



GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Third Session of the Tenth Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT

SENATE

Tuesday 10th November, 2020

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Senate Meeting
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Attendance

Mr. President
Senator the Honourable Chester Humphrey
in the Chair

Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell	- Minister for Climate Resilience, the Environment, Forestry, Fisheries, Disaster Management and Information
Senator the Honourable Judd Cadet	- Member
Senator the Honourable Norland Cox	- Minister for Youth Development, Sports, Culture and the Arts
Senator the Honourable Dr. Winston Garraway	- Minister of State with responsibility for Disaster Management and Information
Senator the Honourable Cathisha Williams	- Member
Senator the Honourable Roderick St. Clair	- Member
Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis	- Member
Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie	- Member
Senator the Honourable Tessa Alexander St Cyr	- Member
Senator the Honourable Terry Noel	- Member

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Prayers
Minutes

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

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Good morning, Mr. President, good morning Members. Let us pray.

(Senate Prayer was said)

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Members, please join with me, in saying the Lord's Prayer.

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Mr. President: Honourable Members, pray be seated, and a warm good morning to everyone.

(Sound of Gavel)

Mr. President: This Sitting of the Senate now commences.

Clerk: Item 3 - Oath of Allegiance or Affirmation of a new Senator.

Item 4 - Confirmation of Minutes.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move...

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Mr. President: One second, Simon, just let me pull up those documents. I am not finding the Minutes on this; I thought everything would be set up here. Where is it?

(Clerk converse with the President)

Mr. President: I am not actually seeing the Minutes itself. I see the Order Paper. I am not seeing the Minutes. I am seeing the Bills, but I am not seeing the Minutes here. I am seeing the Bills. I am seeing the Minutes. Okay, it's upside down. In other words, it isn't following chronologically on my computer. I've found it, but it's at the last document, and that's the Minutes of the 19th? No. Something is wrong here. Let me just go back to the...

Clerk: This is one set of Minutes. Friday, September 4th, 2020. Have him open both sets of Minutes for me, just two (2) minutes on this Laptop and return it please.

Mr. President: One second. This thing has been loaded improperly.

(Sorting out Technical Issues)

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the Senate held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Wednesday, 19th August, 2020, be taken as read.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes taken as read.

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Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the Senate held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Wednesday, 19th August, 2020 be confirmed.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Williams.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Thank you, Mr. President. These Minutes of the 19th of August, the confirmation of those Minutes, were suspended in the Sitting before last, so that a query that I had raised could be rectified.

Now, there wasn't an opportunity for a Committee to meet to settle the amendment, however, I believe that this can be done now and we can dispose of that matter. In order to aid that, the Clerk of Parliament provided to the Members of the House an extract of the Hansard from that Sitting, which would help the Members to decide on the wording of the suggested amendment. And to make life easier for everyone, Mr. President, I have some wording...

Mr. President: I have a little difficulty in hearing you, Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Pardon, Mr. President.

Mr. President: I don't know if Central Control could adjust the volume of it.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Mr. President, are you hearing me better now?

Mr. President: Not much better. This is not evidence that I am the oldest person in the Chamber.

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Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Go ahead, Mr. President?

Mr. President: Yes, much better.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Yes. So, as I was saying, the Confirmation of the Minutes of the 19th of August had been suspended, so that a proposed amendment could be settled by a Committee of Members from the House. But since there was no opportunity for such a Committee to meet, I propose that the wording of the amendment be settled by the Members this morning. To aid the Members in making that decision, the Clerk of Parliament had provided an extract of the Hansard from that occasion. So, the intention of my amendment was to properly couch what I had expressed on the day of that Sitting.

