

*House of Representatives Meeting  
Held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's  
On Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.*

First Series

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GRENADA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

**Second Session of the Tenth Parliament**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Friday, 08<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

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***Attendance***

**PRESENT**

Honourable Michael Pierre, MP, MBE	- Mr. Speaker (In the Chair)
Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell, PC, MP, JP (St. George North-West)	- Prime Minister and Minister for National Security, Public Administration, Home Affairs, Information and Communications Technology, Finance, Planning, Economic Development and Physical Development
Honourable Gregory Bowen, MP (St. George South-East)	- Minister for Infrastructure Development, Public Utilities, Energy, Transport and Implementation
Honourable 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 Oliver Joseph, MP (St. David)	- Minister for Trade, Industry, Co-operatives and CARICOM Affairs
Honourable Kate Lewis, MP (St. Andrew North-East)	- Minister wrf Youth Development
Honourable Pamela Moses (St. Patrick East)	Minister wrf Tertiary Education, Skills Development and Education Outreach
Honourable Emmalin Pierre, MP (St. Andrew South-East)	- Minister for Education, Human Resource Development and Religious Affairs
Honourable Nickolas Steele, MP (St. George South)	- Minister for Health, Social Security and International Business
Honourable Kindra Maturine-Stewart, MP (Carriacou and Petite Martinique)	- Minister for Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs, Local Government and Legal Affairs
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

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***Attendance***

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

- Member

***ABSENT***

Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, MP  
(St. Mark)

- Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation

Honourable Yolande Bain-Horsford, MP  
(St. Andrew North-West)

- Minister for Agriculture and Lands

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**Prayers**  
**Minutes**

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Members, I bid you good morning. Let us pray.

***(House Prayer was said).***

**Mr. Speaker:** Please join with me, as we say, together, the Lord's Prayer.

***(The Lord's Prayer was said).***

**Mr. Speaker:** Pray be seated.

***(Sound of Gavel).***

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Members, this Honourable House is now in Session.

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 3 - Oath of Allegiance or Affirmation of a new Member.

Item 4 - Confirmation of Minutes.

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

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of a Sitting of the House of Representatives held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup>, Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> and Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2018, be taken as read.

**Question put and agreed to.**

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***Minutes***

**Minutes taken as read.**

**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 a Sitting of the House of Representatives held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup>, Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> and Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2018 be confirmed.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes confirmed.**

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

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I now beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of a Sitting of the House of Representatives held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2018, be taken as read.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes taken as read.**

**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 a Sitting of the House of Representatives held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2018, be confirmed.

**Question put and agreed to.**

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***Minutes  
Announcements***

**Minutes confirmed.**

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

Item 6 - Announcements by Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Members, I greet you well. This is the first Sitting of 2019. Let me wish you all the best for the remainder of the year. Also, today, we celebrate International Women's Day. I applaud all the women, who have made enormous contributions to the development of our dear Nation. I salute the women of this Parliament and the other women, who continue to develop our Nation, represent our Nation with dignity at the Local, Regional and World stage. Your sacrifice, devotion and love would always be recognised. Bless you all.

I would also like to inform you that on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, we celebrate Commonwealth Day. To commemorate the Commonwealth Day, the Parliament, under the patronage of the Presiding Officers has organised a Commonwealth Day activity for the students of this Nation. Two (2) students and one (1) teacher, from each school, would be accommodated at the Parliament.

This activity is jointly sponsored by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Parliament of Grenada. Two (2) students, one (1) teacher; we were hoping to have more, but our resources confine us to only two (2) from each school. For this activity we have also extended invitation to the Minister for Education and the Chief Education Officer and any other Parliamentarian, who would like to participate with the youth, as there would be an open question session with them.

I would also like to remind us that on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, we have the visit of the Prince of Wales and the Duchess. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, all Parliamentarians, both present and past, are invited to the reactivated Grenada Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and this would be taking place at the Parliament building from 1:00 p.m., so that is the 29<sup>th</sup>. Invitations would have been extended to you, and we pray that you

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would be able to attend, as we want to reactivate the Grenada Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Let me also say here that I have asked the Deputy Speaker to represent the Speaker at a Conference for PGA, that is the Parliamentarians for Global Action, to attend a Regional Workshop in Trinidad, from the 29<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of April. The Speaker is invited, but is unable to attend, so I have asked the Deputy Speaker to attend that Session.

The third thing I want to just mention here is that we have some new water bottles. I think it is Mount Pure. We have Mount Pure, and because of the nature of the bottle, we would have to ask the Deputy to open for us, because now we don't have openers for everybody yet, and we don't want to open it and leave it open. So, we would be able to open for you, as soon as you need to drink your water. We are moving from plastic onto glass bottles. So, water would be available for you. Thank you, kindly.

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 7 - Presentation of Petitions

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

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

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

- The Report of the Director of Audit, Grenada, on the Market Access and the Rural Enterprise Development Programme (MAREP) for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2017.



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**Papers/Reports**  
**Statements by Ministers**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Members, the Report of the Director of Audit, Grenada, on the Market Access and Rural Enterprise Development Programme (MAREP) for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2017 is laid on the Table.

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 9 - Unopposed Private Business.

Item 10 - Questions.

Item 11 - Urgent Questions under the Provisions of  
Standing Order No. 20 (i) Notice of Questions.

Item 12 - Statements by Ministers.

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Representatives for St. Andrew North-West.

**Hon. Delma Thomas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Please allow me to give an update on some of the things that are happening at the Ministry of Social Development, Housing and Community Empowerment.

Today, March 8<sup>th</sup>, is International Women's Day, and so I salute all women across our Tri-island State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I also salute the two (2) women from my Constituency, who has set the way for me, Mrs. Nadia Benjamin and Mrs. Laurina Waldron. I salute your tremendous contribution (**applause**). And all my colleagues present here and those other Members of Parliament, I salute you for your hard work and for dedication in championing the cause for our women and showcasing women at the national level.

Today is a day, Mr. Speaker, that is celebrated by women all over the world, to reflect on the progress made by women, to advocate for change and to honour acts of courage and determination by ordinary women.

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Mr. Speaker, please allow me today, to pay special tribute to a lady, a woman, who has made her contribution. She was laid to rest last Thursday, Mr. Speaker. I am speaking of no other person, but Mrs. Jacqueline Jackie Cornwall. Mrs. Cornwall was an innovative and strong woman, with a passion for women, who fought for their rights and place in society. She served as the only woman in the Houses of Parliament as a Senator. During that period, the Domestic Violence Bill was presented for the first time. Upon recognizing there was no proper definition for Domestic Violence, she insisted on defining the term, which was then carried forward.

As a Member of the Women's Steering Committee, she was the founding Member of the Grenada National Organization of Women (GNOW) and served as its second President. In fact, Mr. Speaker, she was the driving force, who established the office of GNOW. She promoted women's entrepreneurship and leadership, inspiring GNOW to conduct leadership workshops and promote women's economic empowerment and independence.

In her service to women and girls and her contribution to gender equality in Grenada, she interacted with various Ministers, and I know Minister Horsford worked with her, and the Ministries of Women, Gender Affairs or Social Development over the years. She always advocated for women's rights and empowerment.

This year, Mr. Speaker, International Women's Day theme is: ***'Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change'***. Our local focus is increasing women's participation in non-traditional jobs and skills training. As a Ministry, it is our hope that this dialogue will lead to actions that result in substantive changes for economic empowerment of women.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of activities today to celebrate International Women's Day, and I would want you to excuse me after my presentation, since I would have to be joining the CEO at DIGICEL for an Empowerment Brunch, the theme: ***'There is No Force More Powerful than a Woman determined to Rise.'*** And, later on, Mr. Speaker, at 11:00 o'clock, I will be participating in a Panel Discussion with the US Ambassador and someone from the State Department, all females, speaking to the

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female students at TAMCC. The event is entitled, '**Balance for Better, Supporting Shared Gender Balance**,' and it is aimed at promoting empowerment of our women and girls in Grenada.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to report that in our aim at the Ministry of Social Development, Housing and Community Empowerment, in dealing with the issue of Juvenile Justice and strengthening our Juvenile Justice System, we will be hiring a Clinical Psychologist, in the person of Dr. Augustine Panchoo. We have received funding from the CDB to assist in that hiring, from the 14<sup>th</sup> of March.

We have also hired two (2) additional Counsellors to assist in the work of the Ministry, in dealing with the various issues that confront our people within our Tri-Island State, where they need counselling. And, the counselling services will be, not only in St. George's, but will be in St. John also and St. Andrew.

Mr. Speaker, the Special Victims Unit, which was established sometime last year, continues to operate, and has noticed a consistent intake of clients of intimate partner violence, sexual violence and child abuse. In our objective, Mr. Speaker, to deal with that whole issue, we have planned a number of sensitization and educational activities for 2019, and so we have started already the Special Victims Unit, and, therefore, I want to commend the leadership of the Grenada Royal Police Force (GRPF), the leadership of the Special Victims Unit, Mrs. Andrea Victor, for their hard work and dedication. They had two (2) major activities, one, in St. George's, a sensitization activity, the other was in St. Andrew, last week, and, therefore, I also want to commend the schools that took part, that came out in their numbers to be part of that sensitization exercise and also the Business Community that gave generously to those activities. We will be moving to Carriacou, where the sensitization activities will continue, and we will continue going to the schools, going to the communities, working to eradicate child sexual abuse and all other forms of abuse. **(Applause).**

**Inter-Ministerial Council of Gender Focal Points**

Grenada has adopted the approach that Gender Equality is a cross-cutting theme for development action. Therefore, our Government programmes, policies and

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projects must be sensitive to the need of female and male population and seek to correct the problem of gender inequality. Therefore, the Inter-Ministerial Council of Gender Focal Points has been reactivated. It was also expanded to include selective Statutory Bodies and Government Departments, with the Ministries of Government that are identified to have specific roles in implementing Gender Equality Policies and action plan and the Median Term Agenda. In April, UN Women would support training of Gender Focal Point Mainstreaming. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Applause.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. Andrew North-West and Minister for Social Development and Housing. Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew South-East and Minister for Education.

**Hon. Emmalin Pierre:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend best wishes to you, your team and all of my colleagues for a very successful year of service in this House, and to also use the opportunity to wish every woman of the Tri-Island State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and, of course, those in the Diaspora, a happy International Women's Day, and to encourage us, you know, that we live up to the true meaning of a woman. I just want to wish everybody all the best, as we celebrate today, but let us continue to live out the true meaning of a woman.

This morning, Mr. Speaker, I want to just give us a brief update of a couple things within the Ministry of Education that I want to bring to the attention of this very Honourable House. First being that we would have moved, based on the directive from the Public Service Commission, to engage Mr. David Andrew, as the Chief Education Officer in the Ministry of Education. As you know, Mr. Speaker, it has been a while since we have been trying to recruit a Chief Education Officer and while Mr. Andrew's

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appointment is a very temporary one, the process continues, as it relates to recruitment.

The second point that I want to bring to our attention is that of the two-year plan that I may have spoken about at the end of last year, that the Ministry had started then, to develop; and to say that plan the Ministry would have adopted, internally, and would have started the implementation of that two-year plan, looking at the general advancement of education through the work that we do within the Ministry. Just to highlight, as to how we came up with that two-year plan, which would be an interim plan, which would be a precursor to the development of that ten-year strategic plan I referred to.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the Ministry had been working on the Corporate Plan developed before, also the SPEED document, which is an OECS document, and when you look at the report from both, we decided that there was no need to reinvent the wheel, but to go back to those two (2) plans, in addition, to the results and the report that we got from our stakeholders during the consultative period to come up with that two-year plan, a consolidation of all of that. So, it is not something that just dropped from the sky. It was not an effort to reinvent the wheel, but to actually use what exist, that we have committed to over the years, that we want to do, in terms of changes and to really engage our stakeholders to add and to identify our Priority Areas. Inclusive of that would be the staff at the Ministry of Education.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the attention of the House that with the approval of Cabinet, the Ministry moved to appoint the Education Review Committee. As you know and I probably had mentioned that sometime last year, the Education Act speaks to an Education Review Committee, and that Committee is supposed to review the business of Education, how we do education in Grenada, the Education Sector, how we operate, not just as a Ministry, but on the ground, in the schools, and to present that report to the Minister for Education, and that report to be then tabled in Parliament, and not just tabled, following that, that report to be presented, nationally and be available for public information. The Committee, as far as

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I am aware, met, once before and soon to convene again, and I just want to say to us that we will continue to provide updates of the progress of the Committee and its operations.

Additionally, again, Cabinet has approved the establishment of an Advisory Council, in keeping with the Education Act of Grenada. That Advisory Council, the main role really, is to advise the Minister for Education on matters relating to education and the advancement of that Sector. And that Council, Mr. Speaker, comprises a wide cross section of Organizations and individuals within the Tri-island State that pertains or relate to education.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to our attention that we have established some Committees, and we are paying special attention to the area of Policies. Over the years, we have had a number of Policies, either in draft form, or, in some cases, work started, persons retired, persons even went on with the information collected, and we've put some systems in place, that those Policies identified, as priority, with a deadline by which we should complete all of those. I would just mention a couple of those that we view, as priority; Pre Service and In-Service training; Information and Communication Technology, Physical Education, Graduations, Substitute Teacher Pool, Recruitment of Teachers and Special Education.

There are two (2) Policies, Mr. Speaker, already approved by Cabinet, that of Drug and Alcohol and the other one, Nutrition. However, we identified the need to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the content of those Policies and that we don't just have them on paper and have them on the shelf, but we are actually implementing.

Sometime last year, I pointed to one of the areas within the Policy on Drug and Alcohol, which has to do with the sale of alcohol in schools. Mr. Speaker, this is just a reminder that we are moving with those two (2) policies and our schools would be informed accordingly, as to the content. They were involved in the Consultation, but the fact that it has now been approved by Cabinet, we are moving ahead.

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Another point to bring to our attention this morning, another area, training and development of teachers. Only about two (2) weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, Cabinet approved a list of close to thirty (30) teachers, all of whom would have started studies, whether it be at the Post Graduate level, or, as it relates to their Bachelors, many of them struggling to pay the cost of tuition and many of them struggling to continue. Some of them, as a matter of fact would have stopped their studies due to financial reasons.

Mr. Speaker, our Cabinet took a decision that we would shortlist those thirty (30) teachers in the first instance, gave approval and would have passed on that list to the Caribbean Development Bank through a Loan Agreement with the Government, that's the GIF Project for full funding for over thirty (30) teachers, to continue their studies.

