselling. This Unit is led by Miss Kizzy Clarence, whose is a professional counsellor, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, before I sit, I want to also speak to one last issue and to commend the St. Martin's de Porres Home for the Aged who has recently opened a Dementia Care Unit there. And so, I want to congratulate the Catholic community and the staff there for this very, very important facility at this time. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker,

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

dementia is not a specific disease. Dementia is a group of conditions characterised by impairment of at least two brain function, such as memory loss and judgment issues, Mr. Speaker. And, we have seen an increase in the number of persons within our Tri-island State with dementia, and it's no longer an age thing. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I must say that I was saddened and I left there sad when I realised that somebody who was involved in the educational system has dementia. And that goes to say, Mr. Speaker, that dementia can happen to any one of our family, and therefore as family, we have to be able to learn to cope, learn to deal with it. And, sometimes it is difficult because no one prepare and no one train you for that kind of disease. But, Mr. Speaker, from our Ministry, we are presently training, providing training, not only for caregivers, but for families who are interested, who believe that your family is coming down and you need assistance, you can also call the Ministry and our professional persons from the Ministry will assist in providing training in that regard. So, Mr. Speaker, once again, I congratulate them for this eleven room facility and we look forward as a Ministry to continue working with them, continue providing the support to them, and continuing to provide training and training of the trainers programme, Mr. Speaker, for other families and other caregivers across our Tri-Island State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Mr. Speaker in this period, Mr. Speaker, as I close, I urge us, Mr. Speaker, as individuals, let us remember that we are resilient and together we can do this. Together we can achieve, together we can come out from this pandemic, strong and healthy with good mental health. I thank you Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew North-West. Honourable Representative for St. Andrew North-East, and Minister for Youth.

Hon. Kate Lewis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Grenada joins the rest of the world today in celebration of International Youth Day. This celebration takes

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

place on August 12, annually and the theme for this year's celebration is **“Youth Engagement for Global Action”**. Mr. Speaker, International Youth Day aims at enlightening the need for youth engagement by making local, regional and international institutions more inclusive. As a Ministry, Mr. Speaker, we continue to create many opportunities, we continue to develop and organise many initiatives for our young people to be engaged because we understand the need for them to function effectively at various levels and to be involved in the decision-making process. To mark this important occasion, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry will spearhead a panel discussion with our National Youth Ambassadors; this will be held tomorrow, and the discussion will be on the theme, **“Youth Employment in this Era, in the face of COVID-19”**. Mr. Speaker, I call on all young people to join the conversation, so that they can have their say, because it is very important that their views... their ideas is necessary for future development of our young people.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to again, encourage our young people to take the necessary action to create employment opportunities and to have a sustainable development of our country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Prime Minister and Parliamentary Representative for St. George North-West. Oh. **(Member for St. John rose)** You give way to St. John, Parliamentary Representative for St. John.

Hon. Alvin Da Breo: Yeah, Mr. Speaker. We have taken your advice and we're putting our Ministerial Statement on the website. But, there were just a few things I wanted to mention here, is that we have the Captain's Training Course, which is a course for 300 captains, and that is funded by the FAO and they are doing, it's a week of intense training in navigation, the use of GPS, the fisheries regulations, conservation, sustainable fishing, safety at sea, and radio communications protocol, and other things. And, at the end they will be receiving a brand new waterproof VHF radio that even if the boat sink it will remain in operation, so that they could call and give their GPS location.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

It also has a VHF radio capabilities and also they could listen to local radio stations to know what the weather forecast is. And, that started two (2) weeks ago in Melville Street. This week it's in Gouyave, next week it will be in St. Andrew at Grenville Secondary School.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, is that we are trying to do something for the youth in Gouyave. You know that the main source of revenue there is fishing. So, there was a programme started on July 23, and it will be going on for about six months. And, this programme is to enhance the capacity and employability for Gouyave youth through marine conservation, and that is funded by GEF. And, as I say, so far the enthusiasm is there and as I say we have 30 young people attending this and the attendance has been very good. And, we're hoping that at least if we could take off 30 people off the streets and educate them and make them more employable, we could see huge benefits in **"the town that never sleeps"** as it is called.

And finally, in NADMA, they are trying to upgrade the hurricane shelters because you know we are in the hurricane season and they're working to do that because there is, some of the areas in the Community Centres, Mr. Speaker, some, you know, you would go and you inspect it, and you do repairs and in no time you're seeing some people vandalise it. We have to educate people to be more respectful of Government property, and also it's for their community. I know in my Constituency we are embarking on a programme to educate people how to take care for the Community Centres. Even in Florida, we want to do some repair and we're not giving it to any contractor, we are doing it through a Saturday weekend maroon. So, at least if the people come out and work, they would have more appreciation in opening this long term maintenance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. John. Honourable Prime Minister, Minister for Finance and Parliamentary Representative.

(The Acting Clerk converse with the Speaker in private)

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I...

Mr. Speaker: You will give way again, Sir.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Yes I will.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Representative for St. Mark and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know it is common practice that the Member for St. George North-West comes on a little later. So, I'm sorry, I have to intrude, but Mr. Speaker, I rise to inform this Honourable House and through you to the general public of one issue, as to what is taking place in the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, in the area of airlift. Mr. Speaker, we had set a date for the 1st of July for the opening of our borders and due to certain developments within the region and otherwise, and further assessment of where we were at that time, it was deemed necessary that we had to postpone for a further month. And therefore, we changed that date to the first of August and since then, we have been moving progressively, very cautiously, slowly, maybe too slow for some of the airlines that want to come in. But, we have to ensure that with each flight, we look at lessons learnt, we make adjustments and necessary changes and we move forward. And therefore, we started off intra-regionally and I spoke to that in our last Sitting here. And, I just want to say that it is going very well, that persons in the region are travelling, not as much as before, but there is an awakening after the almost complete shutdown we had in the region in the wake of COVID and it is happening. And, one of our concerns, though, is that some persons are coming from further afield on flights within the Caribbean like Caribbean Airlines, InterCaribbean, One Caribbean and at least in one or two cases, they purported to be coming from one of the Caribbean Islands. The Caribbean Islands, especially the OECS, we have an agreement for a bubble, where because of the low

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

numbers, the low incidence of cases, our requirements, our protocols are a little different from those that are medium risk and high risk. So, persons are allowed to come in, have a test, whether it's Rapid Test or PCR, I think the Ministry of Health is moving more towards PCR because it is more reliable and they can, they are free to go into the country and do whatever, whatever it's up to them to do. However, the medium risk zone and the high risk zone, the requirements are a little bit different. And so, if they're coming from countries like Canada or the USA, UK, and they transit in Barbados, or the transit in Antigua and they come into Grenada as having come from Antigua or Barbados, then the requirements are different and it could put us in jeopardy. So, we are coming up with some new protocols for persons who are in transit and we will be very strict on that because the regulations, they refer to the country of origin regardless to whether you passed in St. Vincent or Barbados or what, where you started from, the country of origin is the country that we will apply the protocol to.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, we had Air Canada coming in with 138 persons, mostly Grenadians, but I was very pleased to see that there was some persons who came as visitors to our shores, and that augurs well for the period after the repatriation of Grenadians, that it gives us the hope that we will continue to have visitors to our shores. But, Mr. Speaker, I just... and there were, I think about 120 leaving as well. So, Air Canada is quite happy with that, they will be continuing with regular flights every Monday for now, and as we see how we manage the situation, in terms of our resources to manage at the Airport, our resources in terms of rooms and staffing to ensure that the required quarantine protocols are adhered to, then we'll go further.

I am happy to say too, that the Geofencing watch is now one Island. And, that is a piece of device that would give the person who is managing that system, an idea of exactly where the wearer of the Geofencing Watch is. That is very important to us. It will give us more latitude in terms of assisting persons with home quarantine, because now we can monitor them better, but they do have to meet a certain criteria. So, if there's a one bedroom facility and there are three and four persons living there and somebody coming in wants to go and home quarantine, then obviously they cannot go

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

there. They have to have at least one room that can comfortably be used; if they have more than one bathrooms better yet, but if not a protocol can be given to them how to use it. So persons may be unhappy, having requested home quarantine and not being given but it is not going to be determined by a certain criteria and everyone will be subject to the criteria. Of course persons with bigger facilities and maybe less persons in the household would have an advantage over persons who have less facilities and have more persons in the household.

But, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say something about that flight. We were quite happy, we did everything, we spent hours meeting and looking at how to welcome our people. The Grenada Tourism Authority went out of their way to welcome that first commercial flight from Air Canada and so on. And, Mr. Speaker, I am well aware and we are all aware that our Government has done... gone far beyond the call of duty to deal with existing expenditures that they had to deal with and new expenditures especially in relation to COVID.

But, Mr. Speaker, there was a video that went viral and I need to speak on it, because having taken on so much with less revenues, having to buy tests that are administered to persons and PPE's and so on, Government just cannot cover everything. And one of the things we decided we were not going to cover at this particular time is the quarantine, so we've publicised it, we put it on all of our different media that we communicate with, the Ministry of Health has their website, GTA has their website and we have said that persons should make their own bookings for where they are going to spend their quarantine period. We have given over 200 facilities that have been inspected with over 700 rooms and persons have their choices to do. And they have to sign a form but a few days ago, one individual came and decided he had to go to his home, he would not be quarantined. We have a breakdown of law and order all of a sudden and people could do just what they want, when they want it and how they want it. After we have circulated and the individual I am told had signed the agreement to be quarantined, but came here and said all kinds of things about this Government and insisted on going home. Staff at the Airport had to spend hours there, wasting time

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

to convince that individual to follow the quarantine procedures, police had to be called, the Chief Medical Officer who is so busy saving lives had to be called, Mr. Speaker, and this is very, very pathetic and I had to speak about that.

