



GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Third Session of the Tenth Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, 08th November, 2019

Table of Contents

Attendance.....	3 – 4
Prayers	5
Motions	5 – 11
Adjournment.....	12

***Special Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held at the Parliament Chamber
On Friday, 8th November, 2019.***

Attendance

PRESENT

Honourable Michael Pierre, MBE, MP	- Mr. Speaker (In the Chair)
Honourable Gregory Bowen, MP (St. George South-East)	- Minister for Infrastructure Development, Public Utilities, Energy, Transport and Implementation
Honourable Peter David, MP (Town of St. George)	- Minister for Foreign Affairs and Labour
Honourable Yolande Bain-Horsford, MP (St. Andrew North-West)	- Minister for Agriculture and Lands
Honourable Oliver Joseph, MP (St. David)	- Minister for Trade, Industry, Co- operatives and CARICOM Affairs
Honourable Kate Lewis, MP (St. Andrew North-East)	- Minister wrf Youth Development
Honourable Pamela Moses (St. Patrick East)	- Minister wrf Tertiary Education, Skills Development and Education Outreach
Honourable Emmalin Pierre, MP (St. Andrew South-East)	- Minister for Education, Human Resource Development and Religious Affairs
Honourable Nickolas Steele, MP (St. George South)	- Minister for Health, Social Security and International Business
Honourable Delma Thomas, MP (St. Andrew North-West)	- Minister for Social Development, Housing and Community Empowerment
Honourable Anthony Boatswain, MP (St. Patrick West)	- Deputy Speaker

ABSENT

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 Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, MP (St. Mark)	- Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation
Honourable Alvin Da Breo, MP (St. John)	- Minister wrf Forestry and Fisheries

***Special Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held at the Parliament Chamber
On Friday, 8th November, 2019.***

Attendance

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

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

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

- Member

***Special Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held at the Parliament Chamber
On Friday, 8th November, 2019.***

***Prayers
Motions***

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

Sergeant-at-Arms: His Honour, the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Good morning, Honourable Members. 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: This Honourable House is now in Session.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item No. 3 - Motions.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

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

WHEREAS it is provided by section 3, subsection (2) of the Non-Biodegradable Waste Control Act No. 9 of 2018 (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") that the Minister may by Order, designate non-biodegradable products for the purposes of the Act;

AND WHEREAS it is provided in section 3 subsection (2) of the Act that before any such Order comes into effect, it shall be approved by the House of Representatives;

***Special Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held at the Parliament Chamber
On Friday, 8th November, 2019.***

Motions

AND WHEREAS it is now expedient that the Non-Biodegradable Waste Control Plastic Food Products Order, 2019 attached hereto as a Schedule be approved by the House of Representatives;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that pursuant to the provisions of section 3 subsection (2) of the Act that the Non-Biodegradable Waste Control Plastic Food Products Order 2019 be now approved by the House of Representatives.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, the purpose of this Act is to meet the prior condition, as stipulated by the International Community, our partners, as we move forward with the continued development of our country from the physical level and our Nation from the population level, Mr. Speaker.

And, it is prudent at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, to recognise our 2035 Year Plan. And, what is so striking about this Plan, Mr. Speaker, is that it has at its helm, foremost, to change the thinking of our people, Mr. Speaker. And, if we achieve this, we will be able to get from it all the physical developments that are necessary. And, as we look towards this particular Motion, Mr. Speaker, we see that we are inculcating the thinking of our people. Are plastics good for us? Should we get rid of all, or some of it, Mr. Speaker? And, we see how we are linking back to our 2035 Year Plan, changing the way we think. Were we far advanced in this, Mr. Speaker, then we would not have had to wait on the world to say that we would get rid of plastic. In other words, if we implement our 2035 Year Plan, we will be ahead of most of the world, even the Developed World. In fact, we will become developed, the most developed Nation, if we change our thinking. I want to repeat, the great tasks ahead of us are the beautiful vision that our 2035 Year Plan has given to us, Mr. Speaker.

***Special Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held at the Parliament Chamber
On Friday, 8th November, 2019.***

Motions

Mr. Speaker, some time ago we passed the Bill in 2018. The Non-Biodegradable Waste Control Act creates a mechanism to control the importation and sale of specified non-biodegradable products, prohibition of the importation and manufacture of products, the prohibition of sale and offer of sale of the products and prohibition of sale and after sale of food in or with the products. These three levels, Mr. Speaker, will be accomplished through Orders and at different stages, Mr. Speaker.