**(Applause).**

Additionally, Cabinet also directed that immediately, a Committee should be established, so that a second batch of teachers can be accommodated under this funding. However, what we noticed in that first batch is that many of the Priority Areas were not covered, and so the Cabinet directed that focus must be placed on Math, English and Science. And, so the task now rest on the Ministry of Education to get back into our schools, identify the struggling teachers, identify the persons needing that support and to engage them.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I want to make mention of some special working committees established to look at a couple areas. The issue of management of our schools; the issue of Students Support Services and how we are doing there. We have a lot of Truancy Officers. We have a lot of Counsellors. We have a lot of persons engaged in different Departments, doing a number of things on the ground, our School Feeding Programme, our Schoolbooks Programme. All of those fall under the umbrella of Special Services to our students, and so we are going to be looking, seriously, at the impact. So, not just providing the service. What is the impact on the ground? How many of our students are not going to school? What is the impact of the service that we are providing?

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***Spiritual Development and Values Based Education***

The statistics are very clear; the relation between values-based Education and successful men and women.

***School Inspections***

And, again, I believe I said this last year. We are very concerned about the number of persons setting up private schools around the Island. The standards that we are working with, we want to make sure that we are working in accordance to the Education Act.

I did say finally, but finally, I want to express thank you to all of those, who made possible the Zonal Meet that took place yesterday at the National Stadium. Mr. Speaker I want to place on record, commendation to Mr. Kerlon Peters, the Chairperson of the Organizing Committee and his Deputy, Mr. Jerry Alexis, the Police, the volunteers, the officials and particularly, Mr. Speaker, I want to recognise the Athletes, who came out yesterday. **(Applause)**.

The next Zonal Meet is the Western Zone, and that would be next Wednesday at Cuthbert Peters' Park. Mr. Speaker, all we are doing is providing an opportunity for our young men and women in the area of Sports, and I will speak further to the Sports at another Sitting. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Minister for Education and Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew South-East. Honourable Representative for St. Andrew North-East.

**Hon. Kate Lewis:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to wish all women across our country, as well as those in the Diaspora, a happy International Women's Day.

Mr. Speaker, we have moved from our traditional places, at home, to our rightful place in the Houses of Parliament, and I want to commend all of the women who are taking the challenge to represent at this national level. I want to encourage also the



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women who are working hard alongside the men, or even who are standing ahead, but to ensure that our country is moving forward and as we make the contribution towards national development.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I just want to give an update from the Ministry of Youth Development, Sports, Culture and the Arts. Mr. Speaker, on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, in this House, the young people of this country, our Youth Parliamentarians were given an opportunity to eloquently discuss issues of National importance right here, Mr. Speaker. I want to take this opportunity to commend them. It's a programme that will help us to build our future Leaders and to prepare them appropriately for the future. The Youth Parliament will continue semi-annually and at this time, Mr. Speaker, the young people are practicing at the Parish level, with the first Parish Youth Parliament to commence later on this month. **(Applause).**

Mr. Speaker, I want to just update the House on the Empower Programme, which we would have launched sometime last year, that was in October last year. The programme is going well; our young men are grateful for the opportunity to be given a second chance to empower themselves. So far, they have completed Psychological assessments, assessments in Literacy and Numeracy and now they are doing Apprenticeship Training, as well as Literacy and Numeracy classes. Only last evening, Mr. Speaker, I was in the company of the Empower participants from my Constituency. It was a wonderful evening, and as they said, they are happy for that opportunity, because they are given that chance to become somebody.

So, I want to congratulate, Mr. Speaker, this Government for the foresight in giving these young men the opportunity, who most of us thought were left behind. They are grateful and we are happy to provide them with that opportunity, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause).**

Mr. Speaker, as it relates to Sports, only last week we were all in a jubilant mood, Cricket West Indies, we had the two One-Day International Cricket versus the England team. The Monday was rained out, we cannot do anything about that, Mr. Speaker. But, the Wednesday most persons would have attested to the fact that it was

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an outstanding day, an outstanding day for Cricket, Mr. Speaker, and from all reviews, all reports, Grenada did well. **(Applause)**. We had a batting paradise. It was not easy to get there, Mr. Speaker, and I want to extend commendation to all stakeholders including the substantive Minister for Sports, who is not here today, and to say thanks for ensuring that we had a good game of Cricket, and we can look forward to more things to come.

Mr. Speaker, I know many persons are asking about the lighting of the Cricket Stadium but our Minister has left to ensure that by the end of this year, the Cricket Stadium will be lighted, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, our entire Nation, our entire Tri-Island State is beaming with pride and joy, because of the outstanding performances of our local Artistes in the International Soca Monarch held on March 1<sup>st</sup> in Trinidad and Tobago. **(Applause)**.

Mr. Speaker, the Artistes represented us well, and today in this Honourable House, we want to extend congratulations, on behalf of the People and Government of Grenada, the Ministry of Youth Development Sports Culture and the Arts, to all six (6) Artistes, Little Natty and Thunder from St David and also Mandela Link from St David. They performed well. He's living in Gouyave, but he is from St David, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**.

Also, to Mr. Leggz, who is from St. Andrew, very close to me, Mr. Speaker, from the Simon area. He placed third with his rendition the '*Whining challenge*'. We extend special congratulations to him. Also, to Little Von from St. Mark, who placed third in the Groovy Monarch and, of course, Mr. Speaker, creating history for us, becoming the first non-national of Trinidad and Tobago to cop that coveted title of the International Soca Monarch, from St. John, Mr. Killer. We say congratulations to him. **(Applause)**.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we will be welcoming home the Soca and Groovy Artistes, in a big way. From 1:00 p.m., at the Maurice Bishop International Airport, we will be having a Welcome Reception, and this will be followed by a motorcade around the Island, from the Airport, going through St David, up to St.

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Andrew, to St. Patrick, to St. Mark and down to St. John, the home of the International Soca Monarch where the activities will culminate there.

Mr. Speaker, what the Artistes would have done is brought great recognition to our country. The impact it will have for Tourism, for our regional integration speaks well for us, Mr. Speaker, and I want to congratulate those Artistes for bringing such tremendous benefits to our country. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause).**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Representative for St. Andrew North-East. Honourable Representative for St. John.

**Hon. Alvin De Breo:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Well, first of all, I also would like to congratulate all our women folk, on International Women's Day, for all the sacrifices that they have made for us. As a matter of fact, I know that they say that the men came before women, but in other sources it's the total opposite. They said that, at least, there is a case where you do not need a man to make a child, that was Jesus Christ, just a woman, so congratulations to them, Mr. Speaker.

I also would like to congratulate the Calypsonians that represented Grenada in Trinidad for a job well done. We are very proud of them and a special congratulation on behalf of the people of St. John to Mr. Killer for making us proud.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to speak on a few things that's happening in our Ministry of Climate Resilience. First of all, I would like to report on... we have St George's, that we would like to make the first Climate Resilience City, and not only in Grenada, but through the Region. And, the reason, Mr. Speaker, is that we know that the sea level is rising due to the greenhouse gases and other emissions that are causing the North and the South Pole, the ice there to melt, thereby the rise in the sea level.

So, we have the New York State University are doing some consultation work here in Grenada and addressing things like protecting our beautiful Carenage, because with the rise in sea level, we know that the Carenage would be looking something like

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Venice in Italy. But, at least Venice is a much bigger place, so we can't afford to lose anything to rising sea levels, Mr. Speaker.

Other areas will be addressing the traffic situation in our Town. We know that everybody complain about it, but if you put a ban on vehicles they would also complain about it, because almost everybody would like to have access to a vehicle for the convenience you receive from it, so we have to address that problem; so that consultation, Mr. Speaker, is looking at addressing the Road System and how you could put in new roads, so we could alleviate some of the problems there, and that would also include traffic to and from the Southern Corridor going to the Airport. We have the Grand Anse Beach, and this is a very important revenue earner for Grenada through Tourism, and with the rise in sea level, we are told that if we do not do anything, all where the Wall Street and Real Value Supermarket are, all those areas would be under water. So, we have to take measures now, Mr. Speaker, of how we could alleviate those problems.

Also, we have a serious problem with sewage. Days gone by it was our habit to go into the river and wash and put everything into the sea. But, now we are seeing the PH level of the ocean is changing, due to all the waste that's going into the sea. And, for instance, the chlorine that we put in the water to protect us from germs, all that is going into the ocean, because it's not being neutralised before it goes back into the sea. So, we have to look at putting all that grey water into the Sewer System to be treated, because even the soaps, detergents and everything that we put in there, toothpaste and everything like that, things that we do without even thinking that these things are going into the ocean and they are changing the pH level.

What is happening, Mr. Speaker, is that studies are showing that some of the shellfish, when the water is not as alkaline, when it is too acid, their shells do not develop at an early stage, so even the amount of shellfish, the population is declining and in many countries, they are looking at putting a ban on things like Lambie, because the population is going down, due to, not only through overfishing, but because the pH level of the ocean is changing. It is affecting the shellfish.

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Also, and not only for St. George's, Mr. Speaker, but the Grenville Coastal Road is also being addressed by that consultation and that we are hoping to get funding for that through the Green Climate Fund. The Ministry is also preparing submissions to the same Fund and also through the CDB for an Energy Efficient Project in which we would be replacing most of the streetlights to LEDs, which consume a lot less power, and in addition to that, we are also looking at this for Government Offices and other private offices to move more to the Solar, to reduce the high consumption of refrigeration and AC, because even in the Fishing Industry, we use a lot of refrigeration and AC for preparing ice, so that the fisherman could go out and fish to protect the catch.

In the Disaster Management, Mr. Speaker, we know that we live under the threat of an active volcano in Kick 'Em Jenny, so on Thursday March 14<sup>th</sup>, there would be a Tsunami Simulation in St. Patrick and that Simulation would be to help us to get prepared, because in the event of such a disaster, rather than scratching our heads and wondering what we are supposed to do, we will, beforehand, know what to do, when the disaster comes. So, I am appealing to everybody to take part in those Simulations.

And, finally, Mr. Speaker, going to Fisheries, we know that the Fishing Industry is changing, it's not business as before, and the Government has taken out post insurance and that insurance is not for an individual to say that the individual could claim for one (1) engine, or a damaged boat; that insurance is to bring back the whole industry, so everybody benefits. So, whatever damages that you have, they will look at the whole scale and try to address that, so that the Industry will be back up and running very quickly.

We only have one problem there is because we have about over three thousand (3,000) registered Fishers, but we only have a little over two hundred (200) that are paying the license fees; and, Mr. Speaker, it's not like with the Police where if you drive your vehicle they could see your license plate and charge you for driving without paying your license fees. It is a different scenario, we do not have that amount of

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Police that's going out there to check on the boats, so we would have to come up, very soon, with a public awareness, so that everybody would see the benefits of getting their boats licensed and paying their license fees.

Also, Mr. Speaker, we have had six (6) local Fishermen; we got jobs for them on the big Trawlers, so that they would be able to get the experience on what it's like fishing out in the open seas. Because, presently, we only fish with the smaller boats and we do not go out, too far, but with those experiences, now, we would be able to start tackling the deep seas.

We are also looking, Mr. Speaker, at having... because some of our exporters are trying to get into bigger markets and have more reliable products, because in our case a lot of it is seasonal; so you don't want to invest into a large infrastructure and you know it's a seasonal business, but you have the other bigger countries, they fish the Atlantic and that they do so on a daily basis. So, we are looking at being a transshipment area just like if it's in Cabo Verde, in the Atlantic, where the ship will come in and offload here, and we will give them services like freshwater and other supplies and then we would export the fish for them. So, Government would be getting a lot of revenue through the export through that scenario, so we are looking, seriously. We have a few proposals on those.

And, finally, Mr. Speaker, we are looking at the landing fees, because right now different parts of the island have different landing fees, so what it is, is that the fishermen, when they are landing their fish, they go to the Ports where they don't have to pay landing fees, and the other areas, where you have to pay the landing fees, you're not getting that revenue to maintain the infrastructure, so we'll be looking also at making it even right across the country. So, with this, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say thank you and have a good day. **(Applause).**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. John. Honourable Representative for St. David.

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**Hon. Oliver Joseph:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and let me extend best wishes to you and the staff since this is the first time we are meeting for this New Year.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to give an update from the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Cooperatives and CARICOM Affairs. Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform this House and the general public that on Wednesday the 6<sup>th</sup>, this week, the Commonwealth Secretariat presented a study, on a finding that was done for Grenada on new products and new markets.

When the National Export Strategy was developed, and last year it was presented for 2017, and the National Export Strategy was presented, I indicated to the Commonwealth Secretariat that in order for us to benefit under this Export Strategy, I would like a study to be undertaken to help us to focus on the Sectors and products that we can have competitive advantage in, and they acceded to the request, commissioned a study and on Wednesday they presented the findings, which were very interesting. Mr. Speaker, they identified twenty-two (22) new products and markets that Grenada can export competitively, twenty-two (22). **(Applause)** And, that is what is going to drive this Export Strategy and at the presentation of the Report all the stakeholders from Private Sector were represented. And, I said to them, it is important because it is not the Government that is exporting, we are facilitating. They are the ones in the Manufacturing and Exporting Business, they are the ones that we are creating this opportunity for, and, therefore, we must work together to build on our export. And, that is extremely critical given the situation that we find ourselves in here Grenada.

In 2017, Mr. Speaker, the Trade deficit was \$1.05 billion. What that simply means is that we imported \$1.05 billion more products than we exported. That is not a good situation to be in, because it's a strain on the foreign reserves. We have to pay for this in US, you know, Mr. Speaker, and so this drive is to increase our export. But, what I did, when I looked at the figures is to look at the Food Import Bill, because every time we talk about the huge Trade deficit, you know what people come

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up to me and say, well, it is time that you ban the importation of motor vehicles, we have too much in Grenada, what do you expect? We are spending all our money, buying motor vehicles and that is why we have this huge Trade deficit. But, the Food Import Bill for 2017, the 2018 figures are being compiled now, and it is looking like it will be more, was two hundred and twenty-one million dollars (\$221m) in food imports, you know, Mr. Speaker. In a country, as Grenada, where we should be producing food, agricultural products and so on, we spend \$221 million importing food. So, we must have a joint approach, in the Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Marketing Board, working together to see how we could reduce on the Food Import bills, because the imports are driven by demand. If people are demanding the products, that's the only how the business would bring it in, because they are driven by profits, they import and sell.

So, if there is no demand for the products it would not be ordered, so it is our people to change the consumption pattern to make an effort to eat what we produce. We have heard that over the decades, we continue to say: 'Eat What You Grow, Grow What You Eat', and all these things, and the Ministry of Trade have had local exhibitions, promoting all the products that are done locally, but unless our people's attitude towards our local produce versus the foreign... You know, Mr. Speaker, it have some people that think the foreign food that we import is much better, but what can be better than locally produced food? You know the source, you know that the farmers are growing fresh produce right here.