And then we had another instance after the Air Canada came in, where again some people insisted that they did not have the money and some of the staff out of the kindness of their heart allowed them to stay in a particular facility. And I heard the person on the video asking **“where is the budget for the maintenance of this facility?”** And I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, when we presented a Budget for this period of time, in this Honourable House, there was no line item called COVID, there was nothing called quarantine, so no monies was budgeted for that. But due to the financial prudence of this Government and the Minister for Finance and his team, they managed to the point where we have enough PPE's for the period, for the next 3 months as the Ministry of Health has told us. To the point where we have enough testing kits and I just want to take a minute off to thank one lady, the owner of Mariposa who contributed 1,000 testing kits to the cause of COVID in this country. We highly appreciate that and **(applause)**, Mr. Speaker, I am glad that there are a few persons and countries that are represented here that have done that and I think this is what we need to be doing. Coming together, doing this together and not seeking to criticise because what is being done now to keep people afloat was never envisaged but I believe now that it is well done. Government has gone way beyond and to ask for a budget, I just wanted to answer this question in this Honourable House, there was no budget and it is just an emergency budget and therefore we are asking that everyone consult all of the websites and they comply with the quarantine, it is the law of the country at this particular point in time and nobody is above the law. And therefore if persons do not want to do, then they can wait in the country where they are until the right time comes. Otherwise let us come in peacefully to our country and let us not waste the time of people who have other more important things to do rather than to be sitting begging with somebody who purports to have common sense and sign a document and then coming here and say you would not quarantine. We have to set

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

better examples, Mr. Speaker, and as we continue Grenada is open. We continue to have dialogue and we will see more airlines coming into our countries and we beg everyone, visitor, local and otherwise to adhere to the law of the land. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Parliamentary Representative for St. Mark and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: My time now?

(Laughter)

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Prime Minister and Minister for Finance. That's why I was making sure I look around to see nobody else would say anything else.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I stand to make a statement as it relates to my Prime Ministerial duties. What we realise, Mr. Speaker, that the Government has a fundamental responsibility to protect the citizens of this country. The oath taken by all of us indicate that our responsibility is first to every citizen of this country and therefore sometimes Government has to take decisions which may not be popular with some group or element in the society but it is necessary for the protection of all and sundry, not any specific group. So when the Government, and we were one of the last to do it, as the Minister for Culture pointed out, agreed to cancel the Carnival celebration while most of us love our Carnival. It was not meant to do anything else but to protect the population as a whole. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, you would have expected therefore all and sundry to understand that. Regulations were in place and I commended the population in general for adhering to the regulation during the state of emergency and other period as the COVID-19 continue to be an issue for all countries.

Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.

Statements by Ministers

In this process therefore, the Police has a fundamental responsibility to ensure that all of us obeys the law of the land. And therefore the regulation which was okayed through an Act of the Parliament was put in place and adhered to, to ensure that we do not have a major crisis in this country. And as I have pointed out, Mr. Speaker, that if we have, and it is possible, those of us watching what is taking place regionally, not just internationally, regionally and internationally would see. For example we have... let's suppose we have the number of infections that Jamaica has or Trinidad has, we're in a lot of trouble because we won't have the capacity to deal with it. And many of those infections are verified of people who were returning and did not adhere to the protocols that was established because it appears to some of us, it can happen to everybody else except me, that's the mindset. When AIDS was ravaging the world, that was the mindset of a lot of us, it will happen to the next person not me. But the Government has a responsibility not to say if I had known, but to take the steps to protect the population as a whole.

And this is why we moved, Mr. Speaker, to cancel Carnival. In the process, as I think the Minister for Social Services alluded to a while ago, with the state of emergency having been removed, Government never said you must not socialise; social activities are fundamental. What the regulation implied is that whatever you do, it must be done within the context of the protocol established. So that in fact and that has been something that internationally is accepted, while people are still grappling with the extent and nature of this virus. But some things have been proven that if you adhere to the protocol rigidly so, the infection rates are very small. And countries that have done it have certainly have very small number of cases. So it was understood that you can have a social activity but do wear the mask, social distance and therefore in effect what you're saying; avoid any activity in which it is impossible to observe the protocol. We did not say you can't Jab Jab, but if you're intending to have a Jab Jab without the protocol and having mass number of persons then clearly that means that you can't have it. So it means that the police watching what has happened over the last couple of days, the police could have been very heavy-handed in ensuring or I shouldn't use the

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

word heavy handed, they could have in fact proceeded to apply the regulation and charge quite a number of persons or groups for disobeying, breaking the fundamental law of the land. And none of us is above the Law, none of us.

In fact, it has been proven over and over, Mr. Speaker, no one could ever say this Government, that persons who are close to anyone of us in Government or Members of this Government have broken a law and the justice system has failed to operate or the police has failed to move accordingly. But the police in its better judgment, did not proceed to make this, because it is clear, Mr. Speaker, that the intentions of some persons with the narrative that has been pushed, that this Government and no matter what institution in the country does anything, it is the politicians. Sometimes you don't know anything, because people have a right, the Public Service has its responsibility and they have to implement the system and they don't have to wait on the politician to indicate what they must do, otherwise we're in trouble.

The police, when one is breaking the law, does not have to ask the Minister for National Security what to do, it doesn't have to. But in their better judgement they did not proceed to apply rigidly the regulations as they are. It appears that the interpretation is that we can do own thing, it appears so, Mr. Speaker, and it's unfortunate because the harsh reality is with the opening of the borders, while we have done very well in keeping COVID-19 infections very low, because of how we have managed and we've been given a lot of credit regionally and internationally for this. The harsh reality is one person, in fact it's proven, one individual in Croydon in Jamaica, a Pastor it was understood, came in... you're supposed to observe the protocol, did not observe the protocol, went and had a church service and that pastor infected over 20 odd persons. It means that one person can cause massive problem, one, not two, not two and three, one. So you could be in a Jab Jab jumping up because particles go all over the place. You're drinking, so if you have 500 persons, 200 persons, 300 persons, you could imagine the massive infection that could possibly occur because we don't know the answer yet. We don't know the answer yet, Mr. Speaker, we better pray that

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

we have none. Because the persons who are doing and disobeying the law of the land, they may not bear the major consequences you know, they could bring it home to their loved ones or the family, the older members or persons with underlying health problems and cause major problems health wise.

With five (5) or six (6) ICU units in Grenada, and you know what will happen? They will come, Prime Minister, my family sick we need help, we need to send them to Barbados, to Trinidad because the heart in trouble, the kidney going because they're infected. You hear the stories and if you can't find it, then curse for you. Which in other words, we are not thinking, the question you ask yourselves, there is some innocence in this but I am concerned there are some people behind the scenes pushing a particular narrative. And the fact is, Mr. Speaker, what's unfortunate, they themselves could face the consequences of that unfortunate decision. It's not going to be the Prime Minister because I ain't going there and I'm very careful going to my mom's home and that's a fact because she is 98 and I don't want to be responsible for infecting her, so we social distance. I go and we sit down far apart and we speak.

The point I am making is, it's unfortunate, it seems like it's a joke, this is not a joke, it is not a joke. We expected the police to go and arrest 500 people? We expect the police would go into anywhere and just pick up people put them in jail? The next thing you hear, police try to arrest a Jab Jab... a few Jab Jab men and next thing the police themselves get sick. So in effect, it is dangerous to ask them to do this. Who is winning in this, Mr. Speaker, who is winning, and who is being hurt? Keith Mitchell, NNP, Ministers of Government. No. It's unfortunate. Mr. Speaker, the same persons who were on the hoopla over the COVID-19 Bill, we need to hear them now, where are the voices? The same concern must now be demonstrated because your family and friends and your country could be in trouble. And some people glad to take all these stuff that sends terrible message, people almost naked and send it all over like Grenada is a mad house, promoting that you know, it's a big joke. F Minister, F Prime Minister, F this, who me, **(laughter)** I'm sorry. Well they are not respecting themselves, no one hurting me, we are just hurting ourselves and I'm concerned about the innocent ones. I

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

am concerned about everybody but particularly the ones that seem not to know what they were doing, Mr. Speaker.

I must commend the religious community for how they have dealt with COVID-19 so far in sending the message how serious this thing is and it's not about any religious person in any religion. It is not about any person from any political organisation. When COVID-19 infection starts or is around, all of us going down. There is no label, you see it in the United States, you see it in other countries, there are no political label or no religious label for the infection, all and sundry. But the same voices with the Government's intention to protect the population was so willing to come and talk about dictatorship, the dictatorial things, the same persons were outside the Parliament. Where are they today, where are their voices when people can in fact get sick? I would expect to hear their voices.

Yes, we thought the Bill should have been discussed more, there was more time and the Government agreed with this. But, sisters and brothers protect yourself, do not go and do anything that destroys yourself because we are worried about that. That would be the approach and should have been the approach, but not a word not a drum is heard, no sound is heard, because they are happy, somebody is being cursed. Some might be happy, I don't know what happiness is this. It seems to me, we as the Government and as Prime Minister, I have a fundamental responsibility and I will not shirk this responsibility, I will continue to speak, I will continue to advise, I will continue to do what I believe is right even if there are some people prepared to curse, that's their right but not do it in a way that breaks the law of the land. And I'm not worried, Mr. Speaker, about some votes. That's not about votes, so you get votes and you die? What point is it, you still can't vote or you lose some votes but you save lives, so be it, Mr. Speaker. We are here about the protection of this country not to play games with people. And I don't care at what level they come from, whether they name politician, whether they name lawyer, whether they name Cultural Artiste, it does not matter. What matters is, we must do what is right **(applause)** in the interest of this country. This is what I'm here for and they should know me better than this, after 35 years, this is

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

joke. I have seen it all, Mr. Speaker, and you know it. When you do what is right, you always emerge in the right lane, Mr. Speaker. You play games, you end up in the wrong lane, you get bounced down; we will do what is right.

