



GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Third Session of the Tenth Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday 28th August, 2020

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***House of Representatives Meeting
Held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Friday, 28th August, 2020.***

Attendance

PRESENT

Michael Pierre, MP, JP, MBE	- Mr. Speaker (In the Chair)
Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell, PC, MP, JP (St. George North-West)	- Prime Minister and Minister for National Security, Public Administration, 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 Special Projects, Needy Assistance and ICT
Honourable Emmalin Pierre, MP (St. Andrew South-East)	- Minister for Education, Human Resource Development, Religious Affairs and Information
Honourable Nickolas Steele, MP (St. George South)	- Minister for Health, Social Security and International Business

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Honourable Kindra Maturine-Stewart, MP
(Carriacou and Petite Martinique)

- Minister for Carriacou and Petite
Martinique Affairs, Local Government and
Legal Affairs

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

- Minister 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

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***Prayers
Minutes***

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

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, good morning. Let us pray.

(House Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: Let's all say together, the Lord's Prayer.

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: Pray be seated.

(Sound of the Gavel)

Mr. Speaker: This Honourable House is now in Session.

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

Item 4 - Confirmation of Minutes.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. 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, 12th August, 2020 be taken as read.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes taken as read.

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***Minutes
Announcements***

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, 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. George's, on Wednesday, 12th August, 2020 be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed.

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

Item 6 - Announcements by Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, just this a few announcements. We have invitations to the 12th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Network for Gender Equality, *Designing Inclusive Futures in Partnership with Youth for 2020*. We also have ParlAmericas Roundtable for September 2, Gender Responsiveness, Disaster Crisis, Planning and these are all virtual Conferences. Grenada is hosting the Conference on the 2nd of September. I think selected Parliamentarians were invited to attend.

We also want to advise that we do have a number of courses and opportunities for Parliamentarians to participate in some of those Conferences and Courses organised by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and PGA and IPU and most of these are done virtually. So, we want to encourage Parliamentarians to read the information that we send to you so that you can advise us on how you would like to react with that. Very often we send the information out, but by the time we get a response, if we get a response, it is too late. So we want to urge that we do that because now more people can attend because of the nature of business.

I also want to advise that the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's (CPA) Benchmark for Democratic Legislatures, the Draft Report, is with us, so we want to

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encourage all Parliamentarians to take some time to read the report, because these are the benchmarks that will determine what assistance we may be able to get from PGA because of what they find during the self assessment. So they have done the self assessment, the consultation took place in January and we are now in possession of the draft Report. And we would want to look at it, we would want to read it and make sure that it reflects what happens in Grenada. Then we would send the okay to the CPA, so that we can then begin to make whatever changes or alterations we may have to or we may want to. Thank you.

Clerk Assistant: Item 7 - Presentation of Petitions.

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

Item 9 - Unopposed Private Business.

Item 10 - Questions.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just before I ask the questions, I do believe that maybe there should be a little bit of clarity in terms of the question being answered. I think, like in the last Sitting, it was almost stated that either you do it written or verbally, but I seek counsel, and I also went in and got one of this here from Sir Curt Strachan that was given to me a long time ago. And, he states that when questions are asked, the answer is expected to be given written. If the Member so wishes, he may put an asterisk or a star to the answer, so that, that indicates that he would require a verbal answer too. I know some questions, a verbal answer will give body to the question or to the written answer, because I can recall the Member for St. George North-West in answering two of the questions, although they were written, he gave body to the answer, when he gave verbal response also.

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So, I will say that, according to the Standing Orders and according to Sir Curt Strachan, it's like not either or either, but in the case as indicated, and if a Member wishes to expound on his answer, he may do so. I do not know if you want to shed any clarity on it, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Leader of the Opposition and I do respect Sir Curt Strachan for his long service and experience. According to the Standing Orders, you well said, every question that is asked is expected to receive a written response. If the respondent so wish to give any further clarification to put body to it, that is the respondent's right. But every question that is asked, except the asker of the question request an oral answer, it is expected that the answer would be written, it is not compulsory for any respondent to give both oral and written, it is as the respondent wishes. Thank you.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, according to the Order Paper here, I have here two questions for the Member for St. George, North-West and the Prime Minister. And, I would read the question on the Order Paper. Can the Minister of Finance...

Mr. Speaker: Would you lift your voice a little? I don't know if the mike is not working loud enough for you.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the questions on the Order Paper, I would tend to read but...

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I thought we... (on a Point-of-Order) ...made it clear last time that the question was asked already. So, all the

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Member has to say, question one or two. I think we had agreed. So, he wants to read, I don't know what the purpose of reading every time we get here when in fact...

Mr. Speaker: Just give the number to your question, please.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Mr. Speaker, the question too is for public information, and not every time that somebody tuned in or listening or watching would have maybe missed the last Parliament.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, I understand that we must... (please sit). I understand that we must try to engage the public as much as possible. But, we also have to remember that we cannot waste the public's time by continuing to give explanations all the time and reading the same thing. So, it is the Order of the House that we would say the number to the question directed at the particular Parliamentary Rep or Minister and we would move from there. So, just state the number to the question and then we would move from there.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay, well, in this here, question one for the Member for St. George North-West and Prime Minister.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I think it's important here. The Member clearly is telling us, he is asking this question for public consumption, not necessarily for the answers that are supposed to be given in the context of the Parliamentary Rules. And I think he ought to know that it is the Parliamentary Rule that counts, not your pandering to the public, Mr. Speaker. And, I think the rules are what I'm interested in. I understand the reason for the question, but I think he's told us in words, exactly in words why he's asking the question.

Mr. Speaker, the answer have been provided, I assume to the Clerk. But I just need to make this point that giving the names of companies and how much they receive is stretching it. So, we've given the answer to the question and indicated that the Audit

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must make sure that these numbers are absolutely correct. And therefore, the question of the Audit would make it even more difficult, why we should not be giving names of companies and names of individuals in the answers to those questions. So, that question has been provided, and the answer to the question has been provided.

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

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

Mr. Speaker: Microphone please.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question number 2 for the Prime Minister and Member for St. George North-West. I suppose that...

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Prime Minister.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the question involves a tremendous level of information and they are still compiling the information. It's quite a lot and we have to make sure whatever you say there is absolutely correct. It has to be rechecked, so that question, the answer is not yet available to this Honourable House. But, I do want to make this point as the Member did mention earlier on, he read out what Sir Curt Strachan said, the Parliamentary Rules are there, Sir Curt Strachan and he knows that I was there right through. In fact, I had the opportunity to recommend for the appointment of Sir Curt Strachan as Clerk of the Parliament. So, his experience I pass through for 30 years. So, I assumed that he should have known this long before he asked the questions. When I gave the answer the last time was because I was also aware of the rules, and of course, Sir Curt Strachan's experience, information to this Honourable House. I just wanted to point out that for what it's worth.

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

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am so guided and I think that we will have to refer to both the Standing Orders and any help that we can get from Sir Curt Strachan. Mr. Speaker, I move on to the question that was placed for the Member for the Town of St. George, the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Peter David: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you Member for North-East Constituency. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the answers were prepared and if they have not yet been, they will be in the hands of the Clerk shortly, but I've done it, and we submitted it. So it will be in the hands of the Clerk and the Member should have it shortly. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. And, let me just say that we are still within the first 30 days of responding to the question. So, we're on time.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Yes, Mr. Speaker, thank you and as a the Member for the town of St. George spoke, I think I do have some documents that was just placed on the desk here. I will look into that.

Mr. Speaker: So, your answer has been received.

Hon. Tobias Clement: I have not yet perused it.

Mr. Speaker: You don't yet have it. Okay, okay.

Hon. Tobias Clement: I have not yet perused the document. The next question is for the Minister for Infrastructure Development and Member for South-East, St. George, questions one, two, and three.

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

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the answers have been submitted to the Clerk of Parliament. Question one I think he has.

(Clerk converse with the Speaker in private)

Mr. Speaker: Okay. So, it is laid. The question is laid at your table, Sir. The answer is laid at your table from the Minister for Infrastructure.

Hon. Tobias Clement: I do believe I see some documents to that regard.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, good. Thank you,

Hon. Tobias Clement: Mr. Speaker, moving on here. In the last Parliament, the Minister of Education was not present, but I think she is now and there two questions that were intended for the Minister. I will await her response.

Mr. Speaker: Question for the Minister of Education.

Hon. Emmalin Pierre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to notify the House that the answers to the question, both questions, were submitted to the Clerk of Parliament, and I assume that the Leader of the Opposition is in possession of the answers. However, I wish to make some brief comments as it relates to the content of the response, in summary.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the general public is anticipating the reopening of school. Many of our parents, of course, have been challenged significantly because of the closure of schools, particularly those who have to go out to work and in some cases do not have alternative arrangements that they can make for the care and the safety of their children. And so for us, it is not just about the reopening of school, but helping to

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alleviate some of the challenges, the problems faced by parents. And so, we were very happy as a Cabinet to approve the reopening of school on the 7th of September, 2020.

Mr. Speaker, this was no easy task to get to that point. From the perspective of the technical persons involved, and the stakeholders involved in this process, this was indeed a challenge. And of course, at the level of the policymakers, at the level of cabinet, this was also a major challenge, particularly because of the financial resources required for the reopening of school. So, Mr. Speaker, if we were to speak from September to December only, it is going to cost us an additional \$1.9 million to put basic measures in place to ensure the safety of our students and our teachers, other stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, I want to use the opportunity to express sincerest appreciation to all of my colleagues who were prepared to support this reopening plan, even if it meant that we had to cut certain activities in other places to be able to facilitate this. And that is the level of importance that the Cabinet attached to the reopening of school.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make reference to the point or the fact that the process included serious consultation with all of our stakeholders to get to the point of deciding that we were going to be reopening school on the 7th of September. This process of consultation started since about March this year and part of that consultative process led us to the point where we decided that we were going to pilot the reopening with the students who were preparing for CXC Examinations. And so, that pilot from all indication was a success and because of additional measures that we decided to put in place, we felt that we were quite ready to give or to pilot the full reopening of school. However, apart from the financial, Mr. Speaker, we are very challenged by the space available to observe the national protocols, particularly the protocol that speaks to six feet, physical distancing. Mr. Speaker, in the average classroom, it will be impossible to accommodate every student physically distancing by six feet on an average day. And so, we have to move to one, launch our national plan, which is a guide for all, but also to go down into the school's specific plan that would speak to classroom by classroom, what will happen for the reopening.

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So, I want to just speak very briefly as to what would happen in the six phases of the reopening of school. Phase One, Mr. Speaker, which was the past week, we expected some of our ancillary staff, particularly our cleaners, would begin as they normally do two weeks before school opens, the cleaning of the school, and this is regular cleaning, exterior particularly. Phase two, which starts on Monday, this is when our principals and teachers go into the school to begin the process of planning and preparing for the new school term. And, this is quite normal, this happens every year.

Phase three, which is September 7, that is when our students are normally going out to school, we will be implementing the national schedule during that week. So, of course, I did indicate that there will be a final address the week before school reopens when that national schedule will be published. So, during that particular week, the week of the 7th to the 11th, the public would be notified which Forms and which Grades will be going out on which days. And why are the students going out in that week? That first week would be for orientation, the new norm, what is expected, which part of the school you cannot go, which part you could go and, when do you go, how do you go? How do you go to the tuck shop, how do you go to the Library? Those sort of things will be dealt with in that first week.