I recall, at one time, there was an outbreak of a disease that affected chickens, so we said to one of the importers that you should not be importing this chicken now, because of the outbreak. He said the outbreak was announced one month ago, but the chicken that is imported is in Miami, in freezer more than two (2) months, waiting to be exported. More than two (2) months, you know, it's there, waiting to be exported, frozen, you see. So, we are not getting the best quality, but we need to increase on our Poultry production.



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At the Budget Debate, I gave the figures and I was amazed of the amount of feedback I got on that statement from the farmers and fishermen, when I went to the butcher. They said: “all this money that we're spending on importing poultry?” He said “no, it is time that we do something about that.” I didn't realise these people were listening to the Budget Presentation, but they heard that, and that stood out to them the amount of money that we're spending in Poultry.

There is a plan on foot. Cabinet approved the Poultry Policy and has pledged support to the Poultry Association, so that we can start our local production of poultry meat, because we need to reduce on this high Food Import bill into our country. And, so I have decided that at every Parliament session to mention about the high import bill for food and then talk about the measures that we, as a Government is doing, because we must facilitate it to keep the awareness going, because we have to make a conscious decision to reduce on our Food Import bill. And, as I said this study is very timely. I was pleased with the support through the Commonwealth Secretariat, and I want to thank the Commonwealth Secretariat for the work they have done in presenting this Report, and it is a very practical report, giving us some clear indication of what we need to do to reach the standard, and what are the requirements in the Export Market to which they are appointing. So, I have asked now, Mr. Chair, for a Seminar on how to export to Europe, because some of the products have been identified that could enter the European Market, and they have already agreed. For the exporters, they will do a step-by-step Guide on how to export to Europe. And, they will look at other export markets and all the requirements that are necessary, ensuring that we fulfill the rules of origin, so that we can enter the market. So, we are very pleased, and I think this activity on Wednesday, was important enough to brief this House and the Nation, on the way that we are moving to deal with increasing our exports. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause).**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. David. Leader of Government's Business.

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**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I move into my Ministerial Statement, permit me the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to compliment all women in my Constituency, all women in Grenada and in the wider Caribbean on their celebrations today, International Women's Day. As was said by the Minister, Mr. Speaker, she has complimented all of them with respect to their various contributions. I simply want to add my voice to this, Mr. Speaker, and to compliment the team, with respect to Culture for their wonderful performance in Trinidad and Tobago, already articulated by the Minister for Culture. **(Applause).**

With respect to the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport, Energy, Mr. Speaker, I simply want to announce that the Traffic Wardens have received their internal training and they are doing the external component now, Mr. Speaker, under the watchful eyes of the Commissioner of Police, through his respective Officers, as they give them the necessary training on the ground, Mr. Speaker. You can hear the comments, island wide, and we know that the population is looking towards better control of traffic and better movements throughout the City and throughout the entire country, Mr. Speaker.

The Park and Ride, that is where transport outside of buses, must park on the extremities of the City and be shuttled into the City. We have held discussions with the National Stadium, and it is well advanced, so very soon the Permanent Secretary with responsibility for Transportation will be meeting with the Police in order to finalise the arrangements. But, the Government must be involved, Mr. Speaker, because the buses are saying they must make a due profit, in the sense that if they are going to run only from Queen's Park, let us say, from one side, into the City, they must get sufficient persons. And, if the traffic is not sufficient, then they will have to be subsidised, so that they can make a profit. So, that is the last step in order to finalise the arrangement, Mr. Speaker.

The public has made certain comments, with respect to, if they park their vehicle at Queen's Park, they should not be paying anymore. So, if they pay for that park, then they should be shuttled freely, they don't have to look for money and get a chit and a ticket. As you come out from there, the bus should be there, you approach the bus,

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only the persons who park, therefore, at the Central Parking point, would have access to the Shuttle, because they would not be paying the Shuttle. These are the final components that we need to get in place, in order to effect the Park and Ride System. Unfortunately, we are not finding a good location on the other side of the City, Mr. Speaker, from the Grand Anse side. We looked at that lovely bit of land by Foodland there. It does not belong to the Government, or any sub Agency of the Government, so then we have to go to get private lands. But, we cannot let people from the North, they must park and ride and people from the South, to come into the City; we know that that is a problem, so we must solve both, and that is where we are, Mr. Speaker, and we will be updating the Nation, as we find solutions to the problems, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to give this Honourable House and the Nation an update on the arbitration between the Government of Grenada and WRB, the 50% shareholders in GRENLEC. And, I want to preface the statement by saying again, Mr. Speaker, that the relationship with the Company, GRENLEC and its management and the Government is excellent, Mr. Speaker. They may not be able to provide certain services, as streetlights, etcetera, etcetera, because they must take Policy, they must take their directive from above. And, if they will not purchase sufficient streetlights to give the entire country, then they could only give what they have in stock, Mr. Speaker.

In that context, the Government is embarking on a programme of acquiring streetlights, and, perhaps, the GRENLEC staff would be able to put them up here and there. There is a project, Mr. Speaker, from the GCF to be looking at all of those things, and now we are working together to see how we can follow through on that, Mr. Speaker. But, the arbitration in question; all documents have been submitted. Lawyers have made their presentations; written presentations. WRB asked this first, we responded, they have placed their second, and now by the 29<sup>th</sup> of March, the Government must place its final submission.

What I want to tell the people, Mr. Speaker, what is at stake here, it's WRB's request, WRB's demand to leave. So, what the Nation could expect is that within the timeframe for a decision by the Tribunal that WRB will leave. Government has not

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asked them to leave. When they say they want to leave and sell, we told them sell to whomsoever you wish, but they are saying now, 'now that I cannot find a buyer, I am going to sell to you, under certain conditions.' And, they are invoking the Share Purchase Agreement, signed in 1994, to force the Government to buy it back. And, if somebody does not want to remain with you, they have invested thirty million dollars (\$30 m) in Jamaica, so maybe they want to go in Jamaica. I think the workers and the Nation must understand that they want to leave and they are forcing the Government to leave. And, people must not sit down and say, well, these people will be around for a long time, they will be going on their own volition, and they are forcing the Government for them to go. So, that is the decision of the Tribunal that will come up very soon, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to the projects and the corporate social responsibility, in that Agreement, in 1994, they had to do certain things, provide 5% of their gross profit into the project, but in that too was a caveat; so although some people are boasting that, well, look at what they did, in that caveat they are saying once it has become uneconomical for them, they will slash the project.

Now, opening the market and putting the perk that is the Regulatory Commission that could control the prices, maybe they foresee some reduction in price, or reduction in profit, and then they will slash this. They have a Constitutional Motion where Government, in order to ensure that projects continue, simply mandated that the same 5% will be put into the projects. They are claiming now, and I must give them credit, Mr. Speaker, in the last comment they made, it was not... seemed to be with any animosity. They are simply saying they do not know whether their project will continue, or whether our project will take place.

So, if that is the case why go to a Motion? Just come to the Government and say which one will continue, your component, where the Government, the Taxpayers, or the Ratepayers will pay for it directly, or whether it will come through your component, which is mandated under the agreement? That could move, so you could

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move aside this and let the other one go through. But, it only points to the trend to where they are going, Mr. Speaker.

This Constitutional Motion would be heard before the court, and I think it will be clarified then, something that we could simply write to each other. And, if the Government needs to make a statement, whether it is through Regulation, or through the Law, to say, well, this is the clarification, I think it will be done, but what the public must know is that the social projects will continue, one way or the other. They are all ultimately funded by the Ratepayers of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, Mr. Speaker.

And, with respect to the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission, a fundamental pillar of the liberalization of the Sector, they now have their office at the Petro Caribè building at Queen's Park. The Commission is in place. There is a Coordinator in place. We publicise and advertise throughout the Region, according to the World Bank Rules, and the gentleman from Trinidad, Mr. Khan, is now in place. We do have an Accounting Officer in place, so everybody who wants a permit to put solar panel on their home, everybody who wants a permit to involve themselves into renewable energy, they can now approach the Public Utilities Commission, directly. Most of the applications normally came, in the past, through the Ministry, and we have now passed them on to the Public Utilities Commission, Mr. Speaker.

So, we are right there, moving along, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Energy Sector, and very soon, we hope to be reaching our mandate, which is 20% renewables, by 2020, far away off, Mr. Speaker. We are about 3%, was the last report I saw from the Ministry of Energy. And, this could have critical effect on all the funding that we are getting, because if the GCF is funding us to the tune of NAWASA, one hundred and twenty-five million dollars (\$125 m), the Smart City, over three hundred million dollars (\$300 m), and our commitment to that Sector of being renewable, having a great component of the energy generated by renewable means, and we have failed to meet our commitment to the Kyoto Protocol, instead of twenty-three, now around fourteen (14), so we have to ramp this up early, Mr. Speaker, so the Public Utilities

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Regulatory Commission will ensure that we meet, or we come close to our commitment and ensure that the funding from this Agency, GCF and the GEF, etcetera, will continue to flow to Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Leader of Government's Business. Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. George's North-West and Prime Minister.

**Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me just apologise for my lateness this morning, because of some national business that I was conducting at the office.

Just a couple areas, Mr. Speaker, I want to just make some short statements on. The first area is the recently concluded Heads of Government meeting in St. Kitts. Just to point out two (2) major issues, among many others, that were discussed, and certain agreements were met among Heads. The first one is related to the vexing issue of the present situation in Venezuela, which, of course, has to be of concern to all of us in the Region, because, as you know, Venezuela is very close to our borders and, therefore, any continued instability in Venezuela can have negative effects on our country and our way of life, and, therefore, we have to be concerned about this. I don't want to necessarily repeat what I think most people know about the present situation.

I just want to comment on the fact that we have two (2) contending positions taken by countries, regionally and internationally, and that is that some countries and many of the bigger powers around the Globe have taken the position that recognizing an interim President, as opposed to the present President that came through the last election in Venezuela. And, of course, there are those, on the other hand, who says that the present Government is legitimate and ought to be given the responsibility or the right to continue in office pending whatever agreements were reached. Well, Grenada's own position has been that, clearly, if these two (2) situations continue, what

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is going to happen is continued problems and that we will not end with a solution, because it appears to us that the Government that now run Venezuela and in charge of the country does have the military support, and of course, some political support among the population. And, the Opposition forces do, in fact, have some support among the population. And, therefore, the continued impasse can only mean one thing, more suffering to the people of Venezuela, and the stories that we are getting from all over, some of it are quite difficult to comprehend, will continue. And, of course, as I mentioned before, the impact it can have on the Region. Trinidad is already feeling the end result of that impasse, and, clearly, Trinidad is right there; what Trinidad feels, Grenada and other countries in the Region will feel it also.

CARICOM spent a considerable time in the meeting, trying to come up with a position on the CARICOM statement that appeared to be seen as a CARICOM statement, not just a statement to satisfy one side or the other. And, I did make the point to my colleagues that we cannot appear to make a statement, that CARICOM cannot be seen as trying to make a statement that satisfied one side, completely, or the other side completely. We would spend the next period, months and years, attempting to do that, because both sides are so distant in their approach.

So, it seems like we should put out a statement to the Opposition, that either side will find comfort in, but either side may find some discomfort with CARICOM, but it would be a CARICOM statement, and that would make CARICOM more relevant. But, if we put out a statement satisfying either side in this situation, either one will become irrelevant, and, therefore, I left the meeting, because I had to come back here to the One-Day Match, and the foreign Minister reported to me that the position that I took was, in fact, the final position accepted by CARICOM, and that's why the statement that was put out, pointed out that we need to look towards national elections in the country, as a way to attempt to deal with the present situation, in agreement between the Parties in Venezuela, because we can't impose anything on the people of Venezuela. And, at the same time, we urged that issues of sanctions needed to be looked at, to help the situation not to continue to provide further difficulties in

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Venezuela. So, we know that some would like some aspect of it, some would not like it, as I pointed out; so that is the present situation.

I just came from one of the meetings, I was just holding while I was here. It was almost an hour meeting with the Under Secretary-of-State, who is visiting the Caribbean, who came to Barbados, St. Lucia and Grenada to discuss this present situation. And, I, in fact spoke to the Under-Secretary of State, a lady, who came down to meet and is heading back to Washington today, and gave our view. Washington, apparently, heard about Grenada's position already, so it wasn't new to her. But, I think we have to find some resolution to that situation in Venezuela, because it would continue to be a problem.

The other issue, Mr. Speaker, I want to mention, is the issue of LIAT. Quite thorough discussions were held, and we all know my views. I think Grenada knows my views about LIAT and the whole question of LIAT's management or mismanagement over the years. And, they know I have expressed strong views that LIAT has to become a serious business, if it wants the Taxpayers of the Region to continue to invest. We have taken the position that we have to have a restructuring of LIAT. It is serious business. It cannot be business as usual, and in the process of that restructuring, we do not believe politicians should be sitting on the Board of LIAT, because what happens, as we have seen, decisions are made by LIAT, because of influence of politicians, not based on business, because we have seen LIAT, sometimes, travelling to sections of the Region that are unprofitable, and where the monies exist and the travelling public exist for profitability of LIAT it is not being served, because it is operating on the basis of political decision. Some people deny it, but we know the facts. When LIAT pulled out their flight from Grenada to Barbados, that was almost every flight full, and went to another country where it was half full. It can't be anything else, but a spite decision and we said so and some people didn't like it, but we could only say what is true, and the facts bore it out.

But, in the face of what has now come to light, and we have seen LIAT operate in the last six (6) months, I must say, I myself have become almost a sympathiser of



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LIAT, because I found myself, when I have to go to the Airport many times and I know citizens have expressed the same thing, and we have to wait for LIAT's arrival for hours; and other people report that they are in Barbados or Trinidad for hours, waiting on a LIAT flight and they keep telling you in two (2) hours' time and next thing it is cancelled.

LIAT have me, sometimes, rushing to the Airport, because the flight is already on the ground and I have to hurry. So, there is no doubt about it that we have seen a change, and the citizens of the Region, the political leadership of the Region have all said that they have seen some change, so I have become more sympathetic. But, we have made it very clear, and with the reports now, that they are in a serious financial situation and that the Airline could in fact go under, we cannot afford LIAT to go under in the Region. I don't share the view of some persons that we should allow it to go under. The impact of that going under would have devastating impact on the economy of Grenada and many countries, and it would not be. It might satisfy our ego, but it would not be taking a business decision or a decision in the interest of the country.

So, when the discussion came up and LIAT's CEO and others were there presenting a report to the Heads and there were discussions on it, we could not be irresponsible saying that we would not invest, because we had some concerns over the years, but we said we need to see a restructuring. We also need to ensure that the new restructuring will not have political people on the Board of LIAT. We need to provide us with a plan for investment into LIAT, to ensure that it does not go under now, and different countries will have to contribute, and Grenada will do its share after the data is presented to us.