I have to speak on this, Mr. Speaker, this morning because I'm wondering what mindset is this? So I am expecting to hear every serious organisation in this country speak about this behaviour of what transpired, I expect that. I am doing my share and the Government will do its share and I'll be addressing the nation accordingly soon. So some people feel the Government did something wrong, then you have a right to express that too. There's nothing wrong with that, we're not perfect people. But to obligate our responsibility to do what is right to protect this country, this would be in fact a serious omission.

So I want to compliment as I mentioned earlier on... I cannot fault the churches. From where I sit and from what I know it appears that almost all, well I have to say all, I have not have any exception to that rule. The religious community has been leading their congregation appropriately and warning us about doing what is right. I saw a presentation by Bishop Clyde Harvey, it's a statement that could have done any one of us proud if we said the same thing. Because you would not know it was a Bishop or some religious person, it was like a concerned citizen at the level of leadership speaking about what he saw and advising the congregation, the people of the country, advising all of us that this thing is serious, it is not a joke. I did send him a note and applauded him.

The other churches, you go to the church services or some funeral, they're observing the protocol, there are marks in the church that you cannot pass certain section. They have their sanitiser giving to everybody that comes in. When I walked in there, they offered me and I said I just did mine in my car because I don't walk without it. But they do it, Mr. Speaker, every one of them, so when I speak it, it must not be said... the religious community must be given tremendous credit for what they have done with respect to advising their congregation. **(Applause)** But we have other organisations in the country, we have every organisation in this country, I expect to hear

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Statements by Ministers

the business community speaking because if we have major infection here, businesses are going to be affected again, we will have to lock down. I expect to hear the voice of the Trade Union leadership, I expect that because if we have infection and we have to lock down, there is no such stimulus package, again, for workers, you know, there are no such. In fact, even what we promised we may not be able to deliver because of the financial situation we're facing.

We expect to hear what we define as the non-governmental community; their voices are loud in some things that even when they should be supporting, they oppose, some elements, the non-NGO. We expect to hear that, Mr. Speaker. In other words, we expect to hear everyone speaking to that, not about the government, not about trying to protect the Government or pleasing the Government, talk about what is wrong, that we see happening in our country that can affect all of us. That is what we have to talk about, we can't play with this. This is no joke stuff because I watch some of these things and I say, wait, wait, are we, is our head right, is our head right? You mean for just a night of fun, we'll kill ourselves, for a night have fun? And then, we have no more fun again. Is that, does that... I am concerned, Mr. Speaker. That's why I'm taking the time this morning to speak because I'm very concerned. I'm not concerned politically. Let's make it very clear. This does not affect the political equation in this country. I am not concerned about that, but, I'm concerned about lives being lost. I'm concerned about the economic future of this country if we have serious infection of COVID-19. I'm concerned about that, and that means jobs, that means opportunities, that means more social problems that the Minister and her team have to face; more serious issues. I'm concerned about that. Politics is the last thing to spend time on, so I expect. Where is the official opposition, where is the opposition? I expect to hear the Leader the Opposition, I expect to hear him talk about this because he spoke with passion about wearing your mask, and he talked about the 1918 epidemic, he spoke about, so I expect that he will speak to that. But, I expect the Opposition Party, the majority of... that had the second majority of votes in the country in the last election and may still be the majority opposition, political organisation in this country here. You were demonstrating

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

**Statements by Ministers
Motions**

for the COVID Bill, well, I expect to see them now to hear their voices. But, I'm pretty sure you won't hear their voices. You will not hear their voices, but, that's for their own conscience.

We will do, Mr. Speaker, what is right, we will do what will protect this country. This is the mandate that we were given by the people of this country, not to play games with the lives of the people, but to do what is right, with God's help to protect every citizen in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
(Applause)

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Prime Minister and Minister for Finance.

Clerk Assistant: Item 13 - Personal Explanations.
Item 14 - Motions.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Motion 14 (a) standing in my name which reads:

WHEREAS the debate on the Gracious Address delivered by the Governor-General on the occasion of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Third Session of the Tenth Parliament on Friday 4th October, 2019 was further deferred to a date to be fixed;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the said Address be further deferred to a date to be fixed.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Motions

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 34, Amendment of Motion, I propose the following Motion, Mr. Speaker:

WHEREAS debate on the Gracious Address delivered by the Governor-General on the occasion of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Third Session of the 10th Parliament on Friday, fourth October 2019 was further deferred to a date to be fixed; and the amendment, Mr. Speaker,

BE IT RESOLVED that the said Address be accepted.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are all aware that at the Ceremonial State Opening and after the prorogation of the Parliament on subsequent occasions, yearly that is provided for in the Constitution and the Standing Order, the Address forms the content of the Budget or it informs the content of the Budget. And, since then, Mr. Speaker, we had the Budget, the 2020 Budget and the situation arose with COVID that we had a Supplementary Budget even thereafter. Mr. Speaker, and we are looking now to move into the prorogation from which we'll have another Address by the gracious Governor-General. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the time for debating this is not only upon us, but the circumstances under which it will be debated has changed significantly. So, we will be debating something pertinent to the 2020 Budget and now we have gone past that, we have a stimulus package debated again in a Supplementary Budget. We simply, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time, I will therefore want to move that we accept the gracious Governor-General's Address, as pertinent to that period, and as we are now, it makes little or no sense to debate it at this particular time. So, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, as I did in the amendment, that we

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

**Motions
Bills**

accept the Address because it was really relevant at that particular point in time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question put and agreed.

Motion accepted.

Clerk Assistant: Item 15 - Bills.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the last Sitting, we did the First Reading for three Bills before us today. I wish to crave your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, and to ask that the Order Paper be revised under Bills, so that today we go forward only with the Praedial Larceny (Amendment) Bill, Mr. Speaker. The other two to be deferred to the next Sitting of this Honourable House.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Order Paper revised.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Representative for St. Andrew South-West and Minister for Agriculture.

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the House be suspended...

Mr. Speaker: Now, the Bill has already been read the first time. So, we move to the second stage of the Bill.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the House be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through all its stages at this Sitting, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members... I think what you need, Honourable Parliamentary Representative, what you need is to move to the second stage because the first stage is already completed. So, we're not taking it through all its stages at this Sitting, we're taking it through the remaining stages at this Sitting.

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: Okay.

Mr. Speaker: So move to the second stage.

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move to second reading of the Bill.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Representative.

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Bill seeks to amend the Praedial Larceny Act, Cap. 250 to make provision for the classification of soursop as a specially protected produce; create a licencing regime under the Act; establish a Praedial Larceny Management Unit; make provision for the appointment or delegation of a Praedial Larceny Management Committee; mitigate the adverse effects of Praedial Larceny on food security generally and apply stiffer penalties, Mr. Speaker.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

Mr. Speaker, soursop is referred to as our green gold in Grenada. Grenada is the only country, Mr. Speaker, that is supplying fresh soursop to the International Market. Mr. Speaker, according to our records, we have seen an increase from 51,374 pounds of soursop exported in 2018, to 92,738 pounds in 2019. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker I recall even during the midst of COVID-19 pandemic, the demand and export continued, bringing well needed revenue to the farmers and foreign exchange to this country. Mr. Speaker, for that reason, this market ought to be protected and sustained and the producers, our hardworking farmers need to be protected from Praedial Larceny.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen and felt the plight of our farmers. I was personally told hundreds of stories by farmers, farmers sleeping in their fields at nights; farmers running down thieves demanding and damaging, Mr. Speaker, themselves, to protect their produce; farmers putting needles in produce, with the hope of holding the thief. Frequently seen, Mr. Speaker, and that's new, are vehicles driving around with rods picking soursop unknown to the farmers, the owners. We have heard this concern, Mr. Speaker, and this is the move to manage such activities in this vast growing industry through a mandatory licencing regime of three categories, Trader's, Carrier's and Traveller's Licence. Mr. Speaker, farmers are fed up. They are working hard and in some cases are stealing... farmers are stealing from farmers and other persons who do not have a scrap of land, reaping, Mr. Speaker, the hard labour of farmers, of others.

Mr. Speaker, some farmers have spent a lot of money, they have invested in cameras, some have fenced their entire property. I mean that level of investment and the persons out there are still stealing. A farmer was crying to me, you know, I went to visit him and he said, he bought a dark vehicle, you heard that, he had to buy a dark vehicle because he say, he tired sitting on a stone in his land, he eventually bought an old pickup and he sits in that pickup every night. He has a family, but he sits in that pickup every night watching his field. I mean, come on, what is happening here? You know, he doesn't have a life, so he toils everyday in the field and then when he has to

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

get a good night's rest, he has to be back out there sitting, cramped in a vehicle looking at his field. Mr. Speaker, that is craziness and we can't continue with this.

Mr. Speaker, farmers are crying out and looking to the Government to provide answers, to provide protection. Mr. Speaker, that is the purpose of us being here today, to make those critical changes to this Praedial Larceny Act. The time for stealing and damaging to property has to stop. Our markets must be protected according to law. Effective management must be practiced and benefits must be enjoyed by all, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill contains 13 Clauses and, I will go through parts of it, Mr. Speaker, and when we're in Committee form, I will explain more about the changes in their form. But, based on how I design my presentation, some of the information will be shared on both end.