Mr. President: Yes, I understand that.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: So, Mr. President, the suggested amendment to page (67) of those Minutes are as follows. Please, permit me to read: ***“Senator Williams sought clarity on the procedure of debates in relation to questions and comments on Ministerial Statements. Senator Williams expressed that the practice of Members giving opinions on matters and asking questions, which do not seek to clarify any particular issue, not in the course of the presentation of the Ministerial Statements, deviated from what is prescribed in the Standing Orders.”*** So, that is my proposed amendment to the Minutes, and I believe that more accurately expresses what my concern was, as reflected in the Hansard excerpt.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, any comments? I take it that those amendments are acceptable to the House?

Hon. Simon Stiell: Yes, Mr. President.

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Mr. President: Okay. No objections. So, Clerk, could you please note that the amendments, as proposed by Senator Williams, be accepted and be reflected in the Minutes. There is no need to solicit a vote on that. It's an amendment offered without objection, in respect of the Members' contribution to the debate. Thank you, Honourable Members.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed as amended.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the Senate held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Friday, 4th September, 2020, be taken as read.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes taken as read.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the Senate held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Friday, 4th September, 2020 be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Fourth Session of the Tenth Parliament held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Friday, 9th October, 2020, be taken as read.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes taken as read.

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Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Fourth Session of the Tenth Parliament held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Friday, 9th October, 2020, be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed.

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

Item 6 - Announcements by Mr. President.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, every 10th of November is recognised as World Science Day for Peace and Development and highlights the significant role of science in society, and the need to engage the wider public in debates on emerging scientific issues. It also underlines the importance and relevance of science in our daily lives.

The peace component of this recognition is given man's understanding of matter and its complexities and the powers contained therein. The issue of World Science, in the context of peace is an existential consideration, in that the knowledge of the atomic and other powers of matter is such that civilisation, as we know it, if the peace component is not emphasised and does not win the day, can see an end to human civilisation.

By linking science more closely with society, World Science Day for Peace and Development aims to ensure that citizens are kept informed of developments in science. It also underscores the role Scientists play in broadening our understanding of the remarkable fragile Planet we call 'Home' and in making our societies more sustainable.

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Just in the last few weeks, in fact the Americans announced today that they have tailored, after much effort and coming after other Scientists in places like the People's Republic of China, were able to analyse the genome of the COVID-19, and have identified and developed possible vaccines to deal with this pandemic.

This reinforces the importance of scientific knowledge, especially biologic scientific knowledge, in the times in which we live. So, as we recognise this day, it is necessary to emphasise that strengthening public awareness of the role of science for peaceful and sustainable societies is important; promote national and international solidarity for shared science between countries. In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) has put uppermost, in the context of the scientific researches, right now, in the findings of the disease, that there is going to be a fair and equitable system of bringing the vaccines to human kind, and that's important, because it underscores the recognition of life, the value of all life and the security of life must not be dependent on the size of your monetary pocket, that's a fundamental principle. And therefore, as we salute this World Science Day for Peace, we have to bring to it also, the principles of equity and fairness, so that all of human society can benefit. Today, Honourable Members, I ask you to reflect, as we salute this day, World Day of Science for Peace and Development of Human Society, and I thank you.

Honourable Members, you would also have learnt that Senator George tendered her resignation from the Senate, and it took effect before we had an opportunity to meet. So I want to use this occasion, really, to pay my own personal tributes to her for the brief period she spent in the Senate. I thought it was remarkable. From the points of view of the value of her contribution, she had a discerning eye for the Law. She was forthright in the collection of her thoughts. She was profound in the contributions that she made to this House, and I think all of us, who would have benefitted from her knowledge, would recognise the loss, by virtue of her absence from the Senate.

She has done some wonderful work on a number of Legal matters. She has been very active in the Parliamentary Sub Committee of Women, working on Legislation to address sexual abuse and sexual offences arising at the workplace, that work still continues. She's made, certainly, outstanding and very valuable contributions.

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Although we have not yet completed that work, she has given the assurance that she is prepared to continue to serve, and I wish to put into the record my profound thanks and gratitude to her.