In addition, if I am requiring a flight, and we have done it for our International Airlines; we subsidise flights from airlines coming from Europe and North America, at some times during the last several years, on the basis of if the load factor does not bring a breakeven position or profitability, then the country provides a subsidy, because we want the flights. So, we are saying to LIAT, if we insist on a flight from Grenada to another country for LIAT, and you have shown us the data that they do not have a load

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factor, at a particular time, then we are prepared to subsidise. Let us know the cost of the subsidy, and let us know, over the period of time, what the load factor is like, and that will determine the cost, of course, and we are prepared to do the same thing we have done with the International Airlines, and it will be on an ongoing basis. But, we must decide which flights we want. But, if we recognise a flight is not profitable for us, then we will say well, we are not going to subsidise, so you would have to pull it out, but that's a decision between the country and LIAT.

But, at the same time we are making the point that the Airline must demonstrate that it can provide itself with a serious business environment that we won't have to be coming back to Governments over the period of time, over and over. And, we make the point, we cannot continue, because even in the subsidy we are now giving, do you know what we are doing in effect, to save LIAT, because of all the high taxes costs that we put on a ticket, all the countries, Trinidad, Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Dominica. So, for a flight what I am paying for now, that whole increase, severe taxes on a ticket are in fact subsidizing that from different countries. I should not be asked to do that. So, there must also be a reduction in the cost of taxes from all the countries, and that study is now being done. I think I made that position clear several years ago and I was nearly ran out of the room by some of my colleague Leaders. Now, they have accepted that the taxes are too high and that we are discouraging people from travelling. We are talking single economy and so on and freedom of movement, and yet the cost of a ticket is sometimes cheaper from here to Miami than you have to go from here to Barbados or Trinidad. It does not make any sense at all.

So, I think when I made the announcement, I said... the reason I made the announcement, Mr. Speaker, is simply this, because there were rumours that LIAT was going down. I made the announcement to say that if Grenada was one of the main critiques, and Grenada said, we are prepared to paying to make sure LIAT survived. We want others to realise that LIAT will survive, so people won't start panicking and next thing people that LIAT owe start calling in their loans and all kinds of stuff and then we have the crash. We can't afford this. So, Grenada has done that, and I want

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our people to understand we are not going to be irresponsible and just go out paying money, because people would then say oh, if you're going to subsidise LIAT, well, why you didn't subsidise, pay the teachers their money, pay this one, pay that one. We are hearing that kind of comment. We are not going to be irresponsible with the taxpayers' resources, so I just need to point out that.

Mr. Speaker, just on another point, recently, only yesterday there was a statement made by the Public Workers' Union that they are now going to be suing the Government on the question of their payment. And, I thought we have gone past this, you know, I think we have an election today in Public Workers, so maybe the suit was meant for that particular purpose. So, I hope, by the end of today that suit would not go further, you know. If that is the purpose of the suit, I don't have a difficulty. I notice the Minister for Labour is laughing, so he knows exactly what I am talking about.

I just need to make one point, the children of the country, they are hurting. Government is not being helped, its image is not being helped, the Teachers' Union, they are also looking bad, we have to accept that. The Unions looking bad, Government looking bad, everybody looking bad, so what you need is resolution, not further deterioration and arrogance. That doesn't help.

So, what we need is a coming to terms that our children are being hurt. When our children are being hurt, none of us should take any position to continue this. This concept of you having Sports for children and people telling them, don't run, you don't run, nonsense, our children, you know. When we are affecting their future, some Sports scholarship could have gone down the drain, because of my attitude or somebody else attitude and I am going to feel that I am winning something? What am I winning, and my children are suffering; can't be.

So, I am calling on people, come to terms, let us stop this. And, there is this perception that if I do this, then I could force the Government to do something. You cannot blackmail a Government. I cannot blackmail the Trade Union Movement to accept my position. If I do that there will never be a solution, and no one should expect they could blackmail the Government. You cannot force the Government to do

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something, which you know is not necessarily the best. Let us sit and talk, let us compromise, let us work together; this is where we are, our children comes first. I am just repeating this, and I know my Minister for Education, clearly, understands the issues. I know the job that she has to deal with right now, so I know the problem they are facing, so I just want to make the point that we need to move forward.

Hopefully, at the end of today, certainly the Clerk is smiling, at the end of today, there will be a different atmosphere. There would not be the need to go in any direction, whatever the results are. I do not know what the results are going to be, and hopefully on March 13<sup>th</sup>, which is our anniversary also and an election taking place also, that will also be an opportunity for us to say, alright, the thing is over, everything is over now. Government is now in office for another four (4) years, at least, or something like that. The Teachers Union has a new Executive, you're in office too. The Public Workers have a new Executive, they're in office too, let all of us in office sit down and do the best for the country. That is what I hope, Mr. Speaker, and I am looking forward to this, and I hope my friends in the Labour Movement are certainly looking forward to it, too.

The final point, the Acting Minister for Sports did probably indicated the One-Day Match. I just want to point out that the Minister for Sports informed me that they are moving aggressively to have lights for the Stadium. It will be in this year, and I am saying this because you would see what is happening with Cricket/T20 and One Day. The more you can have Games in the evening, the better the crowd and the more economic positives that will result for the country, as a whole. So, we are moving, aggressively, to get the lights; and he has indicated that when we get the lights, the new ones we are going to get will be the best lights in the Region now, because they have the updated system now, better than any other lights. So, Grenada would be far advanced, in terms of the technology of the lights that we install. I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister.

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**Moment of Silence**

**Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, just one...

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Prime Minister.

**Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell:** I am sorry, but, I forgot. Mr. Speaker, I noticed this here **(referring to bottled water)**, I really need to talk a little bit about that, because the business company producing this, was visiting my office this morning and indicated, and I said listen, this is an indication we are moving from the plastic, so it's the first Company, so it's a good thing for us to show this. **(Applause)** I am not here advertising any special Company, but I have to advertise that we are moving into a more environmentally friendly initiative, which is what the country is talking about, so we are using bottles now. It is not the plastic, which, of course, is a problem and the Styrofoam and so on, which is a problem for the country.

So, I said bring it up to Parliament, let the Nation see that you have moved in that direction, and I know others will move in that direction and so on. I thought I wanted to compliment the Company, and those of us would say that this is the direction we must go. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister. Let me ask, at this time, if we can all stand. Over the past, we had a few of our past Members, who have passed on. So, shall we stand and observe a minute of silence? We have Mr. Hubert Fletcher, Jacqueline Cornwell and Alphonsus Antoine. They have passed to the Great Beyond, and have made their contribution to this country and to the Parliament of this country.

***(Moment of Silence Observed).***

**Mr. Speaker:** May they rest in peace.

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**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 13 - Personal Explanations.

Item 14 - Motions.

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

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

**WHEREAS** debate on the Gracious Address delivered by the Governor-General on the occasion of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Second Session of the tenth Parliament on Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2018, was deferred to a date to be fixed;

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Debate on the Gracious Address deferred to a date to be fixed.**

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 15 - Bills.

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

**Hon. Nickolas Steele:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to introduce for the first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, the Health Practitioners (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

**Ag. Clerk:** An Act to amend the Health Practitioners Act, Cap. 132A shortly entitled, Health Practitioners (Amendment) Act, 2019.

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**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Minister for Health.

**Hon. Nickolas Steele:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the House be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through its stages at this Sitting.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Minister for Health.

**Hon. Nickolas Steele:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Minister.

**Hon. Nickolas Steele:** Mr. Speaker, as a Nation, we constantly evolve, we hope under the right leadership that our evolution is one always for the better.

In 1974, we received our Independence, and in 1975, an Institution or representatives of an Institution approached the then Government to ask to establish an Offshore Medical University, a thought at that point, that was seen by the then population to be ridiculous; one that goes in history now, as being one of the boldest moves ever made and having one of the greatest contributions to our people and our economy.

Mr. Speaker, in 1976 that Institution received its Charter from the Government. Subsequent years later, that Institution received recognition in the United States from various Accreditation Agencies there. And, more recently that Institution, through the establishment of what is referred to as CAAM-HP, which is the Caribbean Accreditation

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Authority on Medicine and Health Professions received a Regional or a Certification from a Regional Entity that we, as Regional Governments recognised. And, it is with that recognition from CAAM-HP that our dear SGU is a legal entity to train, or to be involved in the practice of educating Medical Practitioners.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward, we believe it necessary to add an additional layer there, a national layer of accreditation. So, this bill seeks to give the authority to our Medical and Dental Council in Grenada, the Body, right now, which is charged with the recognition and certification of all of our Medical Practitioners by recognizing degrees from all over the world, as to whether a degree is appropriate, or not; whether a Doctor is suitably qualified or not, to practice in Grenada. We want to take a step further to give that same Entity the authority to decide whether an institution, in Grenada, is qualified or not, to teach Medical Practitioners to offer a Medical Degree. It is not switching and giving this Entity the total control on it, but it is an additional. So, we work hand-in-hand, and this Entity will be working hand-in-hand, with all of the other Accreditation Bodies that our local Institutions, specific in this instance, St. George's University would have to apply and receive accreditation from.

So, St. George's University would still have to and would still continue to seek and hopefully continually get accreditation from CAAM-HP, and also to seek and hopefully continue to get accreditation from US Entities, so that its degree is recognised in the United States. But, now we are saying, as a Nation, because so many of our people go there too, as well, and that we are evolving, that we would like our Medical and Dental Council to also be able to give St. George's University the opportunity to seek and hopefully receive accreditation from them, as well, so, it's an additional layer. And, I think it is necessary to say, to give a level of comfort to anyone out there, who may have concerns, that this additional layer does not affect or jeopardise any of the other processes. In fact, you would see certain consideration is being made in this bill, to ensure that. It does not stop, or does not circumvent the authority of CAAM-HP, or any of the other Entities that SGU, or, in the future, any other Institution may seek. It does allow us, however, to be able to say that there is a



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National accreditation, as opposed to, in the past, all we have had is a regional accreditation that we, as a Nation recognised.

So, I expect and in our preliminary discussions, the Mental and Dental Council will be working very closely, hand-in-hand with CAAM-HP. And, the objective is, in some instances, to make sure that they don't double up on the work of supervision, visits, etcetera. But, it also allows them to decide, for instance, if we, as a Nation wanted to have an additional qualification, courses, syllabus before we recognise, it allows us to seek that route.

So, Mr. Speaker, in the bill, Clauses 1 and 2 are, basically, as we would refer to, as preambles that allow the introduction or changing of the nomenclature. Clause 4 is the first significant one. It says now that the Medical and Dental Council will be responsible for evaluating, accrediting and monitoring Medical Doctor Degree Programmes in Grenada.

Clause 5 speaks to developing, as I hinted, developing policies and standards and procedures to evaluate, and to establish fees and programmes that seek to maintain accreditation status. So, i.e., yes, St. George's University or any other Entity that wants to be accredited as an Medical Educational Facility in Grenada, will have to pay a fee to the Medical and Dental Council, to allow them to go through the process of accreditation. It is in those fees that we believe it would lay comfort to anyone who thinks, well, is this going to be an additional expense of the State or so. And, Institutions like SGU or any others would want to have that additional accreditation. So, it is not that we are just simply turning to SGU and placing an additional burden on them, financial burden or so; there is a mutual benefit for that.

And, significantly, Mr. Speaker, Clause 6; the main part of Clause 6 of significance here is that it allows the Medical and Dental Council to delegate to an Agency other than a member or committee of the Council, the duties of accreditation, i.e., inspection, etcetera. So, there may be concerns by other individuals. I disagree with them..., on those concerns that our Medical and Dental Council may not be adequately equipped, in terms of qualified, to investigate, and, thereby accredit. But,

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the bill gives them the ability to seek outside Agencies to do that work where the resources or capacity may not exist. And, it is their intention and our desire that they seek the best, because we recognise that our St. George's University is one of the best in the world, and, therefore, in our accreditation process, we will seek the best resources available, internationally, to assist our Medical and Dental Council in their accreditation process. **(Applause).**

So, Mr. Speaker, it is a bold step, yes, but a necessary step in that while we are proud of our St. George's University, we must recognise that our St. George's University is the largest Medical School in the Hemisphere, **(applause)** with respect to the teaching of Doctors. Two thousand, five hundred (2,500) individuals graduate annually, annually. Based on the figures, St. George's University graduates more Doctors than all of the Ivy League schools in the United States put together. Based on the current trend, by 2022 or 2023, St. George's University will have the largest Alumni Body of all Medical Institutions in the United States, and this school was started in 1976, when it received its strata.

So, as we move forward, as St. George's University moves forward, we believe it's necessary also that we, as a Nation, to move forward and use the opportunity of having an SGU to also have a world-class Accreditation Body there, working hand-in-hand, with all of the partners, CAAMHP, SGU, the Government of Grenada, the Ministry of Education, and that is what this bill seeks to do today, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. **(Applause).**

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

**Hon. Emmalin Pierre:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give full support to this Bill that is before us, and I am saying full support, because this could only be better for us. This could only be to our advantage. And, while, Mr. Speaker, we recognise that CAAM-HP is extremely important to this Region, and it is a

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very well respected Organization/Institution, if you want to call it that, Mr. Speaker, I always believe it's better to have your own. And, when we look at the growth and development of the local institution, and I am speaking about St. George's University, the capacity, the number of students, one can only conclude that there is a need to give all the possible support that can be given in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, we want to also look at the economic impact of St. George's University to Grenada, but also how we benefit, as it relates to Medical Doctors, who are turning out from St. George's University. So, anything that this Government can do to improve the current situation, I believe it must be done. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we must note what I consider to be a very important point made by the Representative for St. George South, in that this is not a replacement to CAAM-HP. This is not a replacement. This should complement the work of CAAM-HP locally. And, Mr. Speaker, when we look at what the aim and objective of CAAM-HP is, 'to certify Medical Education programmes and to ensure they meet prescribed standards; to promote institutional self-evaluation and improvement.' Mr. Speaker, we want to support this. We want to ensure that this is happening for the greater good.

But, Mr. Speaker, our local Grenada Medical and Dental Council, I believe, has done us well, over the past couple years, in question; and, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we are convinced that they do have the capacity, they do have what it takes to accomplish what it is that we are seeking to do.

Mr. Speaker, furthermore, this Council would say that a particular Doctor is good enough to perform within the State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, to serve our people; to provide service at our Medical Hospitals, at our Clinics, in the State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Now, to be able to do this well, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be an advantage to be able to monitor a school where that particular Doctor comes from. So, while, yes, some of them come from Institutions outside of Grenada, I believe it is an advantage to us, if they perform this added role for the Grenadian Doctors turning out from St. George's University and serving locally.