Mr. Speaker, Clause 1 provides for the Short Title. Clause 2 provides for the amendment to section 2 of the principal Act, to insert definition, so you'll see different definitions included there in that Clause, Mr. Speaker, based on the changes that were made. Clause 3, Mr. Speaker, provides for the insertion of new sections 2A to 2M to the principal Act. Section 2A provides for the establishment of the Praedial Larceny Management Unit, Mr. Speaker, and section 2B provides for its functions. Section 2C provides for the establishment of the Praedial Larceny Management Committee. And, Mr. Speaker, we already have that Unit at the Ministry of Agriculture. However, there is need for enactment to concretise the functions of that Unit. So the Unit is there, but it's not functioning, it is not, you know, functioning as it should, it's not enacted in the whole thing. So, we are happy that we are moving in that direction, Mr. Speaker, hopefully. Section 2D, Mr. Speaker, to 2M creates a licencing regime under the Act to facilitate the trade of business by buying, selling, exporting, conveying, or otherwise dealing in specially protected produce of the weight of 15 pounds or more. You must have a license granted by the Minister. Failure to comply, Mr. Speaker, a fine of not less than \$5,000 and not more than \$10,000, and imprisonment for four years. Mr. Speaker, this

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

section is proposed to enable management, monitoring and effective praedial investigations into uncontrolled picking, carrying and exporting of soursop.

Mr. Speaker, section 2E to the principal Act, Types of Licences, we have three categories there, Mr. Speaker. We have the Traveller's Licence, the Trader's Licence and the Carrier's Licence.

Mr. Speaker, section 2G to section 2N to the principal Act speaks of process of application and determination of licence. It also speaks of where licences has to be cancelled or revoked and the fines and penalties to address the situation.

Mr. Speaker, Clause 4 provides for the amendment of section 5 of the principal Act to increase the penalty for the offence of damage to produce. This Act Mr. Speaker, is amended by inserting these words, **“a term of”** immediately before the word **“imprisonment,”** and by deleting the word **“for twenty-four months,”** and substituting the word **“not exceeding five years.”** This allows the Magistrate flexibility.

Mr. Speaker, I would not go through all but Clause 5, some pertinent areas I want to highlight. Clause 5 provides for amendment to section 6 of the principal Act to increase the penalty for the offence of dishonesty, receiving praedial larceny produce to a fine exceeding \$10,000, and a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years. Before, Mr. Speaker, the principal Act did not speak to convictions and penalties nor did it seek to identify distinctions of dishonesty receiving, having unlawful possession and this honestly receiving with the intent to export. So that was changed.

Mr. Speaker, Clause 6 provides for the amendment to section 8 of the principal Act to increase the penalty for the offence of vagrancy. Persons who just go on your farm and find themselves there without any consent, reflecting imprisonment not less than two years and not exceeding five years. So, the Magistrates now have, Mr. Speaker, the discretion of increased sentencing for this offence.

Clause 7, Mr. Speaker, provides for the insertion of new sections 10A and 10C to the principal Act, which provide for the forfeiture and sale of any agricultural produce or vehicle or other conveyance seized in relation to an offence after conviction, restitution and the sale or disposal of and compensation of perishable agricultural produce. So,

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

that Clause, Mr. Speaker, explains all those different areas, what happens with the goods when they have been collected, how it's being disposed, etc.

Clause 8, Mr. Speaker, provides for amendment to section 12A of the principal Act to empower the Minister to issue an identification card in addition to the certificate of registration. Mr. Speaker, this allows for the farmer's ID to be legally recognized. Mr. Speaker, we have an effective card ID system at the Ministry, but that was never enacted.

Clause 9, Mr. Speaker, provides for the amendment to section 12B of the principal Act to increase the penalty for failing to comply with the provisions relating to the memorandum of sale of delivery. So, a person who fails to comply, commits an offence and is liable to a fine not less than \$5,000 and not more than \$10,000, and to a term of imprisonment for a minimum of four years. Mr. Speaker, this section of the principal Act reflected a minimum of two years for failing to have a receipt. So, it has been increased to four years.

Clause 10, Mr. Speaker, provides for amendment to section 12C of the principal Act to extend the powers granted thereunder to a Rural Constable, or other persons designated in writing by the Minister. Whereas the principal Act only reflected a Police Officer, this empowers the Minister to recommend increased manpower. Mr. Speaker, most Praedial Larceny cases are attended to by Rural Constables, which is now reflected in the proposed Bill.

Mr. Speaker, and maybe at this point in time, I could give you an insight a little bit regarding manpower and the importance of manpower in this whole Praedial Larceny plan and program going forward.

Mr. Speaker, since 2004, 35 officers were trained as a Task Force. They were subsequently moved to various Departments within the Royal Grenada Police Force. Coming from the 35 trained persons, there were only seven officers remaining, other civilians were later grafted in to give support to the Department. Mr. Speaker, at present there are 29 persons within the Task Force and this is by no means capable of responding to over 7000 farmers out there. Mr. Speaker, the Department will need a

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

minimum of 50 persons attached to the 12 Police Stations at the various Divisions and district if we are to really follow and to curb this Praedial Larceny as we are passing this legislation that we are looking, proposing this legislation, we have to put these structures in place, and the quality of people in place so that we can address this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to raise that because I think that was very important at this point in time, to let the Honourable House and the person out there know that moving in this direction, we also have to have a good plan and structure to make sure that this whole change is taking place. So, Mr. Speaker, Clauses 11 and 12 provide insertions to new sections 11 to section 18A to the principal Act to empower the Minister to amend the Schedules.

So, Mr. Speaker, with these few words, and this level of explanation here this morning, Mr. Speaker, I hope that we have a better understanding and the seriousness of this piece of legislation that we are moving to pass in this Honourable House. I know the farmers will be happy, I know the thieves will not be happy. **(Laughter)** And, I'm hoping that, Mr. Speaker, that we will all take this move seriously and we should support that level of amendment to this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when we move in Committee, I will go with the specific changes that we have made since discussing this. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Representative for St. John.

Hon. Alvin Da Breo: Yeah, Mr. Speaker, I could identify with the farmer on the losses that the encounter from Praedial Larceny because about two (2) years ago I went at the farm in Maran and I bought some soursop and around March there was one that was looking really nice and big. So I was watching it, Mr. Speaker, then the day I decided to harvest it, I went and there was no soursop. In my case, Mr. Speaker, at least I could probably... I didn't need it for export, I just needed it during the lockdown you know just to pass the time, but I could have managed. But, Mr. Speaker, there are farmers that this is their livelihood, that they have made a significant investment to

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

cultivate and plant, nurture, fertilise and all those things. And when it comes to harvest, you get there and you realise that your produce is gone, Mr. Speaker, that's very disappointing, very sad and hard. Because some of those farmers depend on the produce to feed their families and send their children to school and that's their only source of livelihood. But you have the thieves, Mr. Speaker, and the thing about it, they're selling it cheap because they never made any financial contribution towards the cultivation of the soursop. All they do is like they would say locally they stay and they macco the farmer and they macco the growth of the produce and then they will come and harvest it at the opportune time.

So this Bill, Mr. Speaker, it may not illuminate it but it will make it more difficult or be a deterrent and at the same time in addition to the legislation we want people to be a little mindful and considerate of others. Because it all boils down to, Mr. Speaker, to the caring of a nation... of people because if to say you really care, you would not be going and distress people like I have seen and I've heard from farmers coming to me and all their produce being stolen. So I support this legislation, Mr. Speaker, and just to again appeal to the farmers that this is one way in which this Government is trying to help you maintain your livelihood. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. John. Honourable Representative for the Town of St. George.

Hon. Peter David: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my support to this Bill. I'll be very brief. Mr. Speaker, my dear colleague from St. John mentioned his experience and it takes me back to... I think some of us grew up on the book the Sun's Eye. I don't know if you read the Sun's Eye and the story of Bulldog and Spencer where Spencer stood up staying all night looking at his bunch of bananas and he blinked and the bananas were gone. I think we grew up on those stories at high school. So we understand the experiences, plus I think many of us have had

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

experiences like what my dear colleague speaks of and the plight of the farmers, Praedial Larceney is a serious challenge.

I agree with the Bill and the increase, the penalties, the ID's for farmers and persons who are receiving, because a large part of the problem is persons who are receiving from persons who steal. The persons who steal bring it to persons who take it to the market and use of the ID's and identification of where the stuff come from, I think that is important. But I think it's also important and I know the Minister and I want to commend the Minister on this because I know the Minister have had discussions on the use of technology. I think one thing that we must try to get for the farmers is technology. I have seen some persons speak of drone technology for example where you can geofence, I think that is the word that is used and ensure that anybody that goes into the farm, it triggers a drone to be able to focus down on the farm and so... I know the Ministry is looking at that and I want to commend the Member for St. Andrew South-West for doing that. But also infrared technology and all forms of technology, I think it's fairly advanced now in some of the more advanced countries and I want to ask the Ministry to pursue, to continue, because I know they are doing it, to continue to pursue technology. Because as the Member for St. John said, increasing penalties does not stop it, increasing penalties may help deter in some instances, targeting the persons who receive, will help deter. But I think the technology on the farms and to assist the farmers to do it collectively because it's quite expensive so it may be that we have to find ways to speak to GDB and other financial institutions, work with the Government, bring them together. I know sometimes it's difficult to bring farmers together to work on projects, bring them together so they can share the cost because it's quite expensive if each farmer tries to do it him or herself. If the farmers can come together, get the technology, I know some of them are already doing that individually but if the Ministry can facilitate and it's somewhere I think the Ministry is looking at, then we may be able to address.

Because Agriculture is extremely important to our development. We saw it during the period of COVID, the importance of feeding ourselves and therefore I want to

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

commend this Bill because Praedial Larceny is one of the bigger issues in relation to why we are not advancing as fast as we can and why the farmers are having serious difficulty. So I want to support the Bill and support the Ministry of Agriculture for having it here today. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Representative for St. George's Town. The Honourable Representative for St. David.