In that first week from September 7, Needs Assessment would also be conducted, both for students and teachers. The second week of school for students, of course, that's normally, but in that second week, none of our students would be expected to be in school. That particular week is specially dedicated to parents and some additional work to be done with teachers during that week.

The third week, National Assessments would be conducted across the board. And the importance of this is to determine where each student is and what do we have to do, where do we have to go in terms of getting them in line and working with them academically. So, from the week of the 21st, National Assessment, Academic Assessment would be conducted. And then we come to the final phase, which would be from September 28 to December 11. And that is when students would return to regular class sessions based on the schedule provided by the school.

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Mr. Speaker, you would realise that this approach brings the student to a point around the 28th of September when they go to regular programming. And there is a particular reason for this, that we are very concerned that some of our students have been home since March of this year. And so, by no means would we attempt to bring them back and quickly push them into the academics and to not ensure that we have a phased approach that will be smoothly introducing them back to regular class activities.

Mr. Speaker, we expect the continued support of all of our stakeholders as we continue this journey that we were never prepared for, but a journey that we have been taking and successfully so, primarily because of the support we have been receiving from all of our stakeholders. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Minister for Education.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Mr. Speaker, with your leave, maybe I can just ask for clarity on her presentation in terms of an answer to the question?

Mr. Speaker: You need some clarity, you need some...?

Hon. Tobias Clement: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Proceed.

Hon. Tobias Clement: I just wanted, in terms of the plans here if we have the school reopening and just per chance there is a student that is suspected of COVID-19, I want to know in terms of the protocol, I believe they might be isolated and they will have to be tested. Will the test for students in school be done periodically or will a test that is done for students, will you have to pay for it as a parent or will the Government administer the test to students free of costs? And, on the page before the last, I see the phase distribution of devices to parents, and I do believe the Ministry is going through some distribution of devices. I wanted to find out that if the devices are distributed to

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students, will the devices only be distributed to students in public school versus private schools? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Minister, can you respond to any of those?

Hon. Emmalin Pierre: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair, two very useful questions. The first one to do with students who is suspected to be positive for the COVID virus, let me say something that I did not say before. We are working with the same protocol that we worked with for the reopening of school for the CSEC students, the students preparing for CXC exam. Some minor tweaking and we are working with the Ministry of Health, but nothing major will be changed in that protocol and we used that protocol and it was used well. If a student is showing any signs at all, we ask parents to keep those students at home. So any signs related to COVID-19, we do not expect a parent to send that child to school and the same applies for other places like church. If a person is showing signs you don't expect them to come to church. If, while in school, a child begins to show signs, every school is asked to identify a location, similar to what we've done with churches, where that person would be isolated temporarily. During that process, the school would be expected to make immediate communication, one, with the parent, and two, the COVID-19 hotline, and they would be guided accordingly. But, that child must be isolated, they would receive instructions. We have been saying for quite some time, you don't just take somebody and go to the hospital or go to the Medical Center, you will be guided as to the action you must take based on the information provided. And so, this protocol, this item, this reference is included in the protocol that was published some months ago.

As it relates to the phased approach for the distribution of the devices. I tried to explain this before, because of what we are providing, it is not just the tablets. Our PS normally refers to it as an ecosystem. It includes a number of things, including books, ebooks. And so, there's an orientation process that must take place. There are contracts to be signed and a number of other things that parents and students, including

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of teachers also, must become acquainted with. And so, this is the reason for the phased approach, we must do this properly. Right.

Now, the question as it relates to public and private schools. The Education Act is very clear as it relates to Government's responsibility. I believe it's section 98, between 98 and about 100 speaks to the relationship between Government and private institutions. And so, there is a choice, an institution can be private, or it can be private assisted. And, if it is private assisted, there's a document of agreement between the Government and the school that says, what is it that the government will do. The paying of teachers, providing devices, maintenance of the school, it's all documented in law. So, with a private school, there's no obligation on the part of the government to provide any support, or anything at all, to a private school, which is a business. However, the Government has over the years, been very supportive of our private schools and we have been doing all that we can under circumstances to provide those support. So, for example, I did announce before that the MSTAR Platform, where we have registered over 25,000 persons/users, we have made that platform available for all students and all teachers in the private schools at no cost at all. The MESH Project, which has brought high speed internet and Minister Bowen spoke about this some time ago, I think the last Sitting, high speed internet to all schools throughout the Island. I believe that between 50,000 and 100,000 could be the cost per school because of the kind of infrastructure that was introduced. Guess what? Every private school had the opportunity to benefit from this project without paying a cent. When there's training and we can accommodate those persons, we do so at no cost to them. However, there are times when the resources available to Government does not allow Government to extend it beyond the public schools. And in the case of the devices, this is exactly what the situation is. We have had to redirect funds to be able to do this. So, while some countries, for example, St. Lucia, in speaking to one of the officials in the Ministry there just last week, they said Minister, we are trying to provide some of our secondary school students with devices, we are not able to do all and we cannot even start the conversation of providing to primary school students. Right. Thank God we have been able as a Government to access the resources to do both secondary and primary. If we

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were in a position and the funds were accessible, easily so, we would not have any difficulty at all providing to our private schools. At this time, the financial resources have limited us to provide only to the schools that we have an obligation to, to provide.

But let me just close, Mr. Speaker, by making this one last statement. It is false and I consider it malicious as well, for anyone to be saying publicly that the Government of Grenada is providing devices to private schools and asking them to pay \$1,000. This is absolutely false and persons who are repeating this publicly, for whatever reason, I consider it to be malicious. We are only at this time providing devices based on the available resources financially, that the Government has and I just want to make that additional point. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Minister for Education. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the Order Paper, there are three questions that are presented to the Member for St. George South and the Minister for Health.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Minister for Health and Minister for St. George South, Parliamentary Representative.

Hon. Nickolas Steele: Mr. Speaker the answer to the questions have been compiled and will be sent to the Clerk today in writing.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. So, your answer would be provided to you soon. Let me just, do we have any, okay, let me just make one statement here. I am very happy that we are able to provide answers to many of the questions and to do so within the time frame that is stated in the Standing Orders. In the future, what we hope is that we would get the answers and that would be included in your papers and we will send it E for you, E-answers. So that, once we get the information, we would have very little

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paperwork to do but everyone would have the answers to the questions on their device. And, that is where we are going and hopefully that would be the procedure for next week, for next Sitting, sorry. However, the asker of the question would get a hardcopy, but the remainder of the House, you would have your answers via the device.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 11 - Urgent Questions under the Provisions of Standing Order No. 20 (1) Notice of Questions.

Item 12 - Statements by Ministers.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Minister for Infrastructure.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognise that we have a Supplementary Order Paper. So, I don't know if the Clerk's desk is going through the first one because it was not consolidated. If not, I crave your indulgence at the correct time to look at Item 8. So, it's up to you, you either go through the entire first Order Paper, and then, if you so wish, you will take the second Order Paper or you may just do it Item 8 now and go back to the... because there's only one Item on the Supplementary Order Paper. Awaiting your decision, Mr. Speaker.

(Clerk converse with the Speaker in private)

Mr. Speaker: We would include it and move the Order Paper as we go along, rather than having to go on and then stop and start again.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: In which case, Mr. Speaker, then perhaps the Clerk's desk could just recommit to Item 8.

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Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 8 - Presentation of Papers and Reports from Select Committees.

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

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Mr. Speaker, I beg that the following Paper be laid on the Table:

- Report of the Fiscal Responsibility Oversight Committee 2019 - Response of the Minister for Finance.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, the Report is so laid on the Table.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 12 - Statements by Ministers.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Minister for Health. Could you please, switch on your mike please? Thank you.

Hon. Nickolas Steele: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give a report to date on recent activities and developments within the Ministry of Health. Mr. Speaker, as of August 25, 3,396 PCR tests were done in Grenada. What is significant, Mr. Speaker, is the breakdown of that. Of those 3,396, 2,684 were done at Windward Island Research and Education Foundation at SGU and, Mr. Speaker, in the last week of that amount, they did 1,475. That is because they have tested all of the individuals residing in Grenada who are affiliated with SGU, students, faculty, employees have all been tested. Now this represents a wide cross-section of Grenada and therefore can be seen as a sample of our population just in case there were any individuals out there with COVID-19 that we did not pick up. The balance, 712, were done at the General Hospital in our brand new Laboratory facility in Phase 2 of the General Hospital, Mr.

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Speaker. That is now fully functioning as a PCR testing facility. **(Applause)** Mr. Speaker, in Grenada, we now have two, we started this journey in February with no

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testing on Island, in fact no testing in all of the OECS countries, Dominica because they received a new hospital. We have moved to testing on Island, the ability to do 3% of our population sampling and now having two labs on Island to test for PCR, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker as of the 25th of August as well, Grenada continues to only have 24 confirmed cases of COVID-19. The last positive case was on the 31st of July that was someone coming in and was picked up through our screening and quarantine process at MBIA, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do expect and the public and this House needs to be aware that there will be more numbers. As we allow individuals to enter the State with our quarantine process and screening process, we will find more individuals. We just need to be aware of the difference between community spread and picking up at our borders. With a proper border control and having open borders, you will find people coming from elsewhere where the community spread is high in those countries.

With respect to current stocks and ability to do further PCR, we have 6,841 test kits on Island. What that means with respect to our method of testing and batch testing, we have the ability to do 68,000 PCR test or to test 68,000 individuals for COVID-19 right now based on current stocks, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, flights continue to come in, interisland flights are functioning on a daily basis and we continue to exercise quarantine protocols based on travel history of individuals. So while these flights would be coming from certain green zone countries, in other words, individuals from those countries who have been residing in those countries for 14 to 28 days do not need quarantine, there are individuals on those flights who have come from outside of the region from red and yellow zone countries and through our screening, immigration and health process, those individuals are placed in quarantine. Mr. Speaker, we have numerous sites and thanks to GTA, Ministry of Tourism the number of sites for individuals to stay in quarantine or isolation continues to increase. This does provide much needed income to those individuals but also allows us to maintain our protocols, Mr. Speaker. We do have one or two individuals who continue to try to breach the quarantine, they are picked up based on the fact that we use GPS surveillance and security at those sites but the public and the House needs to be aware that it only takes

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one to cause a breach or the pandemic to be back which is why we consistently as a Ministry and as a Government preach, remind, beg and reinforce that individuals need to follow the protocols of wearing the mask and social distancing.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that Canada is now a green zone country, in that Canada maintains less than 19 cases in the last 14 days per hundred thousand population. In fact Canada is now at 14 cases in the last 14 days per hundred thousand which allows us to have individuals who are in Canada come to Grenada and not require quarantine. Mr. Speaker, the UK is tethering on that green zone possibility, we need to see them under 20 for 14 days in a row. In fact last week for 3 or 4 days they were well below the 20 but that have gone back up unfortunately to 22 but we continue to observe. Unfortunately our neighbour to the South, Trinidad is now a red zone country. Community spread has increased significantly to move them from green, to yellow, to red within the space of a week and a half to two weeks, Mr. Speaker. Trinidad is now at 77 cases in the last 14 days per hundred thousand population.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health continues to do what is needed and I would like to take this opportunity again to thank the Public Health Officers and all of those involved in assisting us in maintaining those protocols and keeping the public safe, in keeping Grenada COVID free to date. The risk still remains extremely high, we still remain extremely high, the risk for COVID-19 but the individuals who are doing their part, I want to take this opportunity to thank them. But COVID-19 is not the only responsibility of the Ministry of Health, there are others and despite the pandemic and despite the stresses and the drain on resources and time and efforts, we continue to meet other obligations and so I would like to speak to some of the other achievements and compliments since last at this House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the General Hospital Phase 2; as I mentioned the labs are functioning which is the second floor of that building. The rest of Laboratory equipment have been moved and or the new ones on the sea or in shipment on the way here, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, admin building of Phase 2 is also functional; in fact we started classes there in the boardroom teaching facility. Nursing assistants are being taught there and Midwifery programmes will be starting there as well, Mr. Speaker. The