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Mr. Speaker, additionally, I want to make the point of quality. Now, the role of the Council would be to ensure that there is quality, high standards, that the standards are adhered to. And, who doesn't want that? Who would not want that, Mr. Speaker? The fact that they are based locally, is also an advantage. So, we have the Accreditation Institution here, and a young person, who is probably pursuing (and I am speaking the broader Accreditation Committee here), want to pursue studies overseas, and writes or goes to that Accreditation Board to seek information on an Institution, that Board, obviously, would be speaking from second-hand information, from research done outside of Grenada. Of course, they use trusted sources, but, Mr. Speaker, it must be an added benefit, when the Institution is locally based, and you can see for yourself, you can visit for yourself, you can assess, you can monitor, you can evaluate for yourself.

And, so, Mr. Speaker, I believe our people are well able to do this, and we ought to give them the necessary support. We have to give them the teeth to be able to do this. I am more than convinced that this would be of significant benefit to the Education Sector, and, of course, to the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and I fully support this. **(Applause)**.

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Representative for St. George South-East. (Sorry). North-East.

**Hon. Tobias Clement:** St. George North-East. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too, rise to give my support to this Bill in this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, it was sometime last year, I was looking at a clip from a television series, a CSI, and I think Medical Doctors there, as part of the Movie stream, as they were practicing, they were talking, and one asked, well, where did you get your education from, and he said, the Caribbean, and then the guy was thinking, well, it was Jamaica, and he said, no, he went to Medical school in Grenada. And, referring to that

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in the movie, he said, don't you know that St. George's University in Grenada now is the new Harvard of the Caribbean. **(Applause)** I mean what a mention!

As part of the Faculty at St. George's University, I stand here and I would support the Bill, and I know all of us here, at one time or another, went to an Institution of Higher Learning. And, as we talk about accreditation, what are we looking for? Accreditation to St. George's University is important. It is also important that accreditation of St. George's University, it's important to Grenada, because what you're looking for, you're looking for St. George's University to have a standard and maintain a standard that is unquestionable in the world.

We have heard the statistics, and it will go well for St. George's University and for Grenada, when that mechanism and structure is put in place, because, as we know, most of the times, when you get this standard and people ask where you come from, they would say, St. George's University, is it accredited? It doesn't matter how good you are. It doesn't matter how good you are, if that is not behind your name, then it is questionable. But, when we put such a body in place, that Accreditation Body for Grenada, we would make sure and ensure that St. George's University keeps its standard, that we will be No. 1 in the Caribbean, if now in the world.

And, as the statistics showed over the years, in terms of students at St. George's University, doing their Medical exams and passing, for the first time, we are up there, with the Ivy League school in the United States, with 96% and higher sometimes, and their average is 94, but we are at 96%.

Mr. Speaker, while we talk about accreditation, there is something that has always troubled me at the back of my mind, because now St. George's University is not only St. George's University as a Company, but, as we say, it is Grenadian owned now. It is part of our structure; it is part of our Economy. And, I always asked the question, what we, as a Government will do in order to boost the security of students at St. George's University, because St. George's University, at this point in time probably has students from all over the world, from every country. And, if I live in the United States or Canada or China or Japan, and I have my son or my daughter in St.

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George's University, I know that they would be getting a well-rounded education, especially in the Medical field, but my concern would be what about their safety while they are in Grenada. I know we boast that probably in Grenada, we are one of the safest, if not the safest country in the Caribbean now to be in. But, we must not, Mr. Speaker, see it and take it for granted. What I would advocate, along with making sure that St. George's University does what it takes to raise the standard and to keep the standard, so that accreditation would come, I would also say for the Government to do its part, so that we can boost the security in the Southern part of the Island where St. George's University is located, because, God forbid one or two things might happen to a student, then we know how that goes.

So, as I rise to support this, I hope that all this would be taken into consideration. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause).**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. George North-East. Honourable Representative, Minister for Health, you need to say anything?

**Hon. Nickolas Steele:** Mr. Speaker, I thank you and I thank my colleagues for their support and their congratulatory words to the Institution, but also the move that we are considering. So, I now look forward to the second reading of the Bill.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Minister for Health.

**Hon. Nickolas Steele:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

**Question put and agreed to.**

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**House in Committee.**

**House resumes.**

**Mr. Speaker:** I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the Whole House and passed without amendments. Honourable Minister for Health.

**Hon. Nickolas Steele:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Minister for Health.

**Hon. Nickolas Steele:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a third time and passed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Representative for St. David.

**Hon. Oliver Joseph:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Grenada Citizenship By Investment (Amendment) Act, 2019.

**Ag. Clerk:** An Act to amend the Grenada Citizenship by Investment Act, No. 15 of 2013, shortly entitled, Grenada Citizenship by Investment (Amendment) Act, 2019.

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Minister for Trade, Industry and Co-operatives.

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**Hon. Oliver Joseph:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the House be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through all its stages at this Sitting.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Minister.

**Hon. Oliver Joseph:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Minister.

**Hon. Oliver Joseph:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this amendment to the Citizenship by Investment Act, 15 of 2013 seeks to expand the definition of 'dependent'.

Mr. Speaker, this programme is adopted by many more countries around the world since 2013, when it was first introduced. We can look at what is happening in the Caribbean, in the OECS, Grenada, Dominica, St. Lucia, Antigua, St. Kitts. And, therefore, the market is becoming very competitive and the need to review and make amendment to the original Bill is always on us to examine. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise the amendments Clause by Clause and explain what it is that we are attempting to do.

In Section 2 of the principal Act, the amendment of 'dependent' is done, as follows, 'by repealing paragraph (c), and substituting the following new paragraph.' But, let me say what exist in the Law, so that Members have a good understanding of what changes we are making. It says: "A child...", I am reading now, the original Act.



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***“A child of the main applicant or his or her spouse, who is at least eighteen (18) years and less than thirty (30) years of age who is in full-time attendance at a recognised institution of higher learning and is fully supported by the main applicant will qualify.”*** This amendment is saying we are removing the requirement for the eighteen (18) year old to be enrolled in a higher institution of learning;” that is the amendment, plain and simple. So, the old one required you to be in an institution of higher learning, if you’re over the age of eighteen (18), this amendment is saying there is no need for you to be enrolled in that institution of higher learning, that is the first amendment, Mr. Speaker.

The second amendment that is being proposed is the amendment to paragraph (e), which expands the dependent to include a parent or grandparent age fifty five (55) or under, if the parent or grandparent is living with and fully supported by the main applicant. So, this change here, Mr. Speaker, the change here is simple, to include the parent or grandparent age fifty-five (55) years or under and living and fully supported by the main applicant.

The other amendment has to do with the main applicant, the parent or grandparent of the main applicant or his or her spouse not exceeding the age of fifty-five (55) years, living with and fully supported by the main applicant or his or her spouse. So, we have two categories, one above the age of fifty-five (55) and the second under the age of fifty-five (55); that is the amendment that we are seeking in this provision.

The amendment to subsection (g), this new (g) expands the term ‘dependent’ to include a sibling whether biological or adopted, which is unmarried, is at least eighteen (18) years of age and has no children; that is what this expanded definition does, Mr. Speaker.

In the new paragraph (h), which was left out in the Act of 2017, will read: ***“A child born of the main applicant or his or her spouse within twelve (12) months of the grant of Citizenship pursuant to this Act will qualify for citizenship.”*** In the new paragraph, there are proposed regulations to enable the following enactment into

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regulations, Mr. Speaker. So, I now move to Clause 4. **“A parent or grandparent, fifty-five (55) years, or under will pay fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00) and a sibling, seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000.00).”** These are the contributions that they will make to the Government, when they apply. This Government's contribution will be applicable with respect to application under Section 10 that is the National Transformation Fund, Section 11 Approved Projects, and Section 11 (a), significant Investments; that's when the parent or grandparent apply, it's fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00), the sibling seventy-five thousand (\$75,000.00).

Clause 3 seeks to repeal Section 5 (10) of the principal Act to remove the requirement for the child, under paragraph (c) to submit official transcripts. As I indicated, in the original Act, the dependent who is attending the institution of higher learning, when they apply, would have to submit their transcript, or their acceptance letter from a recognized University in order to qualify. Now, we are removing the requirement for that. You do not need to submit your transcript with the application, because we are saying in the amendment that a child over the age of eighteen (18), but under thirty (30) will qualify, as a dependent. So, no longer this requirement to submit official transcript; that is the amendment that we are seeking to do in Clause 3, which is Section 5 of the principal Act.

In Clause 4, Clause 4 seeks to amend Section 10 (1) and repeal Section 10 (2) of the principal Act to remove permanent residency as a prerequisite to a grant for citizenship. Section 10 (2) of the principal Act provides that in order to grant citizenship, you must first be granted permanent residence and within twelve (12) months apply for citizenship. In this amendment, the requirement for permanent residence is no longer required. Once you have been accepted under the programme and you qualify, you can apply for citizenship.

The amendment to Section 11, which is Clause 5... Section 11 of the principal Act: **“A person to whom Citizenship by Investment is granted by virtue of an investment into an Approved Project under this Section shall not dispose of the Investment until the expiration of three (3) years from the grant of his or her**

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**citizenship.”** So, here there is the requirement to keep the citizenship for three (3) years. I must point out, however, when the first amendment was made to Section 11 and it became Section 11 (a), which was a significant investment, the three (3) years came in there to say, well, you must keep it, you cannot dispose of it and now it has been brought to the other Approved Projects status; under eleven (11) now, they are saying in order to dispose of it, you have to keep it for at least three (3) years, Mr. Speaker.

The amendment to Section 11 (a) of the principal Act... **“by repealing subsection (2) and substituting the new Sections that deals with significant investment.”** So, a significant investment, under Section 11 (a) will now include **“the purchase of Real Estate, the purchase of a registered business, or a registered Company operating in Grenada, the purchase of shares in a Company, or consortium of Companies, or any other investment, as may be determined by the Minister by order from time to time.”** So, when they say significant investment, now we are clearly spelling out what that the investment that you can, in fact, make that significant investment in. However, in (d), it says: **“Any other investment, as may be determined by the Minister.”**

Clause 6 **“seeks to relocate a portion of 11 (a) of the principal Act, as a new 11 (a).”** So, in 5 (a) to insert 11 (a), 5 (b), as follows: **“A person to whom Citizenship by Investment is granted by virtue of a significant investment under this Section, shall not dispose of the Investment until the expiration of three (3) years from the grant of his or her citizenship. Where the significant investment qualifies under subsection (2) (a) and the Vendor was granted citizenship under this section by virtue of purchase of the real estate, the purchaser may make an application under this Section, if the purchaser makes the investment after the expiration of three (3) years.”** So, that is to include it, the three (3) years to Approved Project, as well.

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The approved investment is three hundred and fifty thousand (350,000.00) and fifty thousand (50,000.00) contribution to Government. So, these are the main changes extending the dependent category and looking at the qualifying time before one can dispose of Shares under Section 11. It will be 11 (a) now and 11 (b). These are the changes that are recommended by these amendments, Mr. Speaker. I thank you. **(Applause).**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Representative. Honourable Representative for St. Patrick West.

**Hon. Anthony Boatwain:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to the debate on this Bill. But, prior to doing so, Mr. Speaker, I wish to join with speakers before me in extending congratulations to our Artistes, who did so well, at the International Soca Monarch in Trinidad. Five (5) entered, three (3) placed in the first three and in particular to Mr. Killer, who is now the International Soca Monarch. Also, Mr. Speaker, I want to extend congratulations to all of the women on the celebration of International Women's Day.

Mr. Speaker, I have read the Bill with the explanatory notes, notwithstanding the short time given to do so, and, Mr. Speaker, I have some comments to make with regards to this Bill. Mr. Speaker, before doing so, I think we should be cognizant of the global environment within, within which live, and also to recognise that over the past years, or so, we have to recognise the confluence of forces, how we as small dependent developing economies exist within the global framework and the relationship that has been forged with more developed or advanced countries of the world. And, I want to recognise, Mr. Speaker, three different eras with regards to how this relationship has been forged and how this relationship has been dismantled. And, whether the relationship, Mr. Speaker, has been established or dismantled, it has always been in the interest of the more developed countries. They determine what is good for us; they determine what is not good for us.

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Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the era when we were primary exporters of Agricultural produce and, in particular, bananas. We were granted preferential treatment to sell our bananas on the European Market. But, then there was this challenge with the United States citing the valuation of the General Agreement of Tariff and Trade and WTO regulations, and, as a result, we had to give up, Britain had to give up the preferential markets that we had, taking into consideration, Mr. Speaker, we were competing with Companies like Dole and Chiquita. Our production couldn't come close to those countries, but yet they took that decision, because they were not afraid to do that, because it was in their interest then, to do that. And, it was the same ODCD countries who told us, now that you're out of primary export of Agricultural products, why not enter into the Financial Services Sector. We did so, and then came 9/11 in 2001, what happened? The same countries said to us that is not the Sector for you, you are involved in harmful tax practices, we do not trust you with regards to money laundering, financing of terrorists activities; they destroyed that Sector, as well. The Offshore Banking Sector was destroyed.

Then, we moved into this period of CBI, of Citizen by Investment, something that they themselves are involved in, an activity that generates significant revenues for our countries, poor countries. But, Mr. Speaker, I am afraid here again, that the axe will fall and CBI, in my opinion, will cease to exist, in a matter of a very short time. And, why do I say so, Mr. Speaker? That threat is coming from two different angles, first, competition among the regional CBI countries, countries that are involved in the CBI programme. What we have is a 'better thy neighbour policy', each one trying to outdo the other, in order to seek favour on the market. It's an open market, Private Sector market. That is a serious threat, Mr. Speaker. But, once that is done, we do expect to see the OECD countries to come in, because, as we lower the bar, chances are we might get involved in activities that they may cite, as not being their interest and that programme, Mr. Speaker, could also come to an end.

Mr. Speaker, this will be an unfortunate development, especially the competition among countries in the Region, because what we need, Mr. Speaker, is not

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competition among the countries. The countries should be involved in harmonizing the policies, with regard to the CBI, so investors cannot pay one against the other. But, we have fallen victim to that, Mr. Speaker, and we are on a race to determine who will lower the barrier faster, much to our detriment, Mr. Speaker. We have seen that in other Sectors. We speak of a harmonised Banking System, but yet we have different countries doing their own thing; problems, Mr. Speaker, for us as countries that cannot come together and work out a harmonised formula to deal with issues like these, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the question must be asked. The Member for St. David gave us an insight into the changes, the amendments, but the fundamental question must be asked, Mr. Speaker, in whose interest are these amendments being made, and what are the primary motivating factors propelling those changes, Mr. Speaker? We haven't heard that, in whose interest? When we look at all of the changes, Mr. Speaker, with the exception of one, which is the year, three (3) years, I will come to that; they are all in the interest of the investors, all.