Hon. Oliver Joseph: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my support to the amendment to this Bill, because this is a problem that the Ministry has been grappling for a number of years. Legislations were put in place but that did not solve the problem. Now I know consultations were held throughout the Island with farmers who made certain recommendation to deal with this problem. So it is my hope that the recommendations that have been put forward by the Ministry now would give more teeth to the Ministry in terms of its implementation of the law.

I want to highlight two things; one, the meaning of soursop. In the law now as it says; **"whether in the pod or pulp or separated from the pod, whether ripe or unripe and whether marketable or unmarketable"**. All forms of soursop is protected under this amendment because as you know Grenada can send the soursop in the pod. All the other countries that export to the US send it in pulp, the raw fruit is not accepted, so they pulp it. So the definition of soursop here covers that, so you don't think well you could pulp it as was done before because the raw soursop you are not sending it. It says here whether in the pod, pulp or separated, it is protected under this Act. I want the public listening to be very clear that in any form, it is protected.

The Management Committee, Praedial Larceny Management Committee has now been established and will advise the Minister and will evaluate the application for licence and will advise the Minister whether or not to issue a licence under this amendment. And this mandatory licence, I wish to take two minutes to explain that. You have to... there was an amendment earlier, SRO where you had to go through

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

Marketing Board to ensure that the right quality, you are exporting the proper quality. Now it goes beyond that, the licence, it say “**no person shall carry on the trade or business of buying**”, so if you even have to buy soursop, Mr. Speaker, you have to get a licence, or selling, you also have to get, or exporting. Any business you want to convey with respect to soursop, you have to get a licence and it's compulsory, it's mandatory licencing under this Act. You see the impression that some farmers get is that if you want to export, you need to get your licence to export. No, no, it's not only export; “**buying, selling, exporting, conveying or otherwise dealing with this specially protected fruit called soursop with any weight over 15lbs**”. Once you're dealing with soursop and it weighs over 15 pounds, you must get a licence and the Committee, the Praedial Larceny Management Committee will be able to examine your application for licence, do the checks for the amount of soursop you have on your farm before a licence is issued.

So you have to first obtain your licence to buy, to sell and that is the all-encompassing and these came from the farmers and these are very good recommendation. And I think that will help stem what we are talking about, this Larceny because farmers are investing thousands of dollars in clearing up the farm and planting because of the demand, the high demand for soursop and for Grenada soursop in particular. Because of this high demand we have to protect it, we have to protect it in ensuring that the quality that enters the US... You know with all these investment, in total millions of dollars has been invested and if some fungus is found and it's banned, you know what is the consequences of these millions of dollars that our farmers have invested? If we do not take measures to ensure that the correct procedures are followed, that you meet all the standards that have been set, it could kill the whole industry. All the investment that we put into the soursop now, all that could go if in one shipment some fungus has been discovered. All the investments that we making now could go in one shipment.

I have been told by some, I don't know how true it is that even in some neighbouring Islands and we want to ship out, sometimes it is brought in from

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

neighbouring Island and the country of origin is said to be Grenada but under this licencing regime wouldn't happen because when you apply for the licence it will be traced back. Where did the soursop come from, which farm, before you even buy and when you want to sell it and when you export it, all that would be taken into consideration. So we have to do everything possible to protect this soursop Industry because just too much investment have gone into it, not to protect it and not to ensure that the farmers who spend their money and put in the labour benefit from it.

Some farmers have gone straight into pure soursop as an investment for the future and therefore this Government is taking the right step working along with the farmers and the Minister for Agriculture, listening to the concern of the famers and today I am very pleased to see the amendments that are being made to this law. Because that, more than the penalty you know, that will save the industry. This mandatory licence that we have there, that is the real thing that will save the industry and ensure that it grows and develop and that all our farmers and extension our citizen, will benefit from a protected industry and that for the long term we can have confidence that we can invest in the soursop and that it will be a protected industry. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

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

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do believe that I have spoken to Praedial Larceny on many occasions in this Honourable House. And again I would support any amendment so that the farmers can have some alleviation in terms of their hard earned labour. Mr. Speaker, I come from an area both in Carriacou and even here today in Grenada in Madigras where farming is the business of the people. And I see our farmers work day and night, I even sometimes join in and I'm a registered farmer, Mr. Speaker, too. I do have a few soursop trees because I do believe we have promoted the importance of the fruit soursop to our health. My soursop that I

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

grow is not for export or for sale but for friends and myself. And I know a lot of people who would buy it and freeze it because of the importance of it today.

But, Mr. Speaker, I look at the section here that say **“no person shall carry on trade or business of buying, selling or exporting...”** because soursop is a special crop and it has to have a weight not more than 15 pounds. Mr. Speaker, you could buy two (2) soursop and that is 15 pounds, so you are telling me that if any person or any businessman wants to buy soursop... go to the Market three or four soursops that is over 15 pounds, will he or she have to get a licence when indeed it is not for trade?

Mr. Speaker, I also want to speak to the first section here, the function of the Unit. Under this section it says “the Unit shall be responsible for amending, reviewing, implementing the provisions of this Act. I do believe that we are in Parliament, Mr. Speaker and if the provisions of this Act must be amended, in my judgement it must come to Parliament because after all the Act is under the Parliamentary proceedings. So that part where it says that the Unit shall be responsible for amending, reviewing and...I know reviewing, implementation of the provision of this Act but not amending. I think that is something that should be looked at.

Mr. Speaker, as I move to... I would want to find out if there is a cost for the licencing and I suppose that it is free, but I do want to look at another area here that says that for instance if the police get involved in terms of implementation of the Praedial Larceny legislation here, it says **“the commander at the Police Station as to where the goods is taken shall sell the goods and it says here or dispose of it in the manner that he or she sees fit”**. Mr. Speaker, I know the Police Force, they are Honourable men and women in uniform but it says here that **“the commander of the Force shall be responsible for conducting any sale”**. And I wanted to find out, Mr. Speaker, if we could not direct the Police Force to direct these goods to the Marketing and National Importing Board so that they can get rid of it and not burden the Police Officer in charge of the station with the sale of a whole set of soursop. I think Marketing Board in Grenada is one of the leading exporter of soursop so I think that should be looked at too.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

Mr. Speaker, in general I do want to say that I would support fully because I do understand where the Minister is coming from especially the Minister for St. John when he said that he too had suffered the fate of Praedial Larceny at his property. I think I spoke to this in this House before but I do believe that maybe we should look at it because after all... and the Minister in her presentation did mention that in my research and I always talk to farmers because we are in the business together. And something that concerns me very much, Mr. Speaker, is the action of farmers onto farmers. You know it says, Mr. Speaker, we should be our brother's keeper but imagine that you go to your field, one morning you get up and you go to your field and you see all your soursop is destroyed; chopped up, some still hanging on the tree. Or you go to your melon plot and you see all the melon, as they pass they just chop it up. And I do believe that the Minister is right because we always hear the complaint that in some instances you cannot see a thief in the night. And you wonder where indeed they come from and we have heard it from time and time again that what we should look at really, Mr. Speaker, is farmers stealing from farmers. We all have licence, we all have ID's but how do you curb because most of the time they will have the same products, so you cannot say. So I do concur with the Member for St. George when he said that implementation of the technology that would help maybe not eliminate it 100% but it will help to curb the business of Praedial Larceny in Grenada.

And even so, Mr. Speaker, while we have been speaking about this for many, many years, look at the Minister said that 35 persons were trained, officers and remaining only seven was used and so the effect of the implementation again is the manpower that we put behind it. Even if we implement this here now and we pass this here and we do not put the force behind it, as she said for the 12 stations, you might need at least 50 persons to man those. So I would urge us as a body to implement the force needed so that the Praedial Larceny, this regulation could have teeth so that it can give effect to some change to our farmers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Honourable Prime Minister.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I of course stand to support the second reading of this very important Bill. And I think Members has spoken... the presenter and the Member for St. Andrew South-West gave a number of appropriate reasons for this important Bill and of course a number of other Members spoke on other aspects of the importance of this. The area that I wish to just mention, Mr. Speaker, we could come here in Parliament as we have done and pass all sorts of Bill that is meant to solve a particular problem. But we also need the support of the population, in other words the intention of the Bill is noble and it will in fact help but the real solution in addition to this Bill is our people understanding the significance of what is taking place. Historically we have or we have over the last several years, we noticed the age of our farming community, most of them in the 60s, 70s. And this is not just about our Soursop Unit, this is zeroing in on a particular product but it's about other things.

I had a case, Mr. Speaker, a few years ago with a gentleman in Marian, the gentleman was 97 years old planting food for himself. He had a set of pumpkin and he got up one morning and all disappear, 97 years you know. So you could imagine some young full body person sitting on the side of the road or whatever and an old 97 year old man goes and takes all his time and plant and do all that he has to do and spend resources and some healthy full body person goes and reap. And that is a fundamental problem, and sometimes it is sold to some of us that we know that this person has no land but we get it cheap so we buy it. The penalties there are extremely important because those who... they say the upholder is worse than the thief, that's the whole saying, I agree with this penalty. But we need the people to inform also, they know where the Ministry of Agriculture, with all the 50 persons the Minister is talking about its all well and good but you will still not solve it if you have people that is upholding, watching these things happening and saying nothing. But if they say nothing, we could have all the hotlines you're still not going to get.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

We have to get our people to understand this. It's the same point I was making a while ago about what was taking place during the Carnival season during the period that we said no Carnival sorry. People have to be involved, unless we have that.