She has also given me the assurance that she would be following events in this Chamber. She would be following events nationally, and that from time to time she can be called upon to use her expertise, in any way that the Nation feels that she can assist. So, although she has exited the Chamber in body, she has not exited the Chamber in her commitment to see Grenada, our Homeland, a better place.

Honourable Members, I am certain that I expressed much of what you would feel, but it is only fair and fitting to give you the opportunity, yourselves, individually, to read into the records your own acknowledgement of her contribution and to convey your own personal thanks to her. And, at this point-in-time, I now invite Members to do so, beginning first, with the Leader of Government's Business, and I thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I wish, on behalf of the Government's Side to add to the comments that you have just made. Senator George, during her time here in the Senate, demonstrated her significant professional capacity and brought to the debates here in the House a level of balance, maturity and thoroughness that was her hallmark, and she will certainly be missed. And her contribution, not just on Government's Side, but to the richness of the general debate, will be sorely missed.

Senator George, in preparing for Senate Sessions would often discuss matters with me, as Leader of Government's Business, wanting to get a deeper insight and ensure that the contribution that she made was as significant, as possible and also helped provide me with counsel with her Legal understanding in terms of some of the contributions that I made.

So, the Government's Side will miss her. I, personally, as Leader of Government's Business will miss her support. And, what also struck me about Senator George, as well as all of those professional credits, is her passion for National development. Her contribution here was not about partisan politics, but a genuine

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desire to add her voice and her capacity to the National Debate and propelling our National Development Agenda. And, on behalf of the Senators on “This Side”, I wish her all of the best in her professional endeavours, and as you rightly said, Mr. President, she has expressed this to us, her willingness to continue to serve, in whatever capacity she is able to, she is willing to do so, so she is close by. So, once again, we wish her all of the best and thank her for her valuable contribution to this House. I thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Chris De Allie.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I too, will like to join and associate myself with the comments made by the Leader of Government's Business, as it relates to Senator George who joined us some time ago.

Mr. President, I too, found her thoughts and her contributions of high quality and I suppose that's testimony to individual and what she has done in her own professional life. So, from where we sit in the Private Sector and the Private Sector Rep, we want to wish Senator George; well, I still have to get accustomed to not saying Senator George, but Attorney Kim George, the best in her future endeavours, Mr. President, and, of course, we wish her all the best, as well.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis, André Lewis.

Sen. the Hon Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President, and, I too, on behalf of the Labour Movement, associate with the positive expressions in regards to former Senator Kim George. I found her to be very humble, which is extremely important and a good sign. Despite her progress in life, she has, certainly, in my view and other people's view, whom I have been in contact with, have remained connected to the ordinary people.

I wish her all the very best in her future endeavours, and from a personal point-of-view, I know that our contacts and engagements will continue, because, for instance,

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within TAWU, I have had the pleasure in negotiating with her on the “Other Side” representing an employer and I must admit I found her to be very understandable.

As a matter of fact, I can recall her indicating that this engagement with TAWU was very revealing, because she had formed a view and impression over the years, that all the Unions were there to do was just to fight and make noise. But, she found us to be extremely reasonable and that would have also been under your leadership, Mr. President, the workplace that she represented. So, from that time, we were able to develop that level of engagement to have a better appreciation of where the Labour Movement was coming from, as we do our different deeds to try to advance the cause of the country. I want to end again, by wishing her all the very best, in her future endeavours. Thank you very much.

Mr. President: Senator Terry Noel.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Thank you, Mr. President. I will like to do likewise, on behalf of the Opposition, we here, the Senators on the Opposition Side. My encounter with her was very brief and what I have seen of her as Senator Lewis has just expressed, humbleness, about her.