Let us look at the first set of changes, the dependents. What they are doing, really, Mr. Speaker, is to create a situation where we will have more dependents in relationship to a single investor. Notwithstanding the fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00) or seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000.00) that they have to pay, the mere fact is that becoming a citizen affords you far greater advantage than what you have to pay, so it is in their interest. The more dependents you have, is the better; the fact is that, that primary investor has no additional responsibility, but yet he has a greater satellite of dependents around him.

Take for example the change where a parent or grandparent is under fifty-five (55). I mean someone should be charged for Statutory Rape, because if you are a grandparent at fifty-five (55), it means that, maybe, you had a child when you were a teenager. Is that really necessary, Mr. Speaker?

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But, the one that is more glaring is children now, not being required to provide proof of being registered in an Institution of Learning. There was a reason for that. It was not put there by mistake, or by guess. The framers of the Act, Mr. Speaker, had a reason for insisting on that, because that is proof of dependence. If you're going to school, then you need help. Now you remove that, where is the proof of that dependency? No proof, so do we see the rationale behind such changes, Mr. Speaker.

The next one, Mr. Speaker, is the removal of the requirements, residency requirements, under Section 10. What, Mr. Speaker, could justify that, except you are under pressure, because other countries are doing it, so we have to do it, and I don't blame. We cannot be blamed for that, you know, Mr. Speaker. I support the amendment, because that is our means of survival. I am not against it, but I am saying that we must understand the rationale why we have to do it, because of that constant pressure of competition.

You remove the residency, because other countries don't have it, most of them don't have it, so we have to fall in line, otherwise we get left. But, what is happening here, Mr. Speaker, once you remove the residency requirement, you are telling that person, hey you make an investment, you contribute two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000.00) to the Fund and immediately you get citizenship, immediately, no residency requirement, no time to really monitor the behavioural pattern of that person. But, what is even worse, you are now on par with the investor making investment under Section 11, where you are saying that you have to invest three hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars (\$375,000.00). But, the one contributing to the Fund is contributing less, but they both get their citizenship at the same time. So, any smart person would say, hey, why should I invest more? Why not make a contribution to the Fund and I get my citizenship immediately? So, in essence we are killing that Section. We are killing that Section, Section 11, because nobody will be interested in investing in more, and it is investment we need to drive the country, Mr. Speaker. So, everybody now would be looking at Section 10, smaller contribution, forget about Section 11.

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And, for us, Mr. Speaker, who are concerned about investment, this, Mr. Speaker, we should give serious consideration to.

The third issue, Mr. Speaker, is that of the time for disposal of assets, three (3) years. I would not know what informed that three (3) years, but from what I have been told, there is nothing before; so maybe this is an improvement. You had nothing before, but now you have three (3) years. But, what is so magical about these three (3) years, Mr. Speaker, I would rather propose that this be five (5) years; at least we can link it to the duration of the Passport. The Passport is for five (5) years, so why not make it for five (5) years? And, I am suggesting Mr. Speaker, that this should be an amendment we should look at, make it five (5) years, because you could attach some rationale to five (5) years, but I can't see anything with three (3) years.

The next one, Mr. Speaker, is the repurchase. I do not see the repurchasing of an investment, or secondary purchase, contributing anything new, because, basically, what you are doing, you are paying the initial investor for his investment for which he got citizenship, the one who invested it, originally, and after three (3) years you could dispose of it. You are paying for that; so you are not bringing anything new. You could disappear for the three (3) years, and with even higher amounts, because there could have been appreciation of whatever assets you invested in. But, the person who is purchasing now, yes, he is being in front, but it is nothing new, because the one who invested before is getting back his money, and yet he is enjoying all of the privileges of a citizen. Something has got to be not too right about that configuration and that needs, Mr. Speaker, to be looked into.

Mr. Speaker, in essence, I have no restriction in giving my support to the amendments, as a matter of fact I support the amendments, except the one for three (3) years. I think that that should be five (5), because, as I said, Mr. Speaker, we are in a competitive environment, unfortunately so. I support it, but unfortunately so. It is not because it brings any joy. It is not because it brings any benefits, because in the short run the competition can give you some more revenue, but in the long run you're destroying the same thing. Competition could destroy what could we consider to be a



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very good Programme. And, again, Mr. Speaker, we have to ask, what are our Regional Heads doing, in terms of harmonizing some of our policy stance on certain issues? And, this is a critical one. This is a very critical one, because, as I said if we continue on this trajectory, this CBI Programme will not last, and it will be unfortunate.

We, in the Region would have contributed to the demise of the Programme, because by lowering the barrier, it means that less favourable elements could enter; although someone might say, well you have due diligence. But, the same pressure, Mr. Speaker, the pressure that we are experiencing now could be made to bear on the regulatory mechanism, if we are weak. They might say hey, why not lower certain barriers, in order to get me to come to your country. Some countries might be weak enough to fall for it and that, Mr. Speaker, could trigger the intervention of the OECD and say hey, what you are doing is not in the interest of our country, not us, and we could also see the demise.

So, while we could allow competition to kill the Programme, OECD could come and bury it afterwards, Mr. Speaker. And, that is why I am saying, Mr. Speaker, in going forward, we have to take a very cautious approach. We cannot put too many of our eggs in one basket. We cannot rely too heavily, on the foundation based on CBI to build our country. We have to look at how we could diversify. But, at the same time, Mr. Speaker, let us take advantage of the Programme while it last. But, unfortunately, I think the Region is taking the wrong approach in ensuring sustainability and viability of the CBI Programme. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. Patrick West. Honourable Representative for the Town of St. George.

**Hon. Peter David:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by following my colleagues in wishing all women, the women in the Parliament and women in Grenada and women throughout the world, who have played such a significant part in our development, happy International Women's Day. It's an

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extremely important day for them and I wish them well, not only for today, but in their continued strive to develop this country.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Artistes, who participated in Trinidad and made our country very proud. The last couple of weeks were good weeks for Grenada, Mr. Speaker, the Trinidad experience with our guys, the Cricket and the Debating Team. They all have done us proud. And, while I feel good to be a Grenadian every day, these last couple of weeks, I was very proud, and traveling with the Prime Minister, regionally, to the Heads of Government Meeting and seeing the respect he gets and we get, as a result of that, I am, again, just reenergised to struggle for this lovely little rock we call Grenada.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Bill before us and the amendments proposed, first of all let me agree with something that my friend, Honourable Anthony Boatswain said, the MP for St. Patrick West, that we need a CARICOM approach, and I think there was an attempt at that some years ago. There was a Committee set up and there is, but as with everything CARICOM, it is difficult, with everything CARICOM. Integration and cooperation is not easy, but not only in CARICOM, with the OECS, with the EU, with all International Organizations, the UN, Mr. Speaker, there is always a difficulty in getting a coordinated approach.

I want to first agree with you, MP for St. Patrick-West that it would be great, if we had full cooperation among us. But, it is not always possible, because as you indicated, you agree on something and then you switch on the radio tomorrow and you hear something different. It happens all the time, and I am sure the Prime Minister, being the most experienced among us, with regional integration, will, no doubt, attest to that. So, I want to start by agreeing with you.

I also want to agree with your analysis, as to where we are, with respect to development, because the truth is that the options left to the Caribbean are not many. As you said, we have lost preferential treatment, then we went to Offshore, they smashed that and now that we are lucky to have CBI, every week is something else, not only CBI, but with all of our development initiatives. We hear blacklisting, and some

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people out there think blacklisting means that we are doing something bad. It doesn't mean that. It means that somebody figured we are doing something that's good for us, they don't like it, want to keep us totally dependent, and, therefore, blacklist us. All that means is that they say they don't like something we do. Blacklisting does not mean that we are doing something bad. That is why, at the CARICOM level, that is a big issue. It is a big issue that our initiatives to the EU and the OECD, and the Prime Minister can speak more about that, that we have been fighting this attempt by them to stifle us and to keep us totally dependent. So, I agree with you on that also MP, that we have to find ways to develop and more and more it is becoming difficult. The fact is, you said that us doing this will cause them to try to shut it down, no. Why they try to shut it down is because it is causing us to develop, and it is causing us to be more independent, so I don't think they need any additional incentives. Of course, they can find excuses, where I agree with you, that if we can provide them with justifications we should not do that. And, I will come to some of those issues, momentarily, but, certainly, we have to ensure that our CBI Programme both evolves, but as you correctly state that we try to pre-exhibit.

I don't agree with you when you say that it may cease to exist. The US has a CBI Programme, and I am sure everybody is aware of that. Canada has a CBI Programme. Malta has a CBI Programme. The St. Kitts CBI Programme has been in existence for the last twenty-five (25) years, so the rumours of its demise have always been there. I believe that if we do it properly, then it can be sustained; that I agree with you, but I do not believe it's an inevitability that it will cease. I used to be a skeptic, and I say it all the time, of the Programme until I went out there and got a clear understanding of what the Programme is about. So, I don't want to go into those details, but I don't agree that it is inevitably going to be shut down. I believe we have to do everything to preserve it.

Now, where are we in Grenada? I just want to go through something else. I agree we should not have that race to the bottom, and that would come by a more coordinated approach. The question of the proof of dependency of somebody being

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dependent, let me explain something that I was not aware of, that when we do Due Diligence, men don't get on a computer and check to see what somebody is. They do that, but in addition to that, you have men on the ground. There are some Due Diligence, and I will speak to that in a minute. But, we have, Grenada has one of the most rigorous Due Diligence Programmes, **(applause)** and that includes people who knock the people's door, who applied to be Grenadian Citizens. It's not just a matter of you pick up the phone and you call. They actually go to see; so, if somebody says their grandparent is living in a house, they are going to go check it, physically check and make sure they are there. If they say they are not working, they will check it. If they say they are not in school, they will check it. If they say they are in school, they will check it. So, in other words, the point I am making is that Due Diligence will ensure that we do all of that.

With respect to Asset Disposal, listen, we live in a Private Sector driven economy. You agree with that, we all agree with that. It is extremely difficult to restrict somebody in perpetuity in disposing of their assets. So, I agree with you on the three (3) year issue. It is something we can discuss, and I am sure that is something we can agree to on the time that the five (5) year period may be a more reasonable period, MP for St. Patrick. So I am prepared, if the mover and others are prepared to adjust that. I was not around when the three (3) year was agreed upon, but I, certainly, have no objection, in principle in making it five (5) years. But, you raised a point also, about the competitive nature of the business. So, while I agree with you that we should not compete to the bottom, the reality is, that if in other jurisdictions there is an ability to resale, us not reselling will affect it. And, if we are doing the CBI Programme, we have to do it in a way that it is sustainable; and why?

First of all, we know the importance of CBI to our economy. The Prime Minister will tell you both Section 10 and Section 11. Section 10 brings us monies needed for our Transformation Fund to do projects. I have argued and I continue to argue that we should use our Transformation Fund to do some very transformative projects. And, I am pleased to announce that the Cabinet has been intensely discussing

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transformational projects that we can use the Fund for; transformation projects in IT, transformation projects for Youth Development. The CBI Programme is extremely important for that and the Prime Minister has been pushing us to do that.

I believe, for example, and I am going to try to sell my project, that a project like the Public Library, will be a good project to be financed by the CBI Transformation Fund, because it's important, plus it will let the people know the importance of the Programme by doing something that has visible impact on our people.

I attended yesterday, an opening of a small Library in my Constituency, at the Methodist School, and one of the points that was made was that: ***"Listen, we have to open all these Libraries in the schools."*** And, I want to commend people like Leo Carbert and so on, who are involved in it and the teachers at the school. And, they were saying it's important to have these small Libraries, because we don't have a National Library. I think we need to do something about that, and the Transformation Fund is something that we can certainly look to. So, I agree that the transformation fund is important.

Secondly, you talked about Section 11. Section 11 is important for the projects. So, I just say this briefly to say the CBI is extremely important for our economic development, and we have to keep evolving. We have to find best practices; because it's so important, we cannot be static in our approach to CBI. And, that is why the Member for St. David was making these recommendations for amendment. You know, some people have genuine concerns, like yourself, but there are other persons, who are intent on destroying the Programme. So, we have to distinguish between those two (2) people. We have to balance it. Others are just intent on destroying the Programme, but others have serious concerns, and the biggest concern that I have found is Due Diligence; Due Diligence, to ensure that the people we are getting are worthy of becoming Grenadian citizens.

In fact, our Prime Minister has been so focused on Due Diligence that sometimes he is accused of being too rigid on Due Diligence. If there are doubts, leave out, is the mantra I have heard from him. Any person that we are doubtful about,

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we should leave them out. And, the reason for that is because we have a history, and we understand the dangers of being lax with Due Diligence. So, that is why there has been no compromising on the basis of Due Diligence, and Due Diligence is not just done by one Entity. It is done by several Entities and we take on board all of the concerns of all Entities. As I said the Prime Minister has been accused of being too rigid, but that is something that he has not, ever, indicated a willingness to compromise on.

Mr. Speaker, we have to continue to review it. We have to continue to evolve it. We have to continue to make CBI such that we can ensure that the best people come. But, there is another aspect to CBI that we need to address, which is the persons who are becoming citizens of this country. We can engage them. You know, there are persons now in the application process, who are extremely important people in this world, who are very much high networked, very important, in terms of tech development. When they become a citizen, I can see us engaging them to do things in Grenada. So, if we have a list of CBI citizens, we should ensure that we go through the list and engage these people, not just say to them, here, we collect the money and you become a citizen, no. We collect the money, you become a citizen; let us talk about how you can help us develop Education. Let us talk about how you can help us develop Healthcare. Let us talk about how you can help us develop Tourism.

In other words, the new citizens of this country should be engaged to be participants, not only through Section 11, by way of developing the Tourism Industry and the Agricultural Industry and the Healthcare Industry, but by way of them, as citizens personally getting involved in developing this country. I think we need to embrace the Programme, not treat it, as if we are just doing something to collect money. No. You know, many other persons become citizens because they are ancestral links, because they get married to somebody, because they stayed here two (2) or three (3) years. Their Due Diligence process is much less than the Due Diligence process we have for CBI. So, I am saying today, I am sorry for sounding passionate. It is because new converts are always passionate, and I am a new convert, because I

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had skepticisms. And, I believe, that if we embrace it and use it to develop this country, we can have both an increase in our citizens, who are good citizens, participants in our country, contributing to our development, and at the same time get some investments, so that our Tourism.. In this year, I suspect we will have some new projects coming on stream through CBI. All of these things I am passionate about, because they all...

And, while I recognise and accept what the Member for St. Patrick West said, because we have to be careful. We have to not race to the bottom. I hope that our Caribbean partners work with us to make sure that we do not have a race to the bottom. But, in the absence of that, I can assure you, from what I have seen in engaging, so far, that nothing that I see has been done in this CBI Programme in Grenada, will follow anybody to the bottom. We would do everything to ensure that we are not pulled in that direction. And, while we recognise the competitive nature of the industry, we would not allow competition to cause us to destroy something that is so important. So, I recognise your concerns. I accept on the five (5) year issue. I accept that that is something I am prepared to consider, provided other Members are so thinking. But, certainly, Mr. Speaker, I want to support these amendments, and to encourage all of us, not only us sitting here, but all of us in our country, to see the virtues of this Programme, not only listen to those naysayers, some, who are genuinely concerned, but many of them, who just want to not see our country develop. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**.