The other point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, besides the buying from people. The Judicial process also has a role, the legal area because while we talk about the independence of the Parliament, the independence of the Executive Branch, the independence of the Judiciary, not anyone of us are independent, none. But we're not supposed to talk about a judgement of the Court system, but if the court system does not apply the law in a way that protects the society, the court it self is going to be trouble. But you're not supposed to speak like this, it's only in the United States a certain individual speak about the decision of Judges and Magistrates and so on. But the question you have to ask is, why not. If the society is being affected, none of us is supposed to do anything that causes chaos in the society. So the Ministry of Legal Affairs has a serious role to play because if someone is arrested and all the person gets is a slap on the shoulder when he goes to court, he pays it tomorrow because he sell enough soursop for all the other period and no problem. He goes back again and maybe the next time you catch him again may be two years from now, you catch him again he pays the little fine and he goes again.

So the point I'm making is this requires all and sundry, that the Parliament Members can pass all the laws as it should, we can pass all the fees but the court has a range you know. It says \$5,000.00 or \$10,000.00 but you and I know the Parliament can give a range but if the range persons, magistrates or whatever decides to give, instead of \$5,000.00 charge him \$500.00 or \$200.00 and tell him don't do it again, no problem. So I just wanted to add those two points, the population all of us being involved in the process and reporting when we see things happening that we know is fundamentally wrong and the judicial system must also function appropriately to ensure that what we try to do here and intentions that we have is of course supported because of the impact.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

Because I was making a point, just before I close, Mr. Speaker, I started and I left that point there, the age of the farmers. The young people are now starting to get involved in farming, you're seeing that now, Mr. Speaker, and where I go now I see young boys, young girls, they're the ones. The Soft loans at GDB, they are reporting that a number of young women also, young girls are getting into farming. But if they decide to sacrifice seeing the benefit financially and a good lifestyle from it and they end up with most... the end of their labour goes to waste or is stolen, then clearly there will be no incentives so we will be left without farmers you know, because the young people will not continue to make that sacrifice. So this thing has a holistic approach to it that it involves enormous responsibility on everyone's part. And, that's why, Mr. Speaker, I want to give my full support to the second reading of this Bill. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Just before you wrap up, Madam Minister. You know, some of the people who help the most in the reaping of the crops are some of the employees. They work with you during the day very well and at night your crops are vanishing. And some of the employees are very helpful. I don't like to do plenty work, but I took some time and I planted a good bit of dasheen and I'm digging the hole still to find out where the dasheen gone. It couldn't go up because the whole dasheen gone down, they all vanished, you know. So not only are the farmers helping out farmers in their reaping but your own employees helping you in reaping also. I'm very happy for this amendment to the Bill. Honourable Minister you want to wrap up anything.

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for sharing here and giving their experiences and also their thoughts on the Bill.

I wanted to respond to something that the Leader of the Opposition spoke about. He spoke about the functions of the Unit and amending that section C, amending, reviewing and implementing the provisions of this Act. The Unit cannot amend, they can recommend. There is a procedure for making changes, so that where you spoke about that there, where we have amending, reviewin, they would recommend

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

amendments for if there is a procedure coming to Parliament. So, I wanted to mention that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the licencing, mandatory licencing is so important as the Minister spoke, that is what's going to... these are some of the strategies, the licencing are some of the strategies that would help in curbing this problem. And so, this is an important segment here that I did not speak about clearly. **"The Minister may on the recommendation of the Praedial Larceny Management Committee, grant a licence as follows, a trader's licence to authorise a person to carry on the trade or business of buying and selling, or buying and exporting specially protected produce, for use on specified premises."** And, then you have the Traveller's Licence **"to authorise a person to buy any specially protected produce at any place other than the premises of which a person holds a licence to do so."** And then you have the Carrier's Licence, these are the strategies that's going to propel this and keep this, apart from the sentencing; **"a Carrier's Licence to authorise a person, or his or her servant or agent, to convey any specially protected produce in a vehicle along a public road."** So, these are the three categories of licencing, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to highlight a little more, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: So, we are now for the closing of the second reading. Honourable Members. Did you move motion for the closing of the second reading Honourable Minister?

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Bills

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew South-West.

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

House in Committee.

House resumes.

Mr. Speaker: I have to report that the Committee of the whole House considered the Bill Clause by Clause and passed with amendments. Honourable Minister.

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew South-West.

Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

***Bills
Adjournment***

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Clerk Assistant: Item 16 - Request for leave to move the adjournment of the House on matters of urgent public importance.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the adjournment of this Honourable House **Sine Die**.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: I think I saw the Honourable Representative for St. Patrick West, first.

Hon. Anthony Boatswain: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I came here this morning really to speak on some issues pertinent to the Constituency of St. Patrick West on some concerns that I do have with regards to the Order Paper. But, Mr. Speaker, after listening to the presentation by the Member for St. George North-West, I feel compelled to abandon my original script and to focus on some other issues also relevant to St. Patrick.

Mr. Speaker, how often can we repeat that we are not living in normal times? Mr. Speaker, to date we are looking at over 20.3 million persons being affected by this Coronavirus disease and total deaths over 750,000 worldwide. And in the US, our main source of tourism and travel, you're talking about over 750,000 cases and 167,000 deaths, many of whom have been Grenadian nationals who died out there.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Adjournment

Mr. Speaker, there is this case that no country can remain locked down forever, and therefore, there must be some kind of balancing act between preserving life and making a livelihood. But, Mr. Speaker, without life there can be no livelihood. **(Applause)** So, therefore we must have our priority straight.

Mr. Speaker, many countries and I'm looking at that venture to reopen their borders, have subsequently gone into lock down again. Look at the Bahamas, total lock down because what we have now is what is perceived to be a second wave. The virus is not gone and for those of us who believe that because no one died in Grenada, and we had only 24 cases, everything is okay, there are asymptomatic cases and as someone said, we might have the living dead among us, we might be walking dead because we do not know who has that disease, Mr. Speaker, and therefore, extreme care and caution must be exercised.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that Carnival is our premier cultural event. Every year we look forward to Carnival. And, we look forward to Carnival, not only because of its cultural attributes, but also because it is a source of revenue for our country. I believe a study was done looking at the economic benefits of Carnival. I can't remember the figure, but for us, Carnival is important. We know that, Mr. Speaker, but, how important is Carnival compared to the lives of our people? Are we prepared to sacrifice a number of lives for one or two days of fun, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, Grenada is not the only country where a decision was taken to postpone Carnival for this year because they all understand, Mr. Speaker, the consequences of having such activity where the possibility of a resurgence of this disease or this virus among us is so obvious. And, it takes, as the Member said, it takes only one person. It takes only one spark to ignite a fire you know, Mr. Speaker, not many matches you have to light, one and you could have a conflagrating.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the decision that was taken by the Government to have this Carnival postponed was a wise one, albeit there might have been some defects in the Act itself that did not provide certain clarity. But, that Mr. Speaker, is no excuse.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Adjournment

Mr. Speaker, as I have said to some of my constituents, I know, yes, we have been saying that being under lock down, they need a release and they see the virus as like a knee on their neck and they can't breathe. Well I say, well if it is like a knee on your neck and you can't breathe, if you do not go by the regulation, you will not be able to breathe permanently. Yeah, you will not be able to breathe permanently at all. So, which is more important to us? And, I said to them, Mr. Speaker, yes, I know you need some release. We all understand what Carnival means to us, so, why not, based on a meeting we had Sunday, why not organise your little activities in your villages where you could adhere to the basic protocols of social distancing? I don't believe anyone would have been against that? Yeah. You have your little village activities, enjoy yourselves. But, Mr. Speaker, as the Parliamentary Representative for one of the two Constituencies in St. Patrick, what I saw on display yesterday, Mr. Speaker, what I saw on display was unbelievable and it was shocking, Mr. Speaker, taking into consideration that it was a normal working day.

Mr. Speaker, what I saw in Sauteurs, on the streets of Sauteurs was a total disregard for the rule of law, a total disregard for the lives of others, if they are not concerned about their own lives, how about the lives of others? **(Applause)** And that is what you have to take into consideration, they could say yes, I don't care, but you not caring, Mr. Speaker, does not mean you cannot impact, you cannot have negative impact on those around you and that was totally ignored.

Mr. Speaker, there was a total disregard for those in authority when I listened to some of the languages, some of the chants, Mr. Speaker, total disregard, total disregard, total disrespect, Mr. Speaker. And, even more, I saw it as an attempt to test the resolve of the security forces. It was a taunting, touch me if you can, you can't touch me.

Mr. Speaker, this act of defiance is not typical of our country. We are like copycats, imitating false values. Mr. Speaker, this thing is a stranger to us, what I'm seeing happening now.

Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.

Adjournment

I wish, Mr. Speaker, to place a record my commendation for the Police Force and those in Sauteurs **(applause)** for the maturity and sensibility with which they dealt with the situation. I believe that those on the other side were hoping that there will be confrontation and to use that as a platform for their own personal ambitions. But, Mr. Speaker, under the guidance of the Minister for National Security and the Acting Commissioner, the Police acted very wise **(applause)** and I want to commend them for that. But as the Parliamentary Rep, again, Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to really send an open apology for what happened in St. Patrick. I wish to apologise, Mr. Speaker, to the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister for National Security because I saw this as gross disrespect. I also wish to apologise, Mr. Speaker to our church leaders and in particular **(applause)** Bishop Clyde Harvey, whose admonitions apparently fell on deaf ears. To all the decent and law abiding citizens of St. Patrick, who placed their higher priority on preserving lives rather than pleasure, I say, I apologise. **(Applause)** To all of our children, Mr. Speaker, who were exposed to this unfortunate example of bad behavior, Mr. Speaker, on the part of some, I say I apologise to you as well, Mr. Speaker, because what they were listening to, Mr. Speaker, was not for their ears, totally uncalled for and unnecessary.