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Accident and Emergency side of the Phase 2, the building area facilities are complete and we have begun to move “protocols” as they are referred to. Accident and Emergency is a complicated move because we've got to make sure that we move without interrupting the service at all. Mr. Speaker, imaging, the scanners have been ordered, CT Scanners are on the way. The led lining of the facilities, electricity preparations etc., are well on the way and we expect a last quarter implementation of that facility. Elevators at the Phase 1 of the hospital were scheduled to be replaced, those new elevators are on Island and the work has started to dismantle the old elevators and construct the new ones. This has to be done in a phased basis so that there's no interruption and only one elevator will be down at a time so it will take almost a 3 to 4 months period if not more to make sure that this is done properly. Dialysis, Mr. Speaker, contracts has been signed, equipment has been ordered and we expect to have dialysis services offered at the General Hospital at the end of September, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Carriacou, the upgrade has started, the smarting has started. In fact there were pictures that the Ministry sent out, of Carriacou barricaded and the work-in-progress. That work is a smarting of a facility which makes it more climate-resilient, as well as the preparations for Radiology Department in Carriacou. As I had said earlier the X-ray machines for Carriacou are on Island and we are making the preparations at Princess Royal for that X-ray machine to go up which would make a significant difference in the need or the reason for individuals from Carriacou to come to Grenada. To date, an individual once they need imaging of any type or so have to come to Grenada. Once that X-ray machine is implemented there, individuals don't have to come to Grenada for a simple X-ray based on their trauma or their case or so. It can be done there in Carriacou and the consultants here in Grenada and the world over can view their image and give their opinions on it for individuals, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, St. John, St. Mark's Polyclinic, the building is basically finished and we have begun the process of equipping and staffing of that facility. Princess Alice also with the imaging contract that we signed off on for the nation also had their X-ray refurbished and serviced so that we can continue the life of that. In the primary

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Healthcare system, Mr. Speaker, upgrade of various health centres have started including Tivoli which starts with the relocation of the Tivoli Health Centre, temporary relocation in order to do the work at the Tivoli Health Center. I want to thank the representative and the individuals there for their patience and understanding. I know that it is an inconvenience but all that crosses my mind are those signs you see when things are being upgraded. Please bear with us for the inconvenience as we upgrade the facility.

Mr. Speaker, National Health Insurance, we continue on our commitment to National Health Insurance. We need to be aware, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister for Finance and the Representative from St. George North-West has said and the Ministry of Finance has said that Government revenues are down and therefore the ability of the Government to meet certain commitments need to be re-evaluated and we are doing that as best as possible. NHI also is funded from the Government coffers from contributions from citizens or from public funds as a whole and therefore that evaluation process has to be done and is being done to see how the negative effects of the economy of COVID-19 will affect the ability of the NHI to be launched. But we still proceed, in terms of the legislation, it's to be tabled to Cabinet hopefully to be approved, adjusted, tweaked to then come to this Honourable House in the not too distant future, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the protocols with respect to individuals coming into Grenada, we continue to observe, we continue to look and tweak with two things and mind. One, to try as best as possible to make it as comfortable as possible and as tolerable as possible for individuals coming to Grenada, in particular our citizens who have been outside and are longing to come back home. Many of them are coming in daily now from the various zones and we observe, I personally have been there many times up to last week with the JetBlue flight that came in, a JetBlue charter flight to observe and to see how we can best improve wherever possible the protocols being exercised there. Mr. Speaker, the US unfortunately, our largest neighbour and where most of our diaspora are, they are at 198 cases in last 14 days per hundred thousand. We continue to look and observe and find ways wherever possible, while maintaining the safety of

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Grenada to allow the flow of individuals back and forth and I look forward to being able to make further adjustments wherever possible. I want to thank the Members of the Committee Dr. Bert Brathwaite, our CMO, Dr. Shawn Charles, Dr. George Mitchell and others, Sherice Philip, who are part of this Committee. All of my other Cabinet colleagues who lend their hand and their advice as well, Ministry of Tourism, GTA, Maurice Bishop International Airport Authority, the Minister herself, very active in us finding ways to have, while we say the borders are open, to make sure that that we maintain the safety but allow the flow as best as possible of people in and out of our country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers go to our brothers and sisters and Associates in Trinidad and Tobago and we hope that they will get past their hurdle as quickly as possible and look forward to them getting back to the green zone where we can once more be a CARICOM or Caribbean bubble as we move forward, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, again, just to take this opportunity as always to thank the team that exist at the Ministry of Health, that have continued to provide yeoman service, that based on the report that I've just given to this Honourable House, not only have they made sure to focus their efforts on COVID-19 and keep Grenada with no COVID cases, no deaths at present and continue to monitor that level of risk and maintain the various protocols based on the high risk that we continue to have, Mr. Speaker, but they have also been able to continue do the other duties of the Ministry of Health that existed and continue to exist with or without COVID-19, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Minister for Health and Parliamentary Representative for St. George-South for all the big work that is taking place in the Ministry of Health under your leadership. Honourable Representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique and Minister for Legal Affairs.

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr. Speaker, please permit me this morning to make some few brief statements as it relates to the Ministry of

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Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs and Local Government. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to begin with the area of sport and, Mr. Speaker, there are some exciting news to be told in the midst of this COVID chaos as our 16-year old Zain Mc Farlane of Brunswick, Carriacou, a student of Bishop's College was recently awarded a full athletic and academic scholarship by the Jamaica College in Kingston Jamaica to attend that institution and he has also earned a spot on the Jamaica College track team **(applause)** to begin, Mr. Speaker, September of this year for 3 years. Mr. Speaker, as most of us are aware, the Jamaica College is one of the leading academic institutions in Jamaica that has produced and continues to produce outstanding athletes as they have a recognised athletics programme at that institution. Mr. Speaker, this scholarship offered to our very young Zain Mc Farlane is for 3 years and includes a payment of school fees, accommodation, including meals, books, uniform, medical support for track injuries and the Jamaica College track team is a team that is sponsored by Puma. As a result of that, Zain would be provided with his full supply of athletic equipment; bag, spikes, track shoe, running, etc. Air fare, Mr. Speaker, will be provided to him every year from Grenada to Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, Zain is expected to depart Carriacou for Jamaica next week. Mr. Speaker, this is such a remarkable story for us as Zain was once a resident of the Grand Bacolet Juvenile Centre, his short stint there, Mr. Speaker, I believe would have changed his life forever. **(Applause)** He has, Mr. Speaker, regained much focus, steadied himself and became evermore determine to succeed in what he does best which is that of running. And so, Mr. Speaker, kudos must be given to the Management and Staff of the Juvenile Centre because I believe his stint there would have certainly played a part in his rehabilitation and the result of what we're seeing here today. Mr. Speaker, it was during his stint at Bishop's College that he began to excel in the 100 metre and 200 metres respectively. And as a result of that, Mr. Speaker, he caught the attention of Mr. Trevor Mc Intosh, a Kayak who is the founder of a Foundation known as the Grenada Sports and Wellbeing Foundation. And through that Foundation, Mr. Speaker, with the assistance and cooperation from the Department of Sports within the Ministry of Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs, this scholarship was procured for Mr.

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Zain Mc Farlane. And so Mr. Speaker, I want to single out here this morning and to thank Mr Mc Intosh for the work that he has been doing through his Foundation for the young people on the Island of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. **(Applause)** And so, Mr. Speaker, as a Ministry and as a Government, I know that we continue to support his work and to continue to support young Zain in his attempt at glory.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to briefly comment on an issue, and that issue, Mr. Speaker, concerns patient transfers from Carriacou to Grenada. That is, Mr. Speaker, patients transferring from the Princess Royal Hospital to the General Hospital in Grenada. And, Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether or not you saw that video that was circulating on social media of a patient aboard the Osprey recently. A video, Mr. Speaker, that was recorded without a patient's permission. And, Mr. Speaker, I wonder, how many of us will like for a video of us or even our loved ones to be recorded and publicised on social media and other platforms at a time when we are at our weakest, at a time when we are sick, at a time when we are scared and confused? I'm not sure many of us would approve of this. However, Mr. Speaker, there are those among us that are cold and heartless, there are those among us that have no regards whatsoever for human dignity, there are those among us that have no respect for ones right to privacy and will go out in an attempt to gain what I would say cheap political mileage at the expense of others. Mr. Speaker, we have to be very careful with these people and I believe that they must and should be dealt.

But, Mr. Speaker, on a broader issue of patient transfers from Carriacou and Petite Martinique, patients are ordinarily transferred via different methods or different means. Patients are transferred, Mr. Speaker, via the Osprey Express, the SVG Air, the Coast Guard and in some instances the MV DollyC. Mr. Speaker, the health professionals are the ones who determine the best mode of transportation for a patient having regard to that particular medical emergency or medical issue. And so, Mr. Speaker, the DollyC in particular, that is a vessel that is properly equipped, fully equipped with a sick bay and have all the necessary requirements to transfer a sick patient. But of course, Mr. Speaker, this vessel may not always be available to transfer a patient, this is so because of the particular days and time of their operations. In

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addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we also use the Osprey Express, we also use the Coast Guard and in dire circumstances the SVG Air is used.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs and local Government have an excellent relationship with all of the carriers especially the Osprey Express which is the vessel that is most often used. And so, Mr. Speaker, this is a vessel that we can call at any moment, at anytime, at any hour of the day, at any hour of the night to request a patient transfer from Carriacou to Grenada and Government, the State in some cases have been meeting the expenses. But, Mr. Speaker, you would not hear that. You would not hear that just last week at around 1 a.m. in the morning, the Ministry of Carriacou and Petite Martinique had to call out the Osprey to bring down a patient that suffered from what you call “the bends” and had to seek urgent medical treatment in a Chamber in Grenada. Mr. Speaker, while the system is not perfect, while we could do better but we have made strides and we continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I have had discussions and dialogue with the owners and operators of the Osprey Express and they are willing and prepared even at this stage to modify some seats at the back of their vessel to ensure that patients are transported a little bit more in a dignified manner. And so, Mr. Speaker, I really want to say here today that we in Carriacou, the Ministry and the health professionals in Carriacou are doing all that we can and we are doing our best in the circumstances. This is not an issue that just arrived this year or last year, but this is an issue that is historic. But if you look, Mr. Speaker, from whence we came, when we only had cargo boats and was travelling back and forth and was taking 4 and 5 hours, sometimes 8 hours to reach, we have progressed. We have come a long way and so, Mr. Speaker, it is something that we will continue to do, something that we will continue to engage the stakeholders and the partners because it is not easy, Mr. Speaker, to be under some health issues and at the same time having to traverse the rough seas in order to gain assistance.