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

**Dr. the Hon Keith Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, I stand to support the Bill, as presented by my colleague. I just of course also, like my other colleagues, just to recognise our women on Women's Day, and, of course, the importance of this and its significance for our country and for women, period, regionally and internationally.

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And, of course, the success of our Cultural Artistes and the celebrations that is being planned for tomorrow to formally recognise them. I think we have already spoken; I have already made public statement to that effect already, and to compliment the Ministry of Culture. In fact, they have said that the Ministry of Culture has been so proactive in supporting them, they are so pleased. They made announcement like that in Trinidad, that the Government, through the Ministry of Culture, has given them enormous support.

Mr. Speaker, in commenting on this, I do want to make the point that the Member for St. Patrick West is almost speaking like myself, in the sense of my own position on CBI and what is taking place, because I think, he understands, as someone, who sat on 'This Side', as a Member of the Government and as Cabinet Member, he understands what the Government is doing, and he made the point. He also is making statements to the effect of some of the things that are happening that we have to be very careful with and I certainly agree with him.

To my colleague, to just make the point, that we, unlike, maybe some others, and I hope, maybe, I am wrong, do not depend on CBI for the success of this country's activities. It is an approach in an additional method of helping our development and some of the things we want to do. But, we do not depend on CBI for the successes that we are enjoying right now. We are seeing the serious development in the Tourism Sector. We have seen the investment climate in this country; it has been better than it has ever been. And, the people that are coming here to invest in a number of projects that we are seeing coming, and more and more we are seeing it. In fact, the problem we have is how do we keep up with the demand for skills? In fact, that is the next task in our discussion with the US Under-Secretary this morning, when she asked about 'what are the major challenges we have'. And, I think that is one of the major challenges. How do we, at the same time, get these investments and at the same time deal with unemployment through the available lack of skills that are now in the country. And, in other words, how do we empower our people to take advantage of the



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opportunities coming. So, we are fortunate. We are seeing investments that we have never seen before.

That project, the Cane Production in St. Andrew, the Rum Production activities, where there is over twenty-five/thirty million US dollars investment, is transforming the rural economy, and we are not producing rum for Grenada. We have enough alcohol here, we don't want anymore. So, it's all export, and it's a special rum that's why they bring in special sugar cane. They told us they went all around the world, looking for the land that was ideal for that production, for that quality product that they are trying to get. And, Grenada, after years of searching in North America, Europe and the Caribbean, they settled on Grenada, and that section of Grenada and fortunately so. God is smiling on us, you know, because if I had to tell them where to go, without them finding this, I would tell them go to St. Andrew, or St. Patrick for that development, because we want to see the rural economy given the kind of lift that this project is, certainly, doing.

And, you will be amazed. I mean the Representative for St. Andrew North-East is smiling every day. This has made her job in St. Andrew, as a Representative, much easier, because of the amount of activities that are now taking place. It is well known, historically, that the Pearls Estate has been a major source of income, thirty/forty years ago. But, with the demise of the Estate, unemployment, in those areas, skyrocketed. And, I would never be able to forget, one time in 1986 / '87, when I was Minister for Works, going to Pearls at around 11:00 o'clock, being invited by some of my political colleagues there to come to see the problem in the area, and at 10:00 o'clock in the day, Mr. Speaker, over one hundred and fifty (150) people were there, waiting to see me. That meant they weren't working, and when I ask why you all guys are here, they said there is no employment. And, of course, there were hardly any roads at the time there. So, you go in some of those areas now and you can't see young people, in the midday now in those areas, because people are working, and with this additional project, you are seeing the impact of this Project in that portion of the country.

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So, in effect, I am making the point whether it is Manufacturing, whether it is Tourism, whether it is Educational Service and services, in general, we should be very happy and proud of what is taking place in our country. And, the only problem that we have now is the problem that we have in the School System and in the Education System with the so called 'Work to Rule.' That is the only negative that is existing now, and that's why it is important for us to get that out of the way, and that's why I spoke this morning, about the necessity for us to stop seeing who win and who loose. Nobody is winning right now, and when it's solved, everybody is winning. And, I think that is precisely what we want. So, I totally agree with the Member of St. Patrick West that we have to be careful. But, I am making the point that we are not depending on CBI, that's why we don't have to compromise.

The Member made the point, the next thing you hear that they want to compromise the security. Well, they will be alone and we won't get business before we compromise on security. Because to compromise on security, Mr. Speaker, is pennywise, pound foolish, because you compromise on security, you have to be right on everyone that comes; just one bad one comes through, we're dead, you know. So, we can't compromise. Who wants to go and compromise...

The only unfortunate thing, as I always tell my colleagues, colleagues, what worries me is that if Grenada does something foolish and cause a major problem in security in Grenada, they don't say Grenada, you know, the Caribbean. So, I am concerned when any of my colleagues do anything that appears to be lax and cause us to have problems, all of us get washed with the same brush, and that is it. We can't compromise, and I keep telling our colleagues.

I remember, sometime ago, when we had the CPA meeting here, and there was this concern that some of us were not going through JRCC with our applicants that we are approving. And, I told my colleagues that concern me, and everybody was saying... Grenada saying it's not me, Dominica saying not me, St. Lucia saying... St. Vincent. I said, well, colleagues, and therefore they don't agree. I said, but colleagues, if outside there, there are rumours that some of us are doing it, and each of

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us saying it's not true, and we are not doing anything about it, we still have a problem, because, you know, perception is reality.

So, I got them to agree, let us debunk the thing. If none of us is doing it, then get an independent body, because JRCC will not release the information on anyone of us that is misbehaving, unless we give them authority, because they could be sued. So, I said all of us must just give JRCC, officially now, to tell us, privately, which one of us misbehaving. And, therefore, we agreed with the Governor of the Central Bank and the OECS Director-General, who will, in fact, communicate and co-ordinate with JRCC to find out exactly. And, we did find out information and that, of course, is being dealt with. But, the point I am making is, we will not compromise, my colleague and Member for St. Patrick West, we cannot, because all of us will be in serious problems.

I just want to also make the point, and I think the Member for the Town of St. George made the point, the fact is, historically, monies around the world went in one direction. And, when you are big, you are bad, that's reality, when you are big, you are bad, you know, that's the kind of world... In fact, it's worst today than it was ten (10) years ago, and we know why this is the case. So, the whole point is, we are supposed to be almost little beggars, and even when you beg, you're not getting. So, what are we supposed to do? And, if we don't have opportunities, and if our people are not benefiting, we are going to have security problems. We are going to have social problems, which, in fact, in the end will affect us.

And, the trend these days, Mr. Speaker, is we don't want people in our country. If we notice the world, not just in America, you know, all over. There are more rightwing institutions emerging around the world, and what is it? It is about immigration, keep them out. Who they want to keep out? **(Laughter)** You know who they want to keep out, because they're saying let us promote more people coming from certain parts of the world, but they don't want people like us to come to certain places. So, in effect we are saying, you don't want us to come to you. You don't want us to try to get some money in our country. You're doing everything to stop us from empowering ourselves and educating our people, you're not helping us financially, the Aid packages

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are gone. We cannot produce anything and compete with you, because our economy of scale would prevent us from competing with bananas and all these stuff like that, this is why it went through. So, what are we supposed to do, just lie down and die? It's not going to happen that way. What is going to happen is that we are going to have more Drug Dealers, more of all kinds of stuff in the Region, and in the end, where are the drugs going? Mr. Speaker, this is not a major area of consumption for drugs. It is North America and Europe. So, they are going to feel the pain of what their policies of not allowing us to have some serious opportunities, as far as our country, economically, is concerned.

So clearly, and, I think it was well presented by the Member for St. David, who made the point of what we are trying to do. I don't like the idea that we have to increase the dependents, because, to me, if we didn't do it and the dependents want to come, they have to pay us the big fee; in other words, it is not ideal. But, what would we do, if others have done it? So, it seems that we have to make sure the dependents do not become a security problem, so our security will be in check. In any event, we are still getting something from them, additional fees, although we are not getting the major amounts that we expect to get.

And, just like in the case of the investments, all these things are meant to be competitive. That is why I agree with the Member for St. Patrick West, if we didn't have the problem and others were not doing it, we certainly would not have to do what we are doing. But, I think it is clear that, as far as our country is concerned, that we will not compromise on the whole question of security, no matter what, because in the final analysis, as I pointed out, we will face serious consequences if we allow one person to become a serious issue for us.

But, I do make the point, and maybe I am between my colleague for St. Patrick West and St. David, in that sense, but I do agree, we may not see CBI lasting for a long time, but while it last, let we take what we get. Right? **(Laughter)**. So, in a sense, the Member for St. George Town know we have had debates on this, so I

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understand where my friend from St. Patrick West is coming from, and I understand the Member for the Town of St. George.

So, Mr. Speaker, let's get what we can get and let us empower our young people, use it to create Training Centers in St. Andrew in what they are trying to do there now, to train young people in Carpentry and other areas and the Hospitality Arts, for the Hotel Projects coming, so that they won't have to bring in people from outside. Train people to become farmers; the young farmers in the country show them how Agriculture can now bring a good life for them, not just people like my father, who struggled to earn a living by the Agricultural activities, but give them the tools, help them financially, get idle lands available, Governments Estates. Let them get irrigation, so they could produce all year round; work with the Business Community, the Hotels, the Supermarkets, so that the markets there... So, a guy come today, he sell a pound of tomato for seven dollars (\$7.00), tomorrow, because of a flood in the market, he gets two dollars (\$2.00) a pound. I just heard that recently, because we buy tomatoes at my place.

But, just a few months ago, it was six/seven dollars a pound. And, I was down at Tanteen, playing Cricket with the boys, and one of the boys who came there, he is a farmer and he had a whole big basket of pretty, pretty tomatoes, he said, well he bring it to sell. So, I said well I would buy some, and I took out twenty dollars (\$20.00) and gave the man. The man gave me a whole big pile of tomatoes. So, I said what you mean, I mean, I didn't ask you for anything free. He said I am selling it at two dollars (\$2.00) a pound. Now, how... he can't survive. No, it's just not fair. So, we have to make sure, if we want our young people to get involved, they see the businessman earning a nice living, where he can send his children to the best schools. They see people in different professions, the Public Servants buying vehicles, they are having a better life, they are building decent homes; they want that, too. So, you think they are just going to go into Agriculture, because they like to see how those plants grow? No, they want a good life. And, therefore, we have to show them and we have to invest in showing them how we can build a more solid life by investment activities. **(Applause).**

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So, I am supporting as I said. I think we had excellent presentation from the Member who presented the bill, from St. David, the contribution made by my friend and colleague in St. Patrick West and, of course, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Member for the Town of St. George. Mr. Speaker, let us take what we get to protect our country. Thank you. **(Applause).**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister. Honourable Parliamentary Representative for St. David.

**Hon. Oliver Joseph:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me thank all my colleagues for their contribution. I am sure this is something that we could speak on a lot more, about the benefits and the threats to it. But, focusing directly on the amendments that we brought here today, let me say that I am very happy that we have not come with amendments that will reduce the price. As the Member said it would be a race to the bottom, because there are countries that are one hundred thousand US dollars (US\$100,000.00), and we are saying we are not going further, we are sticking to two hundred thousand (200,000.00) for the National Transformational Fund, so we are not competing on price with the other Member States, and, therefore, we must have a Programme that offers other benefits.

These amendments are meant to enhance the Programme, overall, without reducing the price, so I thought I need to make that... If you look at the price for a sibling, that has increased, we are increasing it. We are saying, we have a Programme that is well-run, well-managed and we are increasing the price now for siblings for application from twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00) to seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000.00), and we are leaving our National Transformational Fund at two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000.00) and Approved Projects at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$350,000.00) and we have made it clear that we will not be competing on prices.

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The one issue, though, that I must clear up. The Member for St. Patrick West talked about the Residency Requirement. There is no Residency Requirement, you know. There is no Residency Requirement in the Act. There is no Residency Requirement in the Amendment. What it says is if you invest under Section (10), you would be given permanent residence and within twelve (12) months, you can apply for citizenship. That is not a requirement for you to reside in Grenada. It does not say that. There is nowhere in the Act that Residency Requirement means you are expected to reside in Grenada for a certain period of time. But, that is not the case. We do not have it here. So, I just thought I need to clarify that. This is not a Residency Requirement.

But, I take the contribution from all; the Member for the Town of St. George, St. Patrick West, the Prime Minister, who made very good and valuable contributions. It is a Programme that we need to always keep focused on and understanding what is going on in the International Community. And, as the Prime Minister said, we are different, in that we are not budgeting as Recurrent Expenditure; we are taking it out of Recurrent Expenditure that will go into a Special Fund, the Transformational Fund to do transformational projects, so in case if there is any fall out, it will not affect our Recurrent Budget. So, Mr. Speaker, I, therefore commit the bill to its second reading. **(Applause).**

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Representative for St. David.

**Hon. Oliver Joseph:** 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 put and agreed to.**

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**House in Committee.**

**House resumes.**

**Mr. Speaker:** I have to report that this Bill was considered by a Committee of the Whole House and passed with amendment. Honourable Representative for St. David.

**Hon. Oliver Joseph:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Representative for St. David.

**Hon. Oliver Joseph:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a third time and passed as amended.**

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

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority Treaty (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

**Ag. Clerk:** An Act to amend the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority Treaty Act, Cap. 85C shortly entitled, Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority Treaty (Amendment) Act, 2019.



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**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Minister and Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the House be suspended in order to take the Bill through all its stages at this Sitting.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Minister and Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

**Question proposed.**

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

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a brief background, the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority Treaty that brought ECTEL into being was debated way back in the end of the last Century and eventually passed into Law in 2000, Mr. Speaker. At that time, the technology, not that it was unknown, but the relevant Legislations in the various underdeveloped countries did not provide for the advancements made.

For example, Mr. Speaker, at that point in time, there was voice and, Mr. Speaker, I remember that you were there and participated, significantly. There was voice and there was data. There were other electronic means and you had one bit of equipment, doing voice and another bit of equipment doing data and another bit of equipment doing other magnetic things. We, in the undeveloped part of the world,

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that's how we operated. Of course, when you have the official bodies in the developed countries, they knew this and they had their technology to do one thing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you hear about Voice, right, Over the Internet Protocol (VOIP) etcetera, they knew that a long time ago. It was not just in the commercial domain. This was in the backrooms of the official security and Intelligent Agencies of the world. So, we passed Legislations, Mr. Speaker, and we spoke about telecommunications. At this point, what are we facing? We are facing both legal battles. What is telecommunication? And, you hear people talking about all the monies in Voice is gone, because they used all over the Talk. We have WhatsApp. We have everything. Voice is going on the same thing, as data, transmitting from one to the other. And, what we have to do now, Mr. Speaker, is to upgrade.