The first level: the prohibition of the importation and manufacture of the products will take effect on 1st March, 2020. The second level, prohibition of the sale and offer of sale of the products will take effect on 1st September, 2020, Mr. Speaker. And, the sale and offer of sale of food with, or in the products will take effect from 1st March, 2021, Mr. Speaker. This is important and these dates came about from discussions with all the stakeholders, the consumers, the importers; well, I don't think we have producers of such products in Grenada, Mr. Speaker. But, importantly, Mr. Speaker, the question was asked, the single use plastics that we ban through the Act and we are now putting the effective dates on it. What happens, or what will be the position if you have straws attached to products that come into the country. In other words, we see the nice food box, they may be quite healthy, but attached to this is the straw. Do we get the box at the Customs, remove the straw, destroying the product, or what do we do?

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, and that is why it is good, when we are doing and passing Legislations that we should look at all possibilities, Mr. Speaker. Our Act says, Section 6 (2) of the Act, it says: "It will be a defense...", if this straw was prepackaged before it reaches the consumer, or before it reaches the importer. So the public must not be worried about straws although it is a single use product. Although in our new thinking we do not like it and it should not be here, but for the time being until we amend the Act, that when this is attached to a product, a box of juice, or something like that, then it is allowed, Mr. Speaker, and the band will not pertain to it. But, we wait on the environment, Mr. Speaker. Sometime, in the future, based on our advanced thinking, we may decide that this is not good for us. I mention this, Mr. Speaker, because there are some products now that face certain

***Special Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held at the Parliament Chamber
On Friday, 8th November, 2019.***

Motions

problems not only in Grenada, because of the classification because there are plastic.

Some of them might be biodegradable to various degrees and we may decide, as it was said here, when the Bill was being proposed some of them will take twenty (20) years. Are they biodegradable? Maybe, but those that would take sixty (60) years; should we classify them as biodegradable? Yes, they will go, but perhaps we should start to classify things now with respect to the time in which they can get themselves within our system, within the earth and really be not a problem to mankind. But, we do have products that are coming into the country now, that can be deemed biodegradable, but which are trapped within this Act, and we know that importers, producers and suppliers are having serious difficulties with the fact that not only in Grenada but throughout the Region, and perhaps the world, they are being banned. And, we look forward, Mr. Speaker, to our Ministry and the environment really leading on this and giving us, Mr. Speaker, the way to go forward and to deal with it.

So, Mr. Speaker, this Oder, as indicated in the Resolution, we must have the support of the House of Representatives and we are here today. And, I repeat, Mr. Speaker, it is a condition precedent to receiving the second tranche of the IDA soft loan to us, it's .75%, forty (40) years, ten (10) years grace, and this is how we believe that if we finance most of our projects in Grenada, with this type of loans that is very close to a grant, then we will be doing our Ministry of Finance and our finances of the country great good, because we must also look at our Debt to GDP Ratio, and if we use this sort of loans, we will be able to have a higher Debt to GDP Ratio. We will be able to manage a higher Debt to GDP Ratio than if we get something of a much more stringent condition, Mr. Speaker. So, I recommend the passage of this Resolution to this Honourable House.

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

Hon. Oliver Joseph: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Resolution and to point out, Mr. Speaker, that when the Act was

***Special Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held at the Parliament Chamber
On Friday, 8th November, 2019.***

Motions

passed, the SRO was published in SRO 19 of 2018, to ban plastic bags and styrofoam. So, these dates that the presenter outlined, the 1st of March, 2020, 1st of September, 2020, part of the Act already commenced in 2018. From the 1st of September, 2018, we had, with respect to plastic shopping bags, from 1st of February, 2019; with respect to Styrofoam, from 1st of September, 2018, and now we are moving with the other parts, first, the prohibition of importation and manufacture, from the 1st of March, 2020. So, these are transitional periods, because you have wholesalers and distributors, who already have stockpiled these things, and, therefore we need to give them the transitional period.

Not many countries take this approach, Mr. Speaker. They put the ban, because their fear was, if they had the transitional period, as the Leader of Government's Business mentioned to 1st March, 2021, which is the third level, the feeling is that between now and then there will be no incentive to change until the time is closer, because they have until the 1st of March, 2021, and, therefore, they will continue to use it.

In some countries, they have decided, no, the transition period will be just the stock that you have now, like we did, when we said from the 1st of September, with the plastic shopping bags. So, the Act was passed, and we said only what you have in stock. But, for the others that are here now, that we are giving the transitional period, the last period will be March, 2021.