I have been called out at many times in the night, Mr. Speaker, we have had to charter a boat, we have had to charter a plane, we have had to do everything and I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that there isn't one person in Carriacou and Petite Martinique that can say that they were not able to be transferred to Grenada because of lack of funds.

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We, Mr. Speaker, have put arrangements and protocols in place to ensure that no one is left behind who is needing proper health care on the Sister Isle.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to touch on another issue, and, Mr. Speaker, that issue relates to the movement of the Port facility to Harvey Vale. Mr. Speaker, somehow in 2020 this has now become a very thorny issue, a subject and a matter that was in the public domain from since 2013. It took, Mr. Speaker, about 3-4 years for the construction of the state of the art Port facility we can now boast of in Harvey Vale. That Port facility was commissioned, Mr. Speaker, in 2018 just a couple months before I was elected as the Parliamentary Representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Mr. Speaker, prior to that, I lived all my life in Carriacou and Petite Martinique and I was apart of the national discussion and national debate at a time prior to entering into national politics. And, Mr. Speaker, I cannot recall that there was much objection or discussions, or debate as to whether or not this port facility should have moved from Hillsborough to Harvey Vale. All of a sudden, Mr. Speaker, it is now one of the hotly debated issue on Island. And might I add even the Honourable Leader of the Opposition...

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Tobias Clement: Mr. Speaker, I do rise on a Point of Order in terms of the Port facility as is discussed. I hear the Member is saying that...

Mr. Speaker: The Point of Order, what is the Point of Order?

Hon. Tobias Clement: That she said that the Port facility was developed between 2013-2018. But, Mr. Speaker, that facility that was developed at the beginning before it changed into a Port, it was developed as a Marina, it never started as a Port, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Ok, thank you.

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Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I...

Mr. Speaker: In situations like that Mr. Leader of the Opposition, you said a Point of Order, that's why I asked what was the Point of Order. What you wanted to emphasise maybe was some clarification, so that is a Point of Clarification not a Point of Order. Ok. Honourable...

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Mr. Speaker, it is an undisputable fact that the Port facility was constructed during the period I spoke about. The Tyrell Bay Port was constructed during the period I spoke about. Mr. Speaker, you would no doubt appreciate that during that time our Honourable and distinguished Leader of the Opposition was quite a Member of the Government of the day at the time. And, Mr. Speaker, it really behooves me as to the real issue and I have said time and time again, at this stage in 2020, the Port is already at Tyrell Bay Carriacou, it is there. What I expect the discussion to be, Mr. Speaker, is what now can we do as a people, Government and Opposition, what can we do to assist, Mr. Speaker? And to see how we can cushion the fallout so to say of that particular movement. That is not what I'm hearing, what I'm now hearing, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why, why it moved. That issue is now to me immaterial, it is dead. The issue now is not why it moved, the issue should be how can we move forward, how can we cushion the effects of Hillsborough?

And, Mr. Speaker, I just want to inform that a Committee has been established to look at the situation. It comprises of persons from different sectors, the business people, everyone, residents in the Hillsborough area and to come up with ideas, with suggestions and with proposals as to how we can cushion, what we can do to bring back a little more life into the Hillsborough area. Mr. Speaker, I have begun to receive some of those proposals and ideas and suggestions. It is not up to Government alone to look at the situation, it's for all of us...

(Time bell rings)

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Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: ...the business persons there, everybody, to look at it and to see how we can come up with some sort of proposal or idea in moving Hillsborough forward. Mr. Speaker, I just want to note that there is a prominent, I'm not sure if I should use the word prominent but there is a business person in particular in Carriacou...

Mr. Speaker: You were about to request two more minutes?

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Yes, I was, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. Mr. Speaker, there is a businessman in Carriacou who I think has now turned political advocate I would say now, who have been championing and been talking about the movement of the Port and the fallout and the ideas and the conspiracy theories and everything like that. And, Mr. Speaker, it's that same businessman while the Port was being constructed, he was also constructing his hotel at the same time, he never said a word, not one word came from him. But you know, Mr. Speaker, he was busy doing other things. Now, Mr. Speaker, now in 2020 he is one of the greatest champion for against the removal or the movement of the Port to Hillsborough, to Harvey Vale. Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy is very real, but, Mr. Speaker, I am convinced and I believe that the movement of the Port to Harvey Vale, Carriacou was indeed the right decision, the best decision.

And if I were in Government at the time, I would have supported that same decision. Mr. Speaker, it is for us to move on, it is for us to move forward and it is for us to stop the political nonsense that I would say and let us come together and let us build Carriacou and Petite Martinique. That is only way forward, Mr. Speaker. I thank you.
(Applause)

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Minister for Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs. Honourable Minister for Finance and Prime Minister.

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Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand, Mr. Speaker, just to make a statement as it relates to one particular issue. Mr. Speaker, last evening I was part of a first ever organised diaspora meeting with the Prime Minister and of course some Members, other Ministers as requested by the diaspora. Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 has been a rough and continues to be a major problem facing all our countries and in our case Grenada of course. But, it is said that in every situation where some difficulty is or crisis emerges one clearly has to deal with the crisis but at the same time not just mourn about it and deal with it, but also look towards the opportunities that it has certainly created. So with all COVID-19 problems that it has created for all of us, it certainly has some areas that it has brought some serious opportunities and I must say in the area of the use of technology. I think the technology was there but we were reluctant, some of us did not want to do it, some of us wanted to continue our old ways of operating and some of us are afraid of the technological advances for what it's worth. But it has forced us because we had to communicate and the only ways where we can do that in this present atmosphere is too to use the technology available, so Zoom and all other communication medium has been utilised appropriately by all of us. So we have not been able to reach our diaspora physically and they of course have issues that they wish to get some feedback or clarification on. So it was initiated by elements in the diaspora and it should be noted that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Minister had a meeting with the diaspora, a few weeks ago, I don't remember exactly the time. So the idea came from them, that they probably needed to hear the Prime Minister also specifically on some major issues.

And then I asked them to let me know what other issues they wished to raise and they did mention the area of health so we had the Minister for Health there in the Zoom session last night. They also mentioned the area of, of course the fiscal situation in the country which of course means myself had to address this and they mentioned education. So the Minister for Education was also on and we felt in any meeting of the diaspora at least the Minister for Foreign Affairs, while he had spoken to them recently, should be on at least, so that his Ministry would be constantly aware of the issues that they are raising.

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And I must say, Mr. Speaker, it was one of the best sessions that we have had. You know something about the Zoom session, even amongst ourselves where we are communicating with our constituents, we are finding more people in our meetings, in our villages than when we called a meeting of a village. When we call a meeting in a village, even in my own constituency where it is known that I have genuine support, you will find 20 people showing. But now on a zoom you're getting fifty something and other Members of the Parliament have reported that they are getting much more people responding. I suppose the whole newness of the technology is getting to people and people are anxious, of course, to speak to their Representative. We had over 350 odd persons on that Zoom session directly so and since it was streaming live on Facebook, they had over 500. And hundreds of people, I heard about a couple thousand persons were on, listening to the various ideas and issues that were brought forward. So it was a highly successful event, and I was touched, Mr. Speaker, by a number of the comments that were made, we were asked a number of searching questions, some people mentioned issues that they had concerns about. But some of the points were raised, people was saying for example they were so impressed with the presentation of the Ministers that were present and in fact one lady said, **"I'm a school teacher in North America and I am so impressed to see the quality of leadership of your team Prime Minister"**, after the Minister for Health and the Minister for Education, the Minister for Foreign Affairs spoke on issues. She said, **"Prime Minister, I could see why you're doing well, because you have excellent backup support."** And I was really impressed and she said, **"I wish we had that here in North America."** I'm not getting involved in North American politics, but she made the point for what it's worth. And so, it was really a special session in many respects and we agreed, in fact, the meeting was from 7 to 9, we went from 7 to 10 and we literally had to cut off because really people did not want to leave. So, it was a very revolutionary session, and I consider this as an excellent way for us to keep in contact with our constituents and our diaspora out there. And, I wanted to make that point here today because I think it's something that the country needs. A number of our local people on the, people watching, were listening because they did put out information to the public ears, so a lot

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of people locally here were watching and listening. In fact, I saw some important persons in the country and different institutions listening on, not commenting, but listening to what was taking place.

So, I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, to compliment our brothers and sisters in the diaspora. They were just interested in what was happening home. They didn't get into the political aspects or they just felt, this is a time for us to work together, not to be on to the political divide and attempting to score any political points, but let us work together in dealing with this very crucial period that we're facing in our country and I think that note was a very positive note. So, I wanted to mention that here this morning.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Prime Minister and Minister for Finance. Okay, let's move on.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 13 - Personal Explanations.
Item 14 - Motions.
Item 15 - Bills.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Minister for Legal Affairs.

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill entitled the Supreme Court Fees Bill, 2020.

(The Clerk converse with the Speaker in private)

Mr. Speaker: Would the Leader of Government's Business just approach please?

(Discussion between the Speaker and the Leader of Government's Business)

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Mr. Speaker: Honourable, we had a Motion for the second reading?

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Yes, Mr. Speaker, of the Supreme Court Fees Bill, 2020.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable...

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a very simple, simple Bill. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court, the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, has since implemented what you call a new E-Filing system via an E-Litigation Platform or Portal. The Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court has since implemented that E-Portal in five of its Member states. Grenada, Mr. Speaker, is one of the outstanding four members that is yet to do so. This Government, Mr. Speaker, is now desirous of having this E-Litigation platform fully implemented in our local Courts in Grenada. That is, Mr. Speaker, our local High Courts. The E-Litigation Portal, Mr. Speaker, will eliminate the requirement for documents to be filed on paper. It means therefore, Mr. Speaker, that at any time, anywhere in the world, Court documents can now be filed electronically. And if that is the case, Mr. Speaker, it means therefore, that there will no longer be a need to affix postage stamps to documents. Mr. Speaker, prior, under the Supreme Court Fees Act, the only way within which Court Fees were payable, Mr. Speaker, was via stamps, postage stamps that are usually affixed to documents.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at Clause 4 of the Bill, it provides for now the payment of court fees and other percentages and associated costs by means other than by stamps. So, Court Fees can now be paid by means of credit card, by means of debit card, in addition to cheques and cash and where necessary by stamps.

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Mr. Speaker, this Bill has tremendous potential that I believe will transform basically the way in which our courts and legal practitioners do business, both in relation, Mr. Speaker, to time and cost.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me give you a practical example of some of the challenges that we experience in the practice of civil law, civil matters through our High Courts. The practice of civil law, Mr. Speaker is heavily time sensitive. So, our court rules provides time, a deadline or a specific time within which court papers and documents will have to be filed, whether it's a defence, a reply, a submission, a record of appeal, an appeal, etc, etc. And, Mr. Speaker, once a legal practitioner fail to comply within those specific times, there are numerous sanctions. Sanctions can include that of a striking off of a Statement of Claim, if it's an appeal, you will not be able to file your appeal. And so, there are a lot of sanctions. And, what you find happening, Mr. Speaker, over the years relationships existed between some legal practitioners and members of staff within the Supreme Court Registry. And there was to some extent, Mr. Speaker, an issue where some clerk, some staff engaged in the practice of backdating documents, so that that document can appear as if it was filed within a specific time. With the E-Litigation Portal, Mr. Speaker, to some extent, that problem or that element would be removed because with the technology, Mr. Speaker, the date a document was filed, the time the document was filed, will be recorded electronically. So the time or the avenue within which documents can be backdated will be reduced. And so, Mr. Speaker, this would augur well, in terms of the administration of justice, and how legal practitioners will do business in our courts.