But, in order to change the Telecommunications Act, in order to change the Bill, or even the Treaty, we must go through a procedure, that procedure, all the Heads must sign on behalf of the countries and then the Parliament must put it into Legislation. So, what we are asking here today, Mr. Speaker, is to put this amendment, with the Protocol already signed by the Heads of Government, otherwise this Bill cannot come to Parliament, because we are just giving effect to the Protocol already signed.

And, Mr. Speaker, the crux of the matter is Telecommunications versus Electronic Telecommunications, and that is the crux of it. So, if we look at the amendment, Mr. Speaker, you look at the definition, wherever we had 'telecommunications' there, we want to change the note to 'electronic telecommunications'. We are giving an idea of what electronic communications would mean now. And, in doing this, we have to try to capture what is going to come in the next twenty (20) years, and to do that, you must be in the field, because they know and the telecommunications providers they know, because they are into research. They know what is going to come into the field, and then they are going to beat us in the regulatory process, because we cannot regulate something that we did not provide for.

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And, electronic telecommunications means a type of transmission, emission, or reception. So, some people might say, well, what is emission? We are capturing something here, in a broad spectrum, so that when they come up, ten/fifteen years from there, it can fit into this emission; visual images, moving images, pictures, pulses, signals or other information. So, you capture those things, because it is coming, you know. The technology is evolving so fast, that, sometimes, not even the providers could keep up with it. Equipment Manufacturers, they make things, but what is happening now? Can FLOW, or anybody prevent certain people from seeing certain things? That is the technology. You might say, well, that's their business, but when it comes to regulating, we have not provided for regulating certain things, Mr. Speaker. Things could go on and we don't know about it, and we only sit back there. We know the mistakes we have made in the past, so we want to capture something in the future. So, we ask the Learned Members, where can these things fall? So, both from the Legal standpoint and the technological people, we came up with this, Mr. Speaker.

And, we say, telecommunications mean a combination. But, formerly, we said this or that or that, but now we are saying it is a combination of these things could work. It is not only voice alone. It is not only data, it would be voice, data and the pictures and everything that you are see, and the pulses, some things must work over magnetic means. So, once it is transferred by that, it is captured in this. So, we don't know what it is yet, but it is going to come, Mr. Speaker. It could use wire, radio frequency, optical, other magnetic means by any other technology. Any other technology, Mr. Speaker, coming to light, would be captured there, and we'll be able then to regulate it.

Electronic Communications Equipment Manufacturer, so they fall within the same boat. Once you make equipment that could serve within this framework, then you cannot tell yourself I am not an EC Manufacturer, an Electronic Communications man. An Electronic Communications Network; once you are doing something along these lines you are there. Right now, we have telecommunications and providers are saying that is not telecommunications. You can regulate telecommunications, but you

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cannot regulate that, because it is not telecommunications. So, that is the crux, Mr. Speaker.

The other bit is licence; licence issued by ECTEL, they will make the application to the various countries, the Member States of ECTEL and the country will send it on to ECTEL, Mr. Speaker. We have the Class licence, the individual licence, that's the bigger players. So, the gist of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, if you will see it, by deleting the word 'Telecommunications' and replacing it with 'electronic communications'; by deleting 'Telecommunications' where it is; by deleting 'Telecommunications'...; if you look at it, Mr. Speaker, that is the gist of the Bill, because it is at the heart of the problem, Mr. Speaker.

Article (11) of the Treaty, at the contracting States, deals with another aspect. When you make an application, it should be made to the States and the States must send it to ECTEL for its analysis and approval. So, if ECTEL says 'no' it is 'no'.

Another component is deleting the words 'universal service', and 'universal service' is where you don't have lines, then they'll bring the lines to you; they will bring the service to you. And, the providers must contribute into a Fund called the Universal Service Fund. But, what we have found now is that a lot of people, a lot of schools, they're asking for access to magnetic electronic communication. You could do this with lines, or without lines. Most of it involves equipment, computers and so forth, but that was not the intention of universal access when the Member States signed it, so we have to change now, the definition of universal access and so, Mr. Speaker.

And, the wordings now, instead of 'universal service', it is 'universal service and access', so the Fund could now be used. And, the Fund has been used many years for the purpose of access, but it was not in the business. And, the problem is, Mr. Speaker, is who provides the funds. The providers, that is FLOW, LIME, DIGICEL, they must put out 1%, 1½% of their revenues into this Fund. But, then they alone could now bid for the job in doing this, and the job in doing that is to bring telecommunication lines. But, what we want to say now is the Fund could also be used for EC electronic communications. So, you don't have to run lines, it could be a building where you have

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computers and other equipment in it, so we could now use their monies and their contribution for that. So, it is important to amend this, Mr. Speaker.

And, finally, Mr. Speaker, by deleting the word 'may' where it appears and substituting the word 'shall'. You know, ECTEL could sit as an Arbitration panel, but they had 'may', so the people don't want to go to them. They could go to the big Courts and spend millions of dollars and force them to defend before the Court. But, now, you must and you must go to ECTEL, and ECTEL cannot be something like mediation; that's what they could only do before, mediate; now, they can give you a resolution. They could resolve the matter. So, after you engage with their time, you still go Court, anyway, but they are given the full powers now under the Treaty, Mr. Speaker and refer the providers... If you have a problem LIME and DIGICEL having a problem, then, instead of going to Court, they shall refer the matter to ECTEL and ECTEL will conduct the arbitration. Whether ECTEL would want four/five Learned Judges to sit with them and so, but they would now have the final say. So, right now they were just marginalised.

When we listen, Mr. Speaker, to the United States of America and the Telecommunications Company, first, you hear how much money they would charge them. They themselves are charging the Companies billions and they themselves resolve it. Maybe, under the Constitutional Motion, if you want to take that and go to the High Court or the Supreme Court, you may do that. But, the Supreme Court will call and rely on the Experts that are within that Regulatory Body, in any event. So, when they charge you, you simply pay; and when they make a Resolution, you simply do it.

One item we have, Mr. Speaker, since FLOW joined with LIME, and I mentioned it in this Honourable, they sued your humble servant and the other persons. We have resolved the matter, because it did not make sense, from either side, to continue, and we always want three (3) and more persons; so we don't want people leaving the field. If you leave the field and you have a duopoly as you have now, it is still not good, as a competitive environment with three and more. So, we have resolved that matter. But,

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they went to the Court. What they had to do under this Law is go to ECTEL. What they did is sued ECTEL, as well. Now, if you have an issue, even where you figure the Minister is not giving you something and it is not working well, resolve it. You go to ECTEL and ECTEL will set up an Arbitration Panel. It doesn't have to be the members of ECTEL, you get Learned people to resolve the issue, so it is all of these things.

And, it is used, Mr. Speaker, as a weapon in delaying this and delaying that, because I could take you to Court and I could do this and that. The United States found that out, you know. When they were liberalising, the incumbents had the purse and they took all the new people to Court; busted them, financially, and so they remained in Office. So, we are upgrading ourselves in order to make sure that we can regulate, Mr. Speaker.

It is in this context, therefore, that I present this Bill to this Honourable House for its second reading. **(Applause).**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Minister. Honourable Representative for St. John.

**Hon. Alvin Da Breo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give support to this Bill, and to also give a little explanation on what some of these technical terms mean, because it is mostly technical.

As the Member for St. George South-East states that this Bill seeks to amend the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority Treaty and to incorporate the Protocol, amending the Treaty, establishing the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority. So, as you are aware, Mr. Speaker, the formation of ECTEL, this Body is one Body that regulates Telecommunications in the Eastern Caribbean.

The first amendment, Mr. Speaker, talks about deleting the word 'telecommunications' and replacing it with 'electronic telecommunications'. So, what 'telecommunications' means is that the word 'tele' means 'distant or far away'. So, if

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you want to communicate from a distance, or far away, then you use the word 'telecommunications'. But, if it is close by, you did not use the word, because right now I am speaking, and you are hearing me. So, this is not telecommunication, but it is communication. But, speaking through the mike, the people up there are hearing me through the glass and they are recording it, or they are sending it out live, this now would be electronic telecommunications, so there is a difference. You have from telecommunication, which means far away, or electronic, means that you are now communicating through the help of an electronic device, be it a microphone, or whatever other medium. So, that is what this change is for, Mr. Speaker.

I will just give you another couple examples, because the first days of communication, people used to communicate with smoke signals. They would send up a smoke signal, if the enemy is approaching, so you know to prepare, or they would be some big reflectors and they would reflect the light. So, it would depend on the number of reflections, you know what the message is, and those were also distant communication. If right now we were on a ship, or a little boat, and I am in distress, I would send out a flare, that is communicating, because I am communicating a distress signal to people on the shore, or on a next ship. But, that is not telecommunication, because I am not using the electronics, so it is not electronic telecommunication. So, this is the point that I am trying to make, is that the Providers of the Service, they use electronic telecommunications, or electronic devices to communicate and not just the other forms of communications that do not use those means.

The next definition here calls for frequency authorisation, by repealing the definition of 'frequency authorisation'. So what it's trying to say, Mr. Speaker, is what the frequency is, normally, if you are listening to a radio, you might different studios that are transmitting, and I am sitting at home and I could only listen to one at a time, because if I am listening to all the other Studios talking, it would not make any sense. So, what the frequency is, it's like pulse that makes sure that only one station comes to the speaker, so I could only listen to one at a time. So, although all of them are in the air, because they are on different frequencies, that's what makes it possible, so we

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could listen to only one or the same thing is with television, listen to only or watch only one television at the same time. Likewise, if I am on my cellular phone and my colleague is on the phone at the same time, the listener would only hear him or myself, and that is because, when we are speaking, the phone changes into a different frequency, so only that one frequency gets to the user; so that is why we do not have the interference, and that is what this Act is trying to do, to clarify what is frequency authorisation.

And, the other amendment calls for exchanging the definition of 'universal service' to 'universal service and access'. So, the key here is 'access', because the service could be available, but I can't access it. And, what the Fund does, the Fund was created to make sure that all the people that live in remote areas, where it is not economical for the Providers to build the network, they would use that Fund to build the network. So, although it is not profitable, because not much people live, everybody would have an equal opportunity, depending on where you live, to get the service.

I will give you an example, Mr. Speaker. In the early days of satellite, Canada launched ANIC 1, and they had their Canadian services, CBC radio and television. And, at that time, they had a choice, they could have collected a lot of revenues from the US market, which was close. But, the Canadian Government said, that they wanted to make sure that every Eskimo, living in the North of Canada, the Baffin Islands would know what was going on. So, it was not profitable, but they wanted to make sure that everybody had access to the communications, so the satellite was tilted to the North, so that everybody would have had access. So, that's the difference. So, the service might have been available on satellite, but if it was not tilted so that the signals would face them, they would not receive it. So, this definition, Mr. Chair, is changing it from universal service to universal service and access.

The next one, Mr. Speaker, I am coming down to the end, it calls for ECTEL being the only Body, or the final Body to make those decisions, because, before, the other States could have made that decision regarding telecommunications. So, what would have happened is that there might be a dispute in St. Vincent, on whatever issue



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and they make a ruling and Grenada might have to go with the same ruling, or make a different. Mr. Speaker, you might have a child and he plays the parent against the other. He might ask one parent for something, the parent says no, then he goes to the next parent, and that's how it could have been, and they were good at that. So, now with only ECTEL being the final Body to resolve those disputes, all the other countries would be singing out of the same hymn sheet, and they would not be able to go and play one Government against the other.

And, that happened recently, because when we had WhatsApp, other Caribbean countries, like Jamaica, they put a tax on termination of local calls, which means that if you call their country, (before, the other countries never used to get any money, you only got money on calls leaving the country), but Jamaica was getting on both ways. So, the Providers were trying now to get the Caribbean Telecommunications Union and other Bodies to lobby against what Jamaica did. And, they also lobbied Jamaica to stop Over-the-Top services like WhatsApp. So, Jamaica was siding with them, so that they would be able to terminate WhatsApp from the other countries, and that's where even ECTEL came in, because, at one time, WhatsApp was blocked, we couldn't use it. But, they stepped in and were able to force the providers to not block WhatsApp and other services that we take for granted like Skype, they don't like us using that, because if you have to set up a video conference, before they used to charge us a whole bunch of money, making it impossible. But, right now, we can all use Skype, so we could have a little meeting, a teleconference, at no cost. Well, there is cost, because you're paying for the Internet. And, that again, my colleague talked about, when they talked about they not making the revenues on the Voice, but when they got the license, it was not for Internet, it was for Voice, so Internet now is added gravy, because they still have the Voice, but they're making the money from the data, because, at this point in time, in most cases, the data cost is even higher than the Voice, so they are making money. So, what it is, is that we want to make sure that ECTEL is aware of all the games that they play, and we have one Body now that could look after this and make decisions for all of us together. So, it's better if we are

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doing it on a united front and this is what ECTEL plans to do through this Legislation and the amendments. So, Mr. Speaker, I support those amendments. Thank you. **(Applause).**

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, very much, Honourable Representative for St. John. Honourable Leader of Government's Business.

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member and my colleague for his contribution. And, simply to state, Mr. Speaker, that notwithstanding many things, no matter how much we try to regulate, competition is the key.

Mr. Speaker, we sat there, ECTEL, the highest organ of the Council of Ministers and watched the price fall, as we brought in new players on the scene, without sitting down. We have the authority, as you know, Mr. Speaker, to do things and to regulate the rates, but we just had to sit back, because once you have the competition down, down, down goes the price. As soon, as it flattens out at two, you're watching and you see things start to go back up. So, we must ensure that we have all the mechanisms, legal and otherwise for regulating the Sector. I, therefore, commend the Bill for its second reading.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

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

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

**Question put and agreed to.**

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**House in Committee.**

**House resumes.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable Members, I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the Whole House and passed without amendments.

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

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

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

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a third time and passed.**

**Clerk Assistant:** Item 16 - Request for Leave to move the Adjournment of the House on matters of Urgent Public Importance.

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

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**Adjournment**

**Hon. Gregory Bowen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move the adjournment of this Honourable House **sine die**.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. Speaker:** I would just like to make a statement on the Adjournment. I want to say thank you so much to our new Clerk of Parliament, **(applause)** and his Assistant for today. It appears, as though he was there a long time, so that is why I didn't mention him earlier. I did not forget. I just left it for last. Thank you, Mr. Clerk for a good job, and to our Legal minds, thank you.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**House adjourned sine die at 1:40 p.m.**

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