However, I want to appeal to the business community, if they could, to make the switch before that period, because, you see, you need to source the right type as a replacement. You need to get your costing right and at the same time the Government is also looking at measures to reduce the cost of the imports of these products, so that it would not be too expensive. The replacement one would not be so expensive; so the Government is considering that also and putting it in effect. So, these transitional measures that we have here today for the dates for importation manufacturer to offer for sale and so on are in the Law and the Resolution is placing the timeframe for the transitional. But, just to remind the public that already in place is the ban on Styrofoam and the ban on plastic shopping bags. So, I just thought I should make that point while I support the Resolution.

***Special Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held at the Parliament Chamber
On Friday, 8th November, 2019.***

Motions

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Representative for St. David.
Honourable Representative for St. George South.

Hon. Nickolas Steele: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give full support to this Bill and to say that while I give this support, I look forward to the next stages. This will be seen as stage two (2) that we have brought here. But, in order to maintain the momentum and the Pure Grenada that we have, I look forward to the next stage and to also commend the Ministry and the stakeholders that they have had that dialogue, those conversations to make sure that these processes are as smooth as possible for all involved, to make sure that in particular, the Private Sector importers and users of the products see as little as possible disruption and or increase in price.

Even the Government itself has gone out of its way to make sure of that for the purpose of import duties and taxes or so, wherever necessary. So, Mr. Speaker, I look forward too, as I point out again this wonderful glass recyclable bottle containing water is the next step of conversations to have with our various producers here on Island to see that in the not too distant future we can also get to that point with minimum disruption to them, as well, in order to maintain this Pure Grenada that we have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

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

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleagues for their valuable contribution with the presentation of this Motion, and they have added latitude and explanation and remind us from whence we came, and we must look to where we are going, Mr. Speaker, with respect to plastics.

I reiterate, Mr. Speaker, that while this is a necessary condition to achieve financing, we also believe that it is fundamentally right to do. So, whether or not financing was at the end of the line, we will have moved along this line, because it is the best thing for our Nation, it is the best thing for our Region and it is the best thing for the world, Mr. Speaker.

***Special Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held at the Parliament Chamber
On Friday, 8th November, 2019.***

Motions

Only Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, we hosted, in Grenada, a Marine Energy Seminar by the Caribbean Development Bank and Small Islands Developing States (SIDS DOCK), and the emphasis was on saving our planet. While we concentrated there on the Carbon Footprints, everybody realized, parallel to this, is the fundamental problems that we face with plastics, marine wise. We look at it and we see it on our televisions, we see it on our laptops, the massive expanse of pollution in the air, around the world, in the marine areas. We see fish life and marine life being destroyed in totality. So, fortunately this Motion, Mr. Speaker, it is trying to push not only Grenada, but all of us into that line. But, Grenada is doing it, as we have done during the Structural Adjustment Programme, many of the Bills that we have passed, many of the policies that we have adopted, they were fundamentally because we know they were the right things to do.

And, the Lord blessed us with a lot of little things coming in from the side, whether it is the IDA loan, whether it is cutting of the debt in half, the haircut, whatever. But, as we embarked on this Programme, this is also part of it, Mr. Speaker, making the sacrifices, we make it, because we know it is correct. So, I commend this Motion to this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Leader of Government's Business. Let me just say that I attended a workshop in St. Vincent, on Biological Warfare, and in doing some research, because I had to make a presentation, I realised that micro plastics is now being found in the flesh of certain sea creatures, especially the crustaceans, and the problem with this is, the scientist does not know what impact the micro plastics in the flesh on these animals would have on the animals. Now, they use that plastic in the sea, but we use plastic every day and every plastic container that we use, there is a possibility of micro plastics, because of the nature of the composition. So, I think this is very, very important that we reach the stage where plastics become a thing of the past. So, I just wanted to say this, not to influence how you vote on the Motion, but just to tell you what is taking place.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved.

***Special Sitting of the House of Representatives
Held at the Parliament Chamber
On Friday, 8th November, 2019.***

Adjournment

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item No. 4 - Request for leave to move the Adjournment of the House on matters of Urgent Public Importance.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

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

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned sine die @ 9:26 am.

PREPARED BY

HANSARD REPORTERS

Miss Shanta Joseph
Mrs. Bernice Horsford-Bridgeman

EDITORS

Mr. Andrew Augustine (Ag. Clerk)
Ms. Daniele Blackman (Administrative Secretary)