Mr. Speaker, with the passage of this Bill, we will see, Mr. Speaker, the implementation that Grenada will begin to receive many new benefits, especially during this covidious times. Mr. Speaker, the COVID pandemic has severely impacted the operation of our courts. And once we have a mechanism where court documents can be filed electronically, Mr. Speaker, that will seriously impact the way in which our courts and within which how things are administered.

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Mr. Speaker, as you know, we are also into the 2020 hurricane season. And of course, during this time, Mr. Speaker, an electronical system can be very important or extremely important in the event that Grenada is affected by a natural disaster.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to Clause 3, of course, Mr. Speaker, there is a slight amendment to be made there, which I propose to do at the Committee Stage. But, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to this Bill as well, the Chief Justice will be able to make moves as it relates to the fees payable. And that is so, Mr. Speaker, of course, with the concurrence of the Minister for Finance, and with the two other Court of Appeal Judges. That is so because the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court wants to harmonise court fees throughout the region, want to ensure that it is standard. So, what a litigant might pay in St. Vincent should be equivalent to what a litigant in Grenada might also pay. And so, we are in the process of wanting to make the legal fees standard across the board. And that is important, Mr. Speaker, because access to justice is a very important thing. And so the fees payable by a litigant must not and cannot be a deterrent. And so, Mr. Speaker, we recommend this Bill and we believe that, Mr. Speaker, it will go well, towards the overall administration of justice here in Grenada, especially in light of the times that we are now in. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Minister. Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs and Town of St. George.

Hon. Peter David: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give support to this Bill. I think in a nutshell, this Bill, I want to commend the Ministry of Legal Affairs and the Attorney General, Solicitor General and all those involved and the Government for the process of taking this into the future. I think it follows on something else that is amazing. Our Cabinet, Mr. Speaker, since earlier this year Cabinet has started to not use paper, we get all the documents on computer and it's amazing because up until that, I would look behind my desk, and I will see a stack of paper and it's amazing, you have trees, so many trees are cut down. So, I think persons who are interested in the environment and persons who are looking for a paperless world,

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because I think that's where we're heading. There is, a lot of the things are being done now, is eliminating paper. I think this, for me, one of the significant things in this, is the fact that we are moving towards the elimination of paperwork in all of these processes, because it eliminates the need for filing physical papers in Court. It's now, in the thing that us old folks don't really understand, but we know the thing called "the Cloud". Everything is out in "the Cloud" and the lawyers could go access it, and pull it down in their computer and then do their work without files. So, no longer would you see lawyers walking to Court with files, you'll see them walking to Court with a computer, as we see our colleagues. So, I want to commend the Ministry for that. It also, Mr. Speaker, deals with the question of the storage. Persons who go out and I hope it expands into other areas in the Registry because when you go to the Registry now, it's stacks and stacks of paper and I'm talking about Land Deeds and other things. I know the Ministry of Agriculture is moving in that direction, the Registry is moving in that direction and this here, Mr. Speaker, must be commended.

It also eliminates on cost, because the cost of paper not only to the litigants, but the cost of paper to the Government is something that is going to be reduced. So it leads to reduction in costs and constant access to these documents. I am told that the Judges and Attorneys have consistent access to documents when filed. You see, Mr. Speaker, this system has been tried in other territories, Grenada was not the pilot, it was used in another territory. So, we are coming in now when most of the kinks have been eliminated. So, it has proven itself in other territories. Five Member States have done it, four Member States have not done it, Grenada is among the four, and now we are in the process of doing it. So, we are following on a process that has already started, so the E-Litigation Portal because that is what, the fees... I think calling it the Supreme Court Fees Act, it's kind of not really getting the essence of it, that was only necessary with respect to getting this E-Litigation Portal up and running. And that is the essence in my view of this Bill that is being brought here today. It also means that persons don't have to be served. Once it's up on the system you are deemed to have been served. I think I'm correct in saying that. So, once you're served it means that people don't have to run around looking for you, dropping paper by your foot to make

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sure you're served, you refuse service and a lot of time wasting because of lack of service will be eliminated. And, that is another issue for litigants in court, the wastage of time because you can't find this one, you can't find that one, the lawyer gone away, the lawyer ducking service, some people hiding from service, once it is filed on the portal in "the Cloud" you are deemed to have been served.

So again, elimination of the cost of paper, elimination of the cost of service. I'm sure that the Baliffs who normally do service will find another way within the system to operate because it means that Baliffs are now no longer, will be slowly... Now, these things are not going to happen overnight. There will be time for other people to be retrained in other areas where the change has been made.

So, I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this is the modernisation or the beginning of the process or the continuation of the process of modernisation of our court system. There's a lot more to be done. For example, the Judges, in the future, I hope we go to the stage where they don't have to be writing everything that wastes a lot of time, but we are getting there. It's a question of resources and countries like ours with limited resources have some challenges. But, I want to welcome this provision, I want to welcome this legislation and to give it my full support. And, to say that, I am commending the Government and the Ministries for the continuing modernisation of the process of our court system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Representative for Town of St. George. Honourable Representative for St. George North-West.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I'm standing, of course, to give my full support to this Bill and of course, the passage of the second reading. Just in addition to the important points being raised by my two distinguished colleagues who are legal practitioners, I wanted to make the point that in addition to the ease of filing, and of course, the necessity to be able to collect fees in a more efficient and quicker way, the fact that the Supreme Court is now having legal litigation portal, works also and the benefit of the people as a whole because then you can be able to have some of

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your court proceedings done on quicker time. Because what my two distinguished colleagues did not say, that the lawyers sometimes use their inability to be in Court or to travel, have traveled or have been so busy doing other things and next thing, you know, someone comes and spend, come from wherever they come from to deal with a court matter and when they reach, the Court is cancelled, the date has been cancelled because some lawyer representing a client decides he has other things to do. There are going to be less excuse for this. And therefore, I think this is a very important factor.

In addition to this, Mr. Speaker, I think one of the problems the Court has historically is that the Supreme Court, that is, some of our countries have not been meeting their responsibility to the Court. I am not going to call names here. But, Grenada right now is not one of them. Grenada has been very much on board with respect to meeting its responsibility to the court system and its financing. So, one of the things that were intended initially on this is to have the fees remitted straight to the Supreme Court, not collected by the individual Governments and then passed on and paid from the Consolidated Fund. This is going to be directly, we have pointed out our Constitution, and I think the Supreme Court has to understand this, stipulate any fees from Government must go through the Consolidated Fund. And since we are not one of those who are refusing to meet our responsibility, we had to insist that we will do what we have to do, but meet our constitutional requirement, which is that the monies must be deposited in the Consolidated Fund and then we continue to meet our responsibilities to the court system as a whole.

But the one area of concern though, and I think I understand the intentions to harmonise the fee structure, but clearly, Mr. Speaker, the countries are not all on the same economic strata. So, if you look at the level of salaries and emoluments in one country in the OECS as opposed to the level of emolument in another country, they are quite different. So, if you're asking me to pay the same fees as another country where the GDP is so much higher, relatively speaking, to ask the consumer who is making less monies, then I think one has to be a little careful. That is why we have insisted in the Bill, that on condition that discussions are held... (because when the Bill initially as it is before the Parliament) ...because we expect when we go to Committee stage that there

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would be a measure of change because it just simply says that the fees are going to be, let me read exactly what it says there. It says that, yes in Clause 3, part 2, it says, **“it provides for the fixing of the court fees by the Chief Justice together with two other Judges.”** But we have to say, after consultation with the Minister for Finance of Grenada. If the other countries will just want to accept that, then that's fine, but we believe that the Minister for Finance because if fees are just raised by the Supreme Court, and it turns out to be very high and we pass it in Parliament, and give okay to it, next thing you hear we are getting real licks in our own individual country for having put pressure on the taxpayers because the consumer that has to pay this, that have to pay it. So I think that condition is necessary. I assume the Chief Justice and her team of Judges will be responsible in not coming up with fees that are too exorbitant, but you never know, it might be one Chief Justice today, another one tomorrow, might be one Government today, another Government and another Minister for Finance tomorrow. So, I think the necessity to indicate after consultation with the Minister for Finance of the of Grenada, the other countries could say otherwise. I think that's a necessary condition.

Other than that, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I give my full support and I think it is necessary. And, I do just add one other point. In fact, at a meeting of the OECS Heads recently where the Chief Justice was there, we realised that one of the things that COVID-19 has done where cases are being held virtually now, we are saving an enormous amount of money, because a lot of times when the Court meet, the Supreme Court, the Judges travel for individual countries and the cost of travel and hotel costs, because Judges are treated differently than poor Prime Minister's because the kind of cost at the hotels, that the expenses that are incurred. I mean, if I try that, I'll be in a lot of trouble with the taxpayers of the country. So, we are saving an enormous amount of money by a lot of the virtual litigation that are taking place at the Supreme Court level, so, the countries are benefitting. COVID-19 has another positive effect for the taxpayers of the country, bringing quicker justice, but also making sure that decisions are held much faster. It's also making sure that the Supreme Court may be more adequately financed appropriately by all countries and so on, because I know that some

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of the first countries that agreed to this completely that the fees go straight to the Supreme Court is among Member countries that were not doing too well in paying their Bills, so they had absolutely no choice but to agree that the monies must go directly to the Supreme Court. Well in Grenada's case, we don't have that problem. And as long as this Government is in office, I know that we will continue to do so. It did not happen in the previous Government, where we lagged considerably in terms of paying our bills, but certainly under this Government we will continue to meet that responsibility.

So, if another Government comes in, and it wishes to change it, because it's not able to pay, then they have that right to make the changes as we are doing here, relatively to the Bill. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I give my total support to the second reading, as proposed by the Minister for Legal Affairs, and of course, the Member for Carriacou and Petite Martinique affairs.

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

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Members of the House who would have contributed and supported the Bill and commend the Bill now to its second reading.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs.

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: 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.

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Question put and agreed to.

House in Committee.

House resume.

Mr. Speaker: I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed with one amendment. Honourable...

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Mr. Speaker, 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 Representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill and passage.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed as amended.

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

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that the Government will not proceed with the Bill on the Order Paper for second reading shortly entitled Public Finance Management (Amendment) Act, 2020 at this time.

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Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill deferred.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I beg to introduce for the first reading, a Bill for an Act shortly entitled the Extradition (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Clerk: An Act to amend the Extradition Act Cap 98 shortly entitled Extradition (Amendment) Act, 2020.

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I beg that the relevant Standing Order of the House be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through all of its stages at this Sitting.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I bet to move the second reading of the Bill.

Question propped.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Honuorable Representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Extradition (Amendment) Bill, 2020 again is what I would term a very simple, simple Bill.

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It is Bill that seeks to amend, Mr. Speaker, the Extradition Act Cap 98 of the 2010 Revised Edition Laws of Grenada.