Mr. Speaker, I venture to say that this was not typical St. Patrick's behaviour. St. Patrick is known as the cultural capital of Grenada producing more cultural icons than any other parish with almost unblemished character. Mr. Speaker, something went wrong yesterday, in St. Patrick. And, working together as citizens of St. Patrick, Mr. Speaker, we will seek to exercise whatever demon came into us in St. Patrick yesterday. Mr. Speaker, we're better than that. **(Applause)** We in St. Patrick, we are better than that, Mr. Speaker. And, working together, Mr. Speaker, we will seek to restore our good name and character. As I said, we're better than that. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Adjournment

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. Patrick West. Your apology is accepted. Honourable Representative for St. George North-East and Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to move the Motion standing in my name. And it says:

BE IT RESOLVED that the fire at Perseverance dump site be extinguished immediately. Mr. Speaker, I beg that the Standing Orders be suspended so that this Motion could be presented to this Honourable House.

(Inaudible comments)

Hon. Tobias Clement: Well, yeah, because yeah, I don't... yeah...

(Inaudible comments by the Speaker)

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, we have a Motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, and which must be seconded, so that the Motion can proceed. Any seconder to the Motion?

(No Member moved to second the Motion)

Hon. Tobias Clement: Mr. Speaker, if the Motion is not seconded, may I pray that the Standing Orders be suspended so that the Motion can be read at this Sitting.

Mr. Speaker: We need a seconder to move the Motion forward. No seconder to the Motion? Honourable Leader of the Opposition, there is no seconder to the Motion. The Motion has not been seconded, which should mean that you may wish to bring that Motion forward at another Sitting. You may wish to bring it forward again.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Adjournment

Hon. Tobias Clement: Mr. Speaker, in such occasions here, I do believe the Leader of the Opposition under public business, if a Motion is presented, and it says that the “Government Side” needs a seconder and well, I will have to pray your leave that it be suspended for another Sitting. But, I do believe that I have been advised that I can ask for the suspension of the Standing Orders, so that the Motions can be read, because if I may pray, Mr. Speaker, how then can a Motion by the Leader of the Opposition be presented to this House?

(Inaudible comments by the Prime Minister)

Hon. Tobias Clement: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. Speaker: Ok, what part of the Standing Order would you suspend, the entire Standing Order?

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: I think we're still on adjournment?

Mr. Speaker: Yes we're on adjournment.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: So, I need to just...

Mr. Speaker: Let's just clear this up.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Alright.

Mr. Speaker: So, the Motion has not been carried.

Hon. Tobias Clement: So, okay, Mr. Speaker, as the Motion did not carry today, I believe that we are on adjournment. So, I'll speak on the adjournment.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Adjournment

Mr. Speaker: Yes, sir.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Mr. Speaker, I believe I can speak on the adjournment and maybe I would mention this here in terms of the Motion. And, as a people we believe, we serve, and we go our way. And, there comes a point in time when we all will have to succumb to the act of nature. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today, and I would stand in solidarity with the people of Lebanon for the devastation that was done to their city, Beirut. I want to stand here also, Mr. Speaker, and to congratulate the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago for the victory in the last election and, I hope and pray that with God speed, Trinidad will move from strength to strength. Mr. Speaker, it was also amazing that he came in, in 2015 and Monday night he announced that this will be a transition for him, and that this last election would be his last and he would not be seeking another term in office, but he will transition, a word to the wise, he did mention that.

But, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the debate that is surrounding now, I do believe I look at the debate, as I said, many occasions in this House, that debate that we are having now on COVID-19 is one that took place a 100 years ago. And the same argument that we're having today is the same argument that they had 100 years ago. But, Mr. Speaker, on April 17 in this House, the Member for St. George North-West in talking about the devastating effect of COVID-19 and the slippage in Molinere and the burning of Perseverance, and according to the Hansard, I quote, **"The Perseverance dump site with the smoke, I feel sorry for the people of Brizan, Beausejour, Happy Hill, Mt. Moritz, Concord, Cotton Bailey and so on. They have to be faced with this problem. There could be a lot of health issues. I am worried, extremely worried for the people living in these communities. My heart goes out to the people of St. George North-West and Concord and the surrounding areas."**

Mr. Speaker, in my mind, this was deep, very, very deep, because I studied, and I went and I researched about the burning of the dumpsite in Perseverance. Mr. Speaker, I also drove through a couple of times. And, Mr. Speaker, I listened to a

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Adjournment

Member from the Other House speaking about the burning of Perseverance. Mr. Speaker, I almost was shocked when I asked the question about the burning of Perseverance and the Member for St. George South says that I should not ask him, it's an environmental issue, if I want it from the health, he can ask them about the ambient air quality. Corona virus might kill us within a couple days, a couple of weeks. The burning of Perseverance dumpsite can have long lasting effects, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, on some days I would wake up in the morning, I live on the mountain and when the night is still and that fumes rise from Perseverance and the air is stale you can see just a little shift in the wind. You can see where the cloud continue to hover over certain villages from Belmont to over the Park to over Grand Mal, Happy Hill. One morning a gentleman asked me, Mr. Clement, what is that and I said to him, that is the fumes from Perseverance. Mr. Speaker, Perseverance has been burning for a long time. I also in my research, saw a video that was put out by the Management of Solid Waste and in the classification of the burning of the Perseverance dumpsite, Mr. Speaker, you can have two classification: surface burning and deep seated burning.

But, Mr. Speaker, what makes Perseverance dangerous is not the burning of the natural gas or methane gas. I mean the North Americans and the Europeans use methane gas to cook, but when the hydrocarbon breaks down and other organic material begins to break down, what is produced, Mr. Speaker, is very troubling. Mr. Speaker, if I speak to the burning of Perseverance, I read the Stockholm Convention in terms of the burning of the dumpsite and, Mr. Speaker, one of the research said that it can be done but it should be done in a remote area where it is not exposed to people or animals. One of the essay said that the security should be in such a way that animals and people should not be able to access or even come into an area that is burnt or a dumpsite that is burnt.

Mr. Speaker, you know we have people living close to that area, we have people working in that area, we have people driving through Perseverance everyday. Mr. Speaker, I am not only talking about getting sick in terms of respiratory diseases but the dioxin that is created, Mr. Speaker, the pollution that is created. Now the

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Adjournment

Perseverance dumpsite as revealed by the Management, it was not built in terms of how it is acting. Mr. Speaker the Perseverance dumpsite, the fire is a deep seated one and it produces the gas. What I found out is that it gets hot, so hot that it can be ignited spontaneously. And when this is done, the poison that could be leached into our water system because there isn't any bottom barrels, they did not build it with any pipes to let out the methane gas. So all this gets into our environment, into our water, into our fishes, into our animals and it is consumed. But immediately, Mr. Speaker, what is very concerning is for the people who live, who work and who drive through that area.

Mr. Speaker, in my research it says that the only how that a deep seated fire can be extinguished is for you to completely cover it with soil material so you starve it of oxygen. You know, Mr. Speaker, I went up onto the mountain where I live and the young man again, I spoke to him and I asked him what he was doing, he had a coalpit burning and he said to me he is stiffling the coalpit. If you live out in the mountain and you're doing a coalpit and you want to out it, you do not have to use water, you have to stifle it, make sure you starve it of all oxygen and after a few days... I do believe that many, many trials were made to out the fire in Perseverance using foam water but, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that this can be done. I looked at some fires in different parts of the country from landfills that were on fire and, Mr. Speaker, in some cases they took months and several million dollars to estinguish it. I think I read one that was burning for about 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, maybe we cannot afford at this time in terms of the amount of monies that is spent to burn Perseverance but I went to the area and there was one time Perseverance area, it was a vibrant place. The village above, Mr. Dor and the people on the side and you ask where are they today, Mr. Speaker? We may not feel the effects of the burning of Perseverance today, Mr. Speaker, we may not feel it during this year but as time goes on, Mr. Speaker, we can see the adverse effect to the people of those areas. I beg the powers that be to do everything in their powers and its possible, to alleviate the pressure on these people. We talk that we cannot breathe, I

Adjournment

wish we can give the people of the surrounding areas of Perseverance from St. John come right down some air to breathe.

And those of you who passes through that place maybe on a daily basis and regularly, you would know exactly what I am talking about. Mr. Speaker, I think it is a burning issue that need to be put to rest in our country. Thank you and God bless you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Honourable Prime Minister. Oh, just before could you let...

Hon. Alvin Da Breo: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a couple minutes here to... because we had the passing of Crafton Isaac who was a former Chief Fisheries Officer and he made some substantial contributions to the industry here. As a matter of fact, if you would permit me to just read a couple experts from the... this came from the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, the Secretariat, they wrote me, **“Dear Minister, it is with deep regret and profound sadness that we have learnt of the passing of Mr. Crafton Isaac, retired Chief Fisheries Officer, last Thursday. On behalf of the Management and Staff of the CRFM and the Fisheries Sector in the Caricom region, I extend sincere condolences to his family, friends and former co-workers in the Ministry of Climate Resilience, the Environment, Forestry, Fisheries and Disaster Management. Crafton is well known across the Caribbean for his outstanding and dedicated work in fisheries development and management in Grenada, particular in promoting proper data collection and evidence-based decision making and representing the interest of Grenadian fisheries at regional meetings. He has contributed significantly to the progress that we have made in building solidarity and enhancing cooperation among Caricom countries and Fisheries organisations across the region. Our prayers and thoughts are with his family, friends and co-workers during this time of bereavement. May he Rest in Peace.”**

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Adjournment

And I also on behalf of the Ministry of Fisheries, I want to wish his family and friends and also co-workers, my condolences because it was a pleasure working with him and he was a tremendous worker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Representative.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Prime Minister.