I remember she congratulated us as we were installed as the new Senators on the Opposition Side, and she wished us well. And, she also seemed as though she had an appreciation for History, which she did mention and that was very nice. When I gave my Maiden Speech, she did mention that, in terms of the History and so on, and she liked the connection and all that. So, I would just like to say that I wish her well and wish her well in all her endeavours. Thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Noel. I want to take the opportunity, on my own behalf and yours, to welcome our newest Senator to the Chamber, Senator, the Honourable Roderick St. Clair. He was sworn in at the Joint Sitting of the Houses, at the Ceremonial Opening of the Parliamentary Session, and we did not have the

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opportunity, Senator, to extend to you a fraternal welcome to the Chamber, so we want to use the opportunity to do so now.

At the rate we are going, Senator, it looks like this Chamber will shortly be the local Government of the Parish of St. Andrew, **(applause)** and that's a good thing, because you have been famously known as the Breadbasket of the State of Grenada. But, I think you can make a claim to be the germinating station of Senators, because St. Andrew is, well, I wouldn't like to use the word 'overrepresented', least I may send a wrong message. But, certainly, it has a dominant presence, from the Labour Leader, to your goodly self, to the two (2) Opposition Senators, St. Andrew is dominating this Chamber. It's taking over from Carriacou, and it's a good thing. I know other Parishes may be a little bit jealous, but all it means they have to work harder.

I am not necessarily recommending that we have proportional representation in the Senate, and that it should be made up of persons, one from each Parish. In the United States the Senate is constituted that way. But, it must be a moment of pride, Senator St. Clair, for you to be here, pride not only for yourself and your family, your parents, if they are still alive, and even if they're not, the fact that they gave birth to someone, who can sit in the Highest Decision-making Chamber in the Land is really quite an astounding achievement for which everyone would be proud.

But to also come from St. Andrew, the traditional Breadbasket, speaks a lot. From the little knowledge I know of you, you and I had an engagement, at my office, after you received your instrument, I am convinced that the Farming Community will be well served, and if you don't execute that, I will be personally disappointed. So, you have a challenge, there is no reason to believe that you won't rise to the challenge. The farmers have been the backbone of Grenadian civilisation.

In earlier periods, even from the time of our indigenous fore parents, up until just recently, tilling the soil, mastering the soil, harnessing its potential for food and sustenance have built Grenadian civilisation. Indeed, it's the foundation upon which international capitalism grew with strength, from the naked exploitation of our fore parents, who struggled as unpaid bonded labour, without rights, equal to chattel. The records of capitalism and slavery and the works of Dr. Eric Williams and others is a

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testimony to the important transformative role that agriculture has played in the history of humankind and continues to play, because no human civilisation can exist without food.

So, you have an important mission. And I am certain, with the energies and foresight and enthusiasm of the Minister for Agriculture, if you all can find ways to collaborate and to engage in a constructive arrangement for the welfare of our farmers, who face a world in transition and change. The Plantation economy of yesteryear, which made others rich has found itself in a transitional form in the world today, where, while it is still fundamentally important, may not necessarily have the same kind of degree of economic force and power. It's the realities of the new world.

But, I am certain that with your efforts, your acumen, your hard work, and most of all, your commitment to the ordinary people, who till the soil, who do a very important job, I am certain that if we build sustaining partnerships that focus on growth and development. And let us be clear, there are going to be differences. There are going to be hard times. There are going to be obstacles. The question has always been, how do we overcome them and what do we do? And, therein lies your challenge.

So with these few words, Senator, I personally want to welcome you to the House, and I will allow the other Members of the Senate, in their own individual capacities, because I think that's only proper, for them also, to record their gracious welcome to you and to make you feel at home. As I said to you before, my office is opened all the time, and your colleague, Senator Tessa St. Cyr can attest to that. I have called her on the phone and WhatsApp her on different days of the week. We have communicated on many matters, related to Parliament, and the same goes to any Senator. In fact, at 4:30 this morning, Senator Judd and I had an exchange. I sent him something around, I think, it might have been half past eleven. He responded around 4:00 this morning and asked if he could call me. But, I saw the message when I got up to feed my dogs, at quarter to six. And, when I tried to reach him, I didn't get him. So, I am saying this to say to you, feel free to call me at any time on any subject, and if I am able to assist you, rest assured that I would.