The Extradition Act, Mr. Speaker, as you may be aware, that is the legislation or the legislative framework that provides the procedure for extraditing persons charged or convicted of criminal offences to and from Grenada, of course, Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Bilateral Treaties and with other States and countries. Mr. Speaker, presently on the principal Extradition Act, a criminal offence qualifies as an extradition offence if that offence, Mr. Speaker, is punishable by imprisonment for 5 years or a longer maximum custodial penalty. Mr. Speaker, however the Government of Grenada has entered into Extradition Treaties with other States for extraditing persons who would have been charged or convicted with offences punishable by imprisonment for at least a year.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, in order to ensure that we as a country and as an State discharge our obligations, it is important for us to consider and to continue to consider extradition requests under our Bilateral Treaties. And so, Mr. Speaker, this amendment Bill seeks to amend the definition of an extradition offence under section 4 to include Mr. Speaker, offences punishable by imprisonment for at least one year as opposed to five. And as indicated, Mr. Speaker, that is to ensure that as a country, as a state, Grenada can discharge its obligations to what we have engaged in with respect to other countries and Bilateral Treaties.

Mr. Speaker, you know it is important to have and to establish these relationships with other countries and, Mr. Speaker, the element of extradition is one such avenue through which cooperation and support usually deepen between countries. And so, Mr. Speaker, it is important at this stage for us to amend the Extradition Act. I thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Honourable Representative for St. Patrick's West.

Hon. Anthony Boatwain: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my support to this Bill but not without first expressing some concerns as to the Intent

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and the motive for the change from five to one year. Mr. Speaker, there is nothing new about extradition, I mean that has been going on for years, from the beginning of time. But as we know, Mr. Speaker, extradition is primarily reserved for persons who have committed serious crimes and have become fugitive from justice. In more recent times, Mr. Speaker, extradition has become popular because of the nature of some of those crimes and crimes that have been associated with what we call the spread of transnational criminal organisations, such as terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking, counterfeiting, that's money laundering and cyber crimes.

Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge all of these criminal activities will attract a prison sentence in excess of 5 years. I do not know if anyone, except for extenuating circumstances where such a crime will attract a prison sentence of less than 5 years. But, Mr. Speaker, it is my belief that a crime is a crime and if you commit a crime and you become a fugitive from justice regardless to the time, whether it is one or five years, I think you should do the time and therefore I have no problem with countries entering into Bilateral Agreements to ensure that persons who commit crimes are really brought to justice.

However, Mr. Speaker, I have two concerns as they relate to extradition. First I believe there should be uniformity in what you call the classification of crimes that are extraditable and there should be some level of uniformity, Mr. Speaker, as to the sentence. We know as a fact that some countries will not extradite their citizens to another country where the death penalty is in place when they themselves do not have the death penalty. Likewise there could be different length of sentencing where countries might have certain reservations. If a certain crime in my country does not attract, let us say a sentencing in excess of 5 years or one year and yet in another country when I enter into that agreement, that same crime attracts a prison sentence of 20 years, there will be some reservation on the part of the sending country as to why should I send my citizen to that country, where that activity in my country just attract a prison sentence of let us say 6 months but yet if I send you over there, it's 10 years. That could create some kind of hesitancy in terms of enforcing whatever laws or treaties that you may have for extradition. Again, Mr. Speaker, what might be considered as a

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criminal offence in one country may not considered a criminal offence in another country. And these are the things we have to look at in terms of enforcing such agreements.

But the ones that concerns me most, Mr. Speaker, is that of reciprocity. And it happens when... there is lack of reciprocity when countries consider themselves to be big and you could do what you want because I have the authority, I have the power. I could request that you send back certain person to my country but they wouldn't listen to me a small country if I make such request, and that has been happening. It happened recently, a small country in our region where a certain big person from a big country committed a serious crime in a hotel, he was put on bail, he went back to his country, Extradition Order was placed and they didn't even look at that because of who you are connected with and the country you come from.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am saying that yes, we could enter into those arrangements but enforcement has always been a problem especially when some countries feel like they could bully you into doing what they want. They could make certain request and if you refuse they could use other powers to force you into subjection and that is my concern, when we enter into this kind of arrangement with countries where we know that we might not be able to enforce because they do not reciprocate in such matters.

But overall, Mr. Speaker, I believe that lowering the threshold from five years to one year will bring more criminal into the net and therefore I think justice could be served much better if we have that kind of uniformed platform of one year for such criminal activities. But then again as I said, we have to be concerned about uniformity in the application of the law and the treaties. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Representaive for St. Patrick West. Honouable Representative for St. David.

Hon. Oliver Joseph: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give support to this amendment. Now, Mr. Speaker, Bilateral treaties are what they are, you

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see, the Extradition Treaties are not done on a multilateral basis. Because every country differs and therefore when a request is made from a country for a bilateral treaty, the level of relations and the benefits and all these things would be taken into consideration and treated differently from other request. Because the legal system in some countries are different from others and that is why the bilateral approach is taken. So in this case a Bilateral Agreement was signed in 2001, an Extradition Treaty with the US where it says for crime that has a penalty of over 5-years. Almost 20 years after having this in place, we decided, the both countries, to review what is taking place and look at the offences and determine that offences of one year could be included as one that you could be extradited for. And therefore that is the result of careful analysis over the years since this treaty was signed and as I said in 2001 and today we are saying that we reduce it from 5 years to one year imprisonment.

Because you see the world has changed over the last 20 years, you also have cyber crime taking place. You have some crimes that, it is so new that we do not even have legislation to address them yet. And that is something we have to look to as we go forward in the future with this information technology. Cyber crime is something that we will have to address and then we'll have to include it and make even further changes as we have agreements. Continuing, there will be changes that will have to be made. And so as I said this country, this Bilateral Treaty between Grenada and the USA has been reviewed and the determination has been made that one year as an offence can result in extradition if the request is being made and it was based on the relations that exist between the two countries and therefore, Mr. Speaker, I support this amendment to the Extradition (Amendment) Bill, 2020. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Representative for St. David. Honourable Prime Minister and Representative for St. George North-West.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Yes, Mr. Speaker, in standing to support this Bill and its second reading particularly so, I too must say that my sentiments are very similar to that of the Representative for St. Patrick West and I think he alluded to some

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very important issues. But as he concluded, which is the same as my conclusion, that a crime is a crime, even if you commit a crime you should spend the time, so to speak. As Prime Minister and of course Minister for National Security, I am very sensitive to the image of this country and any perception that we are soft on crime and I have had to, in several meetings, regionally and internationally, face this particular issue and we have been asked for years, why are we sitting on this important issue? Because they know Grenada's position on criminal activity and so I think people are generally feeling that while the message of one year as opposed to five may be something to be concerned about, I think generally speaking, the image of the country would be enhanced. What we are saying is that there will be no tolerance at all with criminal activity no matter how short the possible sentence may be, it's still a crime.

And I know that the Attorney General in the Ministry of Legal Affairs did make this Bill available to the Bar Association and they did promise to get back to them. I'm not sure that they did. In any event, we did what we are supposed to do but I think the institution in the country, their opinion is important but in the final analysis, we have to take the decision what is best for country, not what is best for some legal fraternity. While their views are important, the country's image has to take priority, so it appears that they may not have felt that strongly. This is why after a couple weeks of having been presented with the information, they have not come back with any clear position. So therefore I give my full support to this important Bill, this Extradition Bill, which of course sends the right message about Grenada's whole position as far as criminal activities are concerned. **(Applause)**

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

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the Members of the House who contributed and supported the Bill and to commend the Bill for its second reading.

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Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House resolves 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 resume.

Mr. Speaker: I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendments.

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Mr. Speaker, 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 Representative for Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill and passage.

Question proposed.

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Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 16 - Request for leave to move the adjournment of the House on matters of Urgent Public Importance.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, 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. Andrew North-West.

Hon. Delma Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand here not only as the Minister for Social Development, Housing and Community Empowerment but as a woman. Today I stand to pay homage to a sister, an extraordinary sister, that's Janelle Francis who was the manager of the Cedars Home for battered women who was laid to rest yesterday. Mr. Speaker, Janelle is no ordinary person, she worked at the Cedars Home for 19 years, but, Mr. Speaker, Janelle was a teenaged mother. She got pregnant in secondary school at a very tender age and she could have easily fall through the crack as many of our teenage mothers. But, Mr. Speaker, Janelle did not want to be part of that statistic and so she attended the Programme for Adolescent Mothers (PAM), where she graduated with nine (9) CXC subjects.

Mr. Speaker, moreover, Janelle moved to TAMCC where she also graduated with 2 A' level subjects. Mr. Speaker, this speak volume of a woman, a woman who

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have left a legacy behind for many other women who have been victim of violence and victim of abuse, but did not let that distract her, but continue to pursue her education and started as an ordinary worker at Cedars but emerged as the manager. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I cried as a child not even knowing much about Janelle as the other people knew. When ordinary persons, women who were in abusive situations, women who were residents of the home came up, Mr. Speaker; one lady who is blind, she never saw Janelle but she knew that Janelle loved and cared for her as somebody who was abused. And she sang a song she made on her own saying "Janelle I cannot see your face but I know you love me and I know you cared for me, who will be there to care for me anymore?" Mr. Speaker, the church cried out loud, Mr. Speaker, because Janelle left a legacy. A legacy for women, a legacy that we as woman and other women who are outside there, who are in abusive relationship, Mr. Speaker, can emerge knowing that you can be a better person not because of your present circumstances. Your present circumstances does not have to define your final destination and therefore Janelle's legacy will live on. And so as a Ministry we have pledged that we will continue to work her family and assist in any way we can. She has three beautiful children, one who is at the second year at TAMCC and one who is very intelligent just like Janelle and will be seeking employment, Mr. Speaker. So on behalf of the Ministry and on behalf of the Government of Grenada, we want to express our deepest condolences to the family of Janelle, the staff and residence of the Cedars home for battered women. May her soul rest in peace.

But, Mr. Speaker, before I sit, the issue of teenage mothers getting pregnant in school and having to fall through the crack is an issue that we have to look at more urgently. PAM, yes, Mr. Speaker, can be an avenue, but education is a key for any child and getting pregnant, Mr. Speaker, in school, at a tender age, Mr. Speaker, is really abuse, in many cases. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I believe at this period in our lives, as a Government and as a nation, we have to look whereby our children can be reintegrated into secondary school.

There should be a choice where you decide whether or not you want to go back in secondary school where it's flawless. So there must be education of our people in

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accepting these young ladies or they can decide whether or not they want to opt for PAM or some other facility that can help in providing education opportunities for our young women in abusive situations. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Representative. Just before you I call you Sir. I think you would find support in this Speaker here when you talk about getting our young ladies to continue their education. My last year as the Chief Education Officer, I got battered by the women organisation, the church organisation and other organisations for having sent back some young ladies who got pregnant as teens, back to school. And I must say the result was wonderful, in that four of the young ladies continued to the end of their secondary education, four of the five. So you have an advocate here. Because I think we must remember that they are not to be crucified for sometimes what they are not responsible for happening. Honourable Representative for St. Patrick West.

Hon. Anthony Boatwain: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to make some brief, I won't say brief because I will be craving your indulgence for some extended time. I rise to make some remarks on behalf of the constituency of St. Patrick West and maybe St. Patrick in general because at times it's very difficult to separate activities in the East and West. But before I do so, Mr. Speaker, I want to make another observation.

Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious that we are here because the people in our respective constituencies, elected us to represent them. And therefore, they do expect us as Parliamentary Representatives to speak on their behalf when there are matters of concern. Mr. Speaker, I am saying this in reference to the Order Paper and this has been, it's nothing new, it has been there from the time I entered this Parliament. That when I look at the Order Paper, although we are saying that we are Parliamentary Representatives and this is the Parliament, I do not see much scope, Mr. Speaker, in the Order Paper for Parliamentary Representatives to speak on behalf of their constituents. Yes, there are Ministerial Statements, but they are different.

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And I can recall Mr. Speaker, you admonishing Members of this House during Budget Presentations and that may be the only time when Parliamentarians get to speak as Parliamentarians, that they should speak on their constituencies first. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, you said that because there is this recognition that the reason why we are here is because of the constituency you represent and therefore their interest should be paramount. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am suggesting, humbly suggesting that we relook the Order Paper and to give Parliamentarians more time to speak on those issues because that's why we are here. Because as I said, apart from Budget time, which is once a year and on the Adjournment, which I believe is more an afterthought, that Parliamentarians get to speak. And I believe this is a matter that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, I want to make some remarks because my constituents have been talking to me on a number of issues and the opportunity to respond to those issues have been very limited so far.

Mr. Speaker, I have been approached by some residents, who indicated to me that on a programme of Beyond the Headlines not too long ago, a remark was made by one of the members of the panel that St. Patrick has overtaken St. Mark as the poorest parish in Grenada. Mr. Speaker, this is not a flattering statement, but neither do I put or give much credence to this statement. I have not seen any poverty assessment survey done recently. I do not know what parameters were taken into consideration when such survey was done, if ever one was done. But the fact that the statement was made caused a number of people in the parish to make remarks to the extent that we are a neglected parish. And that again, Mr. Speaker is difficult to accept.

Mr. Speaker, on every Poverty Assessment Survey that was done, and I know these are done maybe every ten (10) years for the past two occasions, both St. Patrick and St. Mark have been identified as having the highest level of poverty. And, Mr. Speaker, we can ascribe that to a number of factors because poverty is not only economic, but there are social issues involved as well. But when we measure poverty, the number one indicator that is used is really the level of unemployment in that particular area. And it is no secret that St. Patrick and St. Mark do have the highest

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level of unemployment and there are obvious reasons for this, which I don't think anyone does not understand.

We are furthest removed from the main center of economic activity. Most of the economic activities taking place now are really concentrated in the south of the country. And, someone having to leave St. Patrick to go to work in St. George is a great sacrifice. For example, Mr. Speaker, someone working for \$600 a month, coming from St. Patrick is not feasible, because that person after paying transport and lunch, would spend \$500 for the month. So quite obviously, those low income jobs will not be taken up. It's only if you're in the higher income echelon, then you might travel and go to St. George for a job. But someone in the St. George area, obviously, will accept such a job. And secondly, Mr. Speaker, what we have noticed over the years, is a rural/urban migration. But this has created problems in the southern part of the country as well, in Mont Tout, Grand Anse Valley where you have overcrowded housing problem. That's a reason because of that kind of migration, people moving to the south for job, for work. And these people are coming primarily from St. Patrick, and St. Mark. We also have the added problem that if they are working at night, they can't get transport after certain hours, so they refuse to take the work as well. So these are the issues that we have to face up in the northern part of the country.

Mr. Speaker, we can change the dynamics because there is a link between poverty and unemployment. And if we are to address the issue of unemployment, we have to look at how we can create more economic activities in the northern part of the country and that can only come through higher levels of investment from the Private Sector and the Public Sector. That will be the answer, Mr. Speaker. And that is why I stand here being very disappointed with some residents of St. Patrick. And I'm saying it here, who are openly criticising that project, that eco tourism project that is proposed for Levera. A project with the potential of creating a significant number of jobs and transforming the socio-economic landscape of St Patrick and the northern part of the country, but yet we hear the criticism.

Mr. Speaker, development comes at a price. You cannot have extremes. If we want to live as our fore parents lived, hundreds of years ago, then let us do nothing, let

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us not build any tourism plant and let us go back and live in the caves. Is that what we want for our people? There must be a balance, Mr. Speaker, a balance between economic development and environmental preservation. You cannot have extreme because if you have one, and if you go to the extreme with environmental preservation you will have nothing, people will be unemployed and living as though we're living in the dark ages. I do not know of any country that has developed without making that kind of sacrifice where you have to give up some environmental concerns that we have in order to create those opportunities for our people.

Mr. Speaker, I always make reference to the northern part of St. Lucia, which is called Rodney Bay and I recalled when the then Prime Minister, Compton, was proposing to develop that area, there was widespread criticism. Oh, you're destroying the environment, you're destroying this and that. Now visit Rodney Bay, it has transformed that part of St. Lucia. Mr. Speaker, even back here, I recalled when we took the decision to build that Cruise Ship Terminal, there were those who said, if you do that you will destroy Grand Anse Beach. Today, I have not seen any destruction in Grand Anse Beach, Mr. Speaker.

When we took the decision to get the developer to build Port Louis and create a marina, again, they came out in protest. And what was there before, Mr. Speaker? A dump with vehicles, old vehicles all over the place, rats, mosquitoes, yet they were criticising that we're destroying the environment. I mean, the environment was destroyed. Now look at Port Louis and see what is there. Mr. Speaker. Look and see what is there. **(Applause)** And that is why, Mr. Speaker, I am saying that as a Government, we cannot allow our national development agenda to be dictated by those critics, armchair critics and pseudo environmental experts. **(Applause)**

We have to rely on sound advice, Mr. Speaker, and not those who have their political agenda because as far as they're concerned, nothing should happen and when the time come, they will say look, unemployment is high, nothing happening, nothing happening. And they are the ones in the forefront of criticising, Mr. Speaker. We have to pursue an agenda of developing our country on sound environmental advice, and not just those who want to criticise for criticism sake.

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Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I believe that in addition to welcoming private initiative in the northern part of the country to stimulate economic activity, we have to look at the Government's own investment programme. See what is happening there and what we believe could be done to further push the development agenda in the northern part of the country. And in speaking to members of the St. Patrick Business Association, Mr. Speaker, they have identified a number of issues, a number of areas where we believe the Government investment programme could be more effective. And I just want to highlight what is happening and what we think should happen.

Mr. Speaker, we are all happy that the St. Patrick Road Development Project is on. That project, Mr. Speaker, is a multimillion dollar project. Phase one is right now on, it's concentrating more in the Hermitage area. If you look at the proposed highway, it's unbelievable, very good. But, we are hoping, Mr. Speaker, what the residents are saying, let us not stop there. We have to move into Phase two of that project, as the Minister has said, because Phase two is much bigger, it will create far more employment and it will impact many more villages. As it stands right now, only one village is impacted by the project. Phase two will impact five villages and therefore, the economic and social impact of that project, Mr. Speaker, will be greatly felt and therefore I welcome the statement made by the Minister for Infrastructure, that we will be moving speedily into Phase two. This is welcomed by the residents of St. Patrick.

Mr. Speaker, Phase two of the Farm Road Project. Again, this has been welcome and for us in St. Patrick there is one road that is so critical to the residents that I cannot overstate the importance of getting that farm road done. I'm talking about the Red Mud Farm Road. This is a village that is almost isolated, depends primarily on agriculture, but yet the main road, the main access road to their farm has been damaged for years because there is no bridge. And we are hoping, Mr. Speaker, that once this project commences, this road will be given some attention because it will create jobs and it will open up new areas for farming which is critical to the livelihood of the people in the area and to the country as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, another project that has been identified and this one, we spoke about it before here, and I know the Prime Minister was very passionate about this one,

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but Members have raised it again, of the St. Patrick Business Association and I want to raise it here again, and we are talking about the abandoned Government buildings in St. Patrick, in Sauteurs in particular.

Mr. Speaker, we have the old revenue building, massive building, been abandoned, the old Public Works, the Surgery, the Library, the Dispensary. All of these buildings, Mr. Speaker, in decay, while at the same time there are nine Government Offices for which rent is being paid. Mr. Speaker, this is not just a Public Sector Project. This could be a private, this could be done by private initiative, because it could be self sustaining. It is financially viable, Mr. Speaker. If we can get some financing, it doesn't have to be Government financing, it could be Private Sector financing, we can get those things moving, Mr. Speaker. And not only will we create the jobs, but will save Government a lot of revenue from having to pay rent to private institutions. So this is something that people of St. Patrick, the Business Association has highlighted and asked me to raise it as well.

Mr. Speaker, another project that is financially viable is one that we have started, again the Mt. Rich School Furniture Production facility. It is stalled, I'm hoping that we could resuscitate this because this is a viable project. Initially, we could create about seventy-five jobs once we start that project, and at the same time, we could save foreign exchange because we import over a million dollars in plastic furniture from Trinidad, while we have the capacity to produce the same thing here. So the market is there, Mr. Speaker, we don't have to look for market. I'm saying this is a project that again, even if the Government does not have the resources, we could go to the Private Sector and get the resources because it is viable, the market is there, school furniture, government offices, repairs of furniture, Mr. Speaker. These are things that need to be done. You go to schools, furniture is broken, what they do, they just throw it away. That could be repaired. But, when you have the plastic you can't repair them, Mr. Speaker, but when you have the wooden furniture you could repair them and create employment opportunities, Mr. Speaker. And, this is something again I think we could fast track and create more employment for people.

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Mr. Speaker, we have the number one tourist attraction in St. Patrick, Leapers Hill. Visitors from all over want to go to Leapers Hill, but let us look at Leaper's Hill right now, almost abandoned. Yet we have security guards, we have to pay security guards, the potential to earn revenue from that project is not being realised. Again, Mr. Speaker, and you know, what's the problem, the Minister for Tourism could tell you, one person creating an obstacle to progress there. And, yet hee seem paralysed, not being able to do anything. He talked after talk and nothing is happening there, Mr. Speaker, major tourism, major attraction. You visit places in St. Kitts, you pay your \$2/ \$3 just to see, what we have in Sauteurs is far better than what it have in a number of countries that people paying to go and look at. We have to, Mr. Speaker, realise our own potential and I'm saying that this is a project that we have, somehow to find the means to overcome whatever bottleneck to to get this project moving.

Mr. Speaker, another project that they're talking about in St. Patrick is the Mt. Rodney area where there is serious erosion taking place. A number of houses have been destroyed already. An Amerindian cemetery, over 1000 years was unearthed, was exposed because of the erosion, something that we trivialised. But what is even worse now, Mr. Speaker, is that the main road leading to the villages of Darvey and Prospect, that road is being threatened, the sea is just about 60 feet away from that road now. And once that road is destroyed, then that entire area is cut off, because there'll be no access to Darvey/Mt. Alexander from Sauteurs, Mr. Speaker. I am saying we have to look at that carefully. For the people whose homes have been destroyed, we have already indicated to them that once the facilities provided by the Chinese, the Low Income Housing Project is ready, we can have them relocated, Mr. Speaker. So, that part is okay, but I am more concerned about the potential threat to the road itself, that sooner or later we will have no access to that part.

Mr. Speaker, we have in St. Patrick, the Mt. Reuil Estate, over 257 acres of land underutilised, underutilised but yet Government is paying workers. Yes, we have to pay them because you know, they have to survive as well. I am saying, Mr. Speaker that is a project with tremendous potential. I know that we have been engaging private investors, but not of now nothing has been realised.