(Honourable Oliver Joseph rose)

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: No, I have to leave.

Mr. Speaker: Ok, you'll close.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Jo, you will go after me. Mr. Speaker, I just, I thought it strange, the Member for St. George North-East asked a question about the Perseverance, he asked for information but he proceeded to bring a Motion as if he has got an answer and start taking positions as if something has not been done. And speaking about it as if he cares about the people, not the Member for St. George North-West, it's amazing. I think this is laughable. The Member must know, I am a scientist myself, he knows that, he don't talk about it but he knows this. So I understand, a lot of work has been done by the Ministry of Environment, a lot of attempt has been also made to do what we can do locally but it is a work in progress. No one is concerned about the people of... I am from Brizan, that's where I was born and I grew up there and I'm always there so I might have to worry about my health too. So I can't understand the Member, he is speaking as if he is so concerned, he is concerned about the people of North-West St. George and they know that I have done all that I can and will continue

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Adjournment

to do because as he quite rightly quoted me, I mentioned it here because of the serious concern that we have for the entire people and I'm being affected myself personally and family of mines who live in Brizan and Happy Hill and Beausejour. My office is there so clearly I have to be concerned.

I have to speak to this because the Member must not be allowed to make statements like that. Ask a question, the answer is to be given but the Member preceded the same Order Paper saying it must be out immediately, that's the question. As if somebody is allowing it not to be taken care of immediately and they could do it immediately. The information that we have, it will be far more... work has to be done scientifically to get that... a lot of things has been done, initiated already. But it's not a simple thing to just out that fire, Perseverance dump has been there for years and it has been a problem, not just today, this year has been more prolonged. Over the years, the last 40, 50 years Perseverance has been there and it's been a problem. The alternative is to move the Perseverance, that dumpsite and a lot of discussions has taken place over the years to move it to different parts but no area wants a dump. Telescope was identified, different parts, no one wants it, so it's a problem that we have to solve and maybe what we have to do is to look more of the approach, the technology so that we don't have a physical dump but the utilisation of garbage into other scientific processes that will permanently take care of the problem. So I just wanted to make this point on the adjournment.

But I thought I would have heard the Opposition Leader speak to the problem that we just faced with what is taking place in Grenada as the Member of St. Patrick-West quite rightly pointed out, the seriousness of this. This is only about an area you know, this is the whole country could be destroyed because we don't have the facility and we do not have the resources to deal with 100 COVID patients who might be terribly sick, we don't have it. And all of us could be in serious problems physically. I would have thought the Member, instead of just focusing on an area, which he had already asked a question and did not receive an answer, but I heard very little in that respect. So, Mr. Speaker, I rest my case.

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Adjournment

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. George North-West. Honourable Representative for St. David.

Hon. Oliver Joseph: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate and compliment the St. David's Catholic Secondary School on the celebration of their 50th Anniversary. On Sunday 2nd they celebrated 50 years since the formation of that school. A virtual meeting was held in the diaspora, hundreds of people joined including Grenadians and it was a very, very successful celebration as they reflected on the 50 years past. This school has really contributed tremendously to the development, not only of St. David but the whole of Grenada and internationally. There has been outstanding students in Education, Sports, Culture, the Arts and many, many other areas over the years. I wish to mention the early years of the school and the role played by the Catholic Church and the priest from Ireland that came here and did a tremendous job with the school, laid the foundation. There are no more Irish Priest there at the School, so it's run over the last 15 years, 20, by local Grenadians now, but these Irish Priest really left a solid foundation and an institution that is highly respected and in the country and internationally and therefore I wish to extend my congratulations. I did address them virtually in their celebration and I want to use this opportunity to once again complement the school and urge them to continue doing the high quality work and the quality students that they produce from this Secondary School.

Mr. Speaker, I wish now to turn to Carnival because we announced that the holiday was cancelled. I'm not sure where people got the time, there were so many people in the street playing Jab Jab although the Carnival itself was postponed. But it seems like Grenada seems to be different from all other territories because in every Caribbean state, Carnival was cancelled, every State and I have not heard any report or seen any pictures coming from none of the Member States with Carnival like activities. But in Grenada, we cancelled it and it was all over the world for everybody to see what is taking place in Grenada. They could still have Jab Jab as though Jab Jab is not part of Carnival activity. And the whole world was there to see what was taking place here

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Adjournment

and I got calls and messages from some of my friends, you said there were no Carnival in Grenada, so what is happening here? It sends the wrong message, Mr. Speaker. We cannot be showing the World that we just could disobey the law and disobey the authorities and just go ahead and do whatever we want... it might be Jab Jab in one area of disobeying. There might be other instances coming forward where we see the same display of disorder for public law and order. That is sending the wrong message. We're in a different time, "COVID-19". We have seen the increase in COVID when people started exposing themselves, not wearing mask at gathering, not keeping the social distance.

We just have to look at what happened in Miami to see the repercussion, after the beaches were opened and restaurant were opened, to see the rapid increase. I'm not sure how many days we will have to wait to see the effect of what just happened. It will be real sad, Mr. Speaker, if after 14 days, if that's the period it takes or whatever amount of days, that they have report of an increase in the virus and then we have to lock down the country again. Grenada is a small open economy that depends on international transaction, so if you have to lock down the country, then everyone will suffer. Not only the Government of the day, everyone will suffer. So it is bigger than just the individual village and Jab Jab group and thing, the repercussion will be for the entire country. If Government cannot collect revenues to meet its expenditure, then how it will pay its Wage Bill of 23 million dollars? How would we be able to support all the programmes that we have going for the vulnerable, when you need the taxes because that's how we function. Almost 50% of the taxes comes from the Port, that's where we get our revenue from.

VAT is a tax on transaction, if business close and you have no business transaction, you're not collecting no VAT. And if Customs close and no goods coming in and you cannot collect the CET and all the other charges, then Government will have no revenue. So the long term implications of that behaviour that we saw there, I think we need people to think not selfishly about going and play Jab Jab and enjoying yourself. I recall the words of the Bishop, Clyde Harvey in his message he say **"we can**

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Adjournment

jam together and prepare to die separately”, that was in his message. **“You want to jam together, well jam together and prepare to die separately”**, we have no deaths so far so we drop the guard and think that everything is going to be okay.

I was shocked by the amount of activities that took place Sunday, Monday and Tuesday all around Grenada as though it was business as usual. And I want to join and commend the Police because you have 500 Jab Jab... five (5) Police could arrest 500 Jab Jab or 200 Jab Jab? The Police expected people to comply with the law, the regulation is still in place you know. We did withdraw the Act but the regulations governing COVID-19 is still in place. The protocol that was established that you must wear your mask and keep your social distance is still in place. It is still an offence, you could still be charged. I have not seen one Jab Jab with a mask, you could still be charged for not wearing a mask, you know. That is an offence but we proudly flaunt the laws in Grenada, post it up for the world to see. That is not something to be proud of, I pray that we do not have any increase in the Coronavirus as a result of what took place over the Sunday, Monday and Tuesday period. I just pray that God protect us and we remain safe. Because they're saying if there is any spike, the consequences are too serious for us to take this thing lightly. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Representative for St. David. Just as we... just before I put the question. There are just two observations, one is that I noticed we had two of our Members of the House not present today but they have not informed the House that they would not be here. So in the future, Parliamentary Representative who is not able to attend should inform the House, inform me through the Clerk that you would not be here today for whatever reason, just to point this out.

Let me say what I saw over the past week scared me and this did not begin on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, it started on the 2nd of August, on the 2nd of August that's when it started, the Jab started on the 2nd of August and continued from the 2nd of August to yesterday. And that reminded me of a theme that we had some years ago “one hundred thousand Jab Jab” that Grenada was classified as having one hundred

Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.

Adjournment

thousand Jab Jab. Then I had to check and I realised that there were about one hundred and fifty thousand people in Grenada... one hundred and fifteen people in Grenada, so I had to fall within that fifteen thousand because I couldn't be associated with the hundred thousand Jab Jab. And sometimes statements are made and we don't understand the implication, so we have bonded Grenada as a hundred thousand Jab Jab. So we are seeing the impact of one hundred thousand Jab Jab.

Lastly I looked at some of the pictures that came on Social Media and some of our Ambassadors... sometimes when we have certain of our Ambassadors they don't understand the responsibility that goes with it and sometimes they end up the leaders of the big group of Jab Jab. And I think that is something that we have to look very carefully, I believe that we must award greatness, I believe that we must give awards to people who are deserving of it but we have to be careful that we tell them what the awards mean. And the amount of Jab Jab I heard, I did not see... what I saw was on the media, because what I did, I try and run to stay by my mother because she is 94 and she can't hear no Jab Jab no more. So I made sure I had my mask on and I haven't hugged her for some months. So I thought I would best spend it with her but I heard the music and there were loud drumming and the noise and so on and I got scared. Because it is said do not be afraid. Honourable Representative for St. David, do not be afraid. But I wasn't afraid, I was just scared and pray that this does not have the repercussion that I believe is possible. Honourable Members... Honourable Leader of Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you remarked about the Members informing the Clerk, when I heard you earlier, I indicated to the House during the period of questions that the two Members were absent. I automatically took it that maybe they had reported to you. Unfortunately then, I omitted to say that I got words from the Member from St. Andrew South-East to indicate that she was unwell. So I think I will take some blame and responsibility for not indicating to you thereof. But I know that we normally do, so when you mentioned they were absent, I thought that you

**Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held At the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Wednesday 12th August, 2020.**

Adjournment

had received that message. So my apologies and the Member did ask for me to inform the Clerk and yourself, thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Accepted.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned sine die at 12:49 p.m.

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