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Honourable Members, therein lies my welcoming remarks, to the most Honourable Roderick St. Clair, Representative in the Senate of the Farmers of the State of Grenada. Thank you. I noticed Senator Cox. Did I see Senator Cox's light? Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I too, would like to take the opportunity to welcome our dear Colleague, Senator St. Clair to this Honourable House. And also to extend an offer, in terms of support, specifically to agriculture, as that is one of my areas of competencies. I have worked in a different capacity, serving farmers for more than a decade. So, I truly do have an intimate knowledge and understanding of some of the challenges and some of the opportunities that there lies where Agriculture is concerned and it's one of the areas that I do have a strong passion for. And so, I am saying here, in this Honourable House, feel free to call on me, in any capacity, personally, or anyhow, for any support, towards any initiatives, towards the farmers and the development of agriculture, going forward.

Mr. President, I think there is a wonderful opportunity here, within this Honourable House. It is one of the best places to be, especially around this time of the year. We normally be the last to leave for the Christmas break, and so, we have an opportunity, even to express that sentiment around that time. That is one of the beauties of this place. And, it also lends itself, because of the diverse nature and competencies of the individuals here, for an exciting and of course, enjoyable debate in this Honourable Place. So, I think that you're going to enjoy it. I think that you may not want to leave, when you start to enjoy our operations here in the Senate, so welcome and all the best. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Senator Tessa St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I want to join with the other Members of this Honourable House to welcome Senator St. Clair. Interestingly, he was actually my neighbour for a period of time. So, not only is St.

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Andrew represented here, well, I noticed you forgot to mention Senator Cadet, who is also from St. Andrew and Senator Garraway.

But, Senator St Clair was actually my neighbour, for a short while, and my brother had a small business that Senator St. Clair used to patronise. So, I wish to take this opportunity, from the Opposition Team, to wish you well in your stint as a Senator for Agriculture, representing the Agriculture Sector. Like the other Members, I would like to extend my best wishes and if you do need any support, we are also here to support you. So, all the best.

Mr. President: Senator Cadet.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, like those who went before me, I want to join in welcoming Senator St. Clair, in this Honourable House.

Mr. President, yes, as you have rightly said that St. Andrew is well represented here in this House. In fact, Senator Cox and I were trying to figure out, whether or not Senator De Allie has St. Andrew roots. **(Laughter)** I won't be surprised, if St. Andrew has 100% representation, in some way, or another.

But, I welcome you, and I, like the others, as well, as it relates to youth in Agriculture, it's an area I am quite interested in. As you know, with so many things happening now, and agriculture being a main pillar in this economy, I think we can have a great discussion, in terms of engaging more young people in the agriculture field. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Senator Winston Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I want to join my voice with the sentiments shared, or expressed by my fellow colleagues before, and just want to say to my good brother, welcome.

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Senator St. Clair and I have had several debates on several issues, over the years, and I do believe the bond and relationship we would have developed, very mutual, very respectable and so forth, will continue, as you embark on this journey, very important journey, and that is to represent a major sector within the country, and that is agriculture. And, of course, as we know, agriculture is one of the pillars of our dear Land.

And, coming from Birchgrove, in St. Andrew, in particular, where nutmeg would have been our hallmark, some cocoa, lots of banana, but mainly nutmeg, we understand the value of agriculture to the rural communities. And, you will be given the mandate to champion this, going forward. You cannot do it in your own sphere, in your own zone, there must be teamwork. So, there is a great need for collaboration and teamwork with the Minister for Agriculture, a man, in similar nature to yourself, and I guess as much Monty will agree with me that he is outgoing like Roderick himself. And, I think when you both put your heads together, as it relates to serving the sector, I expect a lot to happen. And, with your commitment, I do believe the Agriculture Sector is at a better place, with you on board. Thanks.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Garraway. Senator Noel.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Thank you, Mr. President. I too, want to welcome Senator St. Clair, personally, because I know him very well. We often meet from time to time and the fact is that we are from the same Parish. And, I know that he has a wealth of knowledge and experience in the field, and that he would serve the Agriculture Sector and community, well.