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Soursop is now Grenada's green gold. Can you imagine if we could transform that Mt. Reuil Estate into a soursop plantation? We have to take initiative, Mr. Speaker, to do those things in order to create the jobs and to bring the development to that part of the country.

Mr. Speaker, having said all that, I do not want to be speaking in a vacuum, I do not want to be speaking without the realisation that we are not living in normal times, Mr. Speaker, they call it COVID-19 time. And there must be the understanding that the thing that we will like to do, we cannot do that because of this COVID pandemic. So whereas pre-COVID, the country was on a sustainable development path, significant growth, 4.5%, unemployment being reduced from 28 to 14%, Mr. Speaker. We have to realise that, we were on a track to sustainable development. Government generating surplus, important for financing its capital programme. COVID turned everything upside down, so we have to understand that there must be some mitigating factors at work that we cannot do as much. The people are asking but we cannot do as much, Mr. Speaker, because the revenue is not there again. So, whereas yes, we are seeing all these things to be done, that's the ideal situation, Mr. Speaker, but the practical situation is that the revenue, not having the revenue might not allow us to do the things that we want to do. So I just want to ensure that I make this statement, that people will not get the idea that yes all these things can be done and Government not doing it. I'm pretty sure if we have the resources we will do it, we will do it but the resources are not there, Mr. Speaker.

In that vein, I want to give this Government very high commendation because notwithstanding the COVID crisis, Mr. Speaker; notwithstanding the reduction in revenue, half of your revenue base being eroded, this Government has maintained all of its social programmes designed to alleviate poverty, **(applause)** not only in St. Patrick but the whole of this country. And we must not only see poverty from the extent of not having the means of a job, but there are social programmes that assist in poverty alleviation and we in St. Patrick, we have seen that happening. Mr. Speaker, do not underestimate this programme by Government for the building of toilet and bathroom. Because outside.... we call them latrine in the old term, that is an indicator of poverty,

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and when you measure poverty, you look at how many households still using latrines. And when this Government take that bold initiative to ensure that every home have a toilet and bath, this Government is saying, yes, we care about bringing our people out of poverty, Mr. Speaker, and that must be commended.

The House Repair Programme, again housing, the quality of the housing stock, a major index of poverty measurement. Look at what the Government is doing in terms of providing, not only the material but a building brigade, Mr. Speaker, for those who cannot afford, we cannot underestimate that, Mr. Speaker.

The SEED Programme, no one has been removed from the programme, instead Government moved to even complement what was happening in the SEED by providing food baskets, another aspect of poverty alleviation, Mr. Speaker. And therefore I am saying that this Government must be commended. Yes, there are avenues in terms of the PSIP but when we look at the Social Programmes, Mr. Speaker, and I was talking to my colleague, she must be commended because she is always a pusher for these things. To ensure that people... because development is about people, Mr. Speaker, people must be at the centre of the development thrust of any Government. And the social agenda that this Government is persuing is ensuring that our people move out of poverty and that must be commended, Mr. Speaker.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on one issue that is very topical, the reopening of schools. Mr. Speaker, I'm hearing... (again it's unfortunate), that the Minister for Education and her team has been doing a fantastic job, fantastic job, Mr. Speaker, in preparing our children for the reopening of school on the 7th of September. But I'm hearing some parents saying no they're not sending their children to school because of the COVID, they're afraid of COVID. But I won't be surprised, Mr. Speaker, if some of these parents, were not part of the jump up that we had and saying that there is no COVID. Is it by convenience that now we have COVID? Mr. Speaker, my advice to our parents, send your children to school for the reopening of school and the Ministry is putting appropriate safeguards in place to ensure that the children, even if they do have pre-existing conditions, will be taken care of. Let us not be detracted because some of

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them out there are just there to oppose, it's just to oppose everything that this Government is doing. Whether it's right they will still oppose it.

So, Mr. Speaker, on this note, I want to thank you very much for your patience and your time and to say that I am hoping that in the future those of us who will like to speak on developments in our constituencies will be given that time and just not on the adjournment when people's mind and potential to retain is very limited. I think we need more comments in terms of speaking on behalf of our constituents, Mr. Speaker. I thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Representative for St. Patrick West. Leader of the Opposition just a second. I want to point out to you that yes I understand the limitations that comes with speaking at the adjournment but we have other provisions in the Standing Order, for example, Unopposed Private Business is one area that a Parliamentary Representative can speak to. You have, I'm just looking through my Standing Order here Private Business.... Private sorry. Unopposed Private Business, you can speak issues of your constituency at that time, once you organise it, so you'll deal with those businesses and then you can speak again at the adjournment. But I think since the House can determine its own procedure, then we can, under the different Committees look and see how we can reorganise the Standing Orders, because you have the Standing Orders Committee, we have the Committee of Privileges and we have the Committee of the House. So these Committees can meet to address some of the issues that you speak to because I believe and as you know I give priority number one to Parliamentary representation.

Hon. Anthony Boatwain: Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, some clarification on the Private matters or Private Business. I do not believe that was made clear in terms of exactly what could be said there. This is the first time I am hearing that you could speak on your constituency under that heading. I thought we were dealing with matters that were more of a private nature rather than expressing your concerns.

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Mr. Speaker: Urgent Private Business, Unopposed Private Business. Mr. Clerk would you just like to... I give you permission to share, share.

Clerk: There are some areas for example the Unopposed Private Business where a Member who is not a Minister can raise certain concerns that he has to the House, so that is one area. So some of what may have been said on the adjournment could be taken up in that area also. Additionally, there could be Motions that comes as a debate which deals with matters that should have been raised pertaining to your constituency which could actually ask the House to provide support. It may not be a definite resolution but it comes in terms of support, so some of these matters could be discussed as a Motion also. And that we could have discussions on further and provide further clarity on how that could be done.

Mr. Speaker: We want to make sure that you know the few minutes that is given at the end do not restrict any Member from discussing their Parliamentary representation. Leader of the...

Hon. Tobias Clement: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise on this adjournment and as the Member for St. Andrew North-East mentioned about the passing of the lady, I think this House may recognise that in recent days just maybe a week ago, Member of... I shouldn't say Members of this House, but workers from this workers from this House lost three (3) family Members. I think the guy that does the IT he lost his mother while on the job here. Then Ms. Morgan, your Secretary, lost her brother and then Ms. Farray I believe and so I just want to recognise the contribution that the workers made to this Honourable place and it is indeed with sadness that we hear about this.

Mr. Speaker, now in my position as Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition maybe I can go now beyond the boundary of just my constituents. And there are a few things that I want to speak to, questions. I do believe, Mr. Speaker, this is the public House, the people's House and some of the questions that I asked were submitted to me by the

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people and they want to know. For example the question about the Annandale Waterfall, it came from the people, the area and they were asking whether consultation should be done when such is listed or under what condition. Then again the question that I raised about the Port facility in Carriacou, again, it came from the people of Carriacou.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Patrick West just spoke about the importance of developing St. Patrick's waterfront, he spoke about the change that the cruiseship terminal brought to St. George's. He spoke to the change that the Port Louis brought to the Lagoon and here we are debating whether or not... the question should be asked, you take away the Port facility from Hillsborough Carriacou and bring it to Tyrell Bay, what is the economic impact to the businesses in Hillsborough. Hillsborough possesses, Mr. Speaker, about 4 or 500 businesses. Mr. Speaker, it is a place where I grew up, I went to Primary School, I went to High School, I worked there as a teacher in Hillsborough. It was very sad when my mom called me one day, she usually visits here in Grenada and I sent her up via the Osprey and she said to me... when she called me when she got home, she said you know I won't be coming to Grenada often again because she took the Osprey here and she is 82 and she dropped off in Harvey Vale, catches the bus with all her little goods and when she got to Hillsborough she dropped off, the boat left. So she has to get back again on another bus to take her to Windward to see if she could catch a boat when it used to be from St. George's to Hillsborough to Petite Martinique, and the people are crying out.

Mr. Speaker, I am not saying let us remove the Port facility in Tyrell Bay, it is a good thing but what I am saying, let us return a Port facility in Hillsborough so that the businesses that are there can and indeed develop. Mr. Speaker, I do believe the people in Hillsborough Carriacou, the northern part and Petite Martinique is seriously, and I think at this point is considering bringing a petition to this House because I do believe that some kind of Port facility. But when we speak in the absolute to tell these people that there will be no Port facility, to say that this is a dead issue, Mr. Speaker, I am told (I just visited last week) that the Port facility in Hillsborough, Carriacou was established in 1774 by the French. And if you know the French they usually look and

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establish Ports all over the place in funny places but they chose Hillsborough over everywhere else because it is central. It is deep water too and if indeed that you have to let the businesses and the development in Hillsborough suffer somewhat, maybe the question should be asked, how can we help these people that are at the bottom line to recover?

You know I spent Friday night in Hillsborough last weekend and I walked from the bottom right up to the top, my family is there too and I went home. And on my way, it's only when I got to the Police Station that I really come across two Police Officers in the junction and as I was walking back, Mr. Speaker, I stopped in a little shop and I spoke to the lady and I bought some drinks to bring back home. And when I was leaving she said to me, Mr. Clement, this is the only sale I would receive for the night. I did not answer her but, Mr. Speaker, that went deep, deep to my gut. Here the lady is in her shop, I stopped to buy something and she mentioned to me unknowingly, that this is the only sale that she will receive for the night.

Mr. Speaker, the town of Hillsborough, probably if it's not dead as yet, it is not far from there. And I wish and pray that this debate don't end and I will not call it a dead issue but one has to tread carefully in moving forward. Because what we want to see is the upliftment of people, the upliftment of businesses and I pray that we will speak to those issues. So, Mr. Speaker, just on that note that I will end here. Thank you. God Bless.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Honourable Leader of the Opposition. I would just want to, I'm still looking about. Now let me just say Honourable Members that we are moving and I'm feeling happy that we are Sitting in Parliament and we have our devices in front of us. This is where we wanted to go a long time, so we have reached part of the way. The other part of the way is to make all information that is available at Parliament available at the touch of a button and so we are working diligently. Our IT Officer, Mr. Gayvon Mark who is here today, and as the Leader of the Opposition mentioned, lost his mother just a couple days ago, but is here today because of the importance of what he is doing for the Parliament.

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I must also remind us that my Secretary has lost her brother who was in England and died suddenly and Ms. Farray has lost a nephew who died when he went to assist in the building of a House and the wall fell on him. So these are three of our workers, our Members of Staff who have suffered loss within the past week. So I want to extend on behalf of this Honourable House, our sincere sympathy to all of them.

And let me also say that I want to extend my congratulations and commendation to my staff, the staff of the Parliament because we don't always get credit for all that is being done. And, let me say that our Clerk of Parliament is sometimes, I don't know how he does it, because many Members of staff have to forego their vacation or on many occasions have to be recalled from their vacation to come to perform, because we cannot at that particular time do without them. So, I want to commend them for their willingness to sometimes forego their vacation, so that they can be here, even if some of them have not yet or is given the appointments that we hope and have recommended by the Public Service Commission. So, I just wanted to remind us that they are here working hard and we need to sometimes remember that they are hard workers to make this whole thing happen.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned sine die at 12:40 p.m.

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