From my point of view, the fact that I am very passionate about agriculture, as well, I am looking to work along with him, as well and render support where it's necessary, because I believe that, especially at this time, with the unprecedented pandemic at hand, agriculture should be one of the main pillars, (I've often said it), going forward in this country, in terms of our development. So, I want to take the time out again, and welcome him, personally, because I know him well. Thank you.

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Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Noel. The Honourable Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. I too, want to add my words of welcome to Senator St. Clair. And, we had experience, when I was in the Ministry for Agriculture, you at the MNIB, and you have always come across, as a straight talker, very knowledgeable, very passionate, about the development of the Agriculture and Fisheries Sectors. And, what I've always found with you is your objectivity. You are a bridge builder, working at the grassroots level, but also with a very keen interest at the policymaking level, and the need to build extra capacity within those sectors. And your appointment here, to the Senate, I believe, is another positive step forward on the path, on the journey, that you have taken.

And now, I also want to recognise your predecessor, Senator Campbell, who also made a valuable contribution and I know that you will, in a very similar way, build on those who have gone before you.

And, Mr. President, I noticed everybody is claiming to be from St. Andrew. There was a time where everybody wanted to be part of the 'Cacabawee Clan.' **(Laughter)** But now, clearly, it is St. Andrew, and I must admit, I cannot say I have roots there, but I know I am in very, very good company. So, once again, through you, Mr. President, I welcome and look forward to working closely with you and the valuable contributions, we know, you're going to be making to this House. Thank you.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. And, it is indeed a proud moment to welcome Senator Roderick. I guess you will permit me to say my good friend, my buddy, my Comrade, Roderick. Not only is he from St. Andrew, but he's also from La Digue, and we both grew up together, and engaged in many robust discussions and debates on the blocks. Yes. So, for myself and Roderick, it is very important and understanding the important role that the farming community plays in our Nation's development. And not just understanding that role, but

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understanding and being knowledgeable of the fact that Roderick himself grew up in the lands and grows almost everything, in terms of his foundation, as many of us in the land, the cocoa, the nutmeg, the banana, the spice, cutting the spice, the different things. So, it is a very proud moment, and I am absolutely confident that he will continue that rich legacy of representing the farming community, which by extension are workers, the parents of workers. And, even if we, inadvertently, may have tried to shake off each other, but our path is just meant to be, because, as the General Manager of the GCNA, our Union represents workers at the GCNA, so we have had that engagement. And it's a useful engagement, because what he is into, he is into the interests of the community as a whole. And my brother, my friend, it's a very proud moment, to welcome you to the Senate, where we can give it our best shot, in the interest of the country. Once again, thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. President.

(Applause)

Mr. President: Senator Williams.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Thank you, Mr. President. I too, would like to join in the chorus of welcome, to Senator St. Clair. Well, I am not from St. Andrew, but I do have an Uncle, who lives there. **(Laughter)** I am from the other side of the Island, the Parish of St. John and of course, those Parishes share similarities. But, nonetheless, we are all brothers and sisters in here, and we all have the same goal, which is the development of our country. And of course, I don't have to tell you, or impress on you the importance of your position, as a Representative of one of the pillars of our economy, agriculture. We are all aware that we have so much to do in that field, and I am confident that you will take on that mantle and perform your duty faithfully, thoroughly, and with the same level of impartiality and integrity, as your predecessor.

Now, this is a House of Scrutiny, a House of Review, it is far more exciting than that "Other Place." So, I am sure you will enjoy the engagement here. I am sure that we will have many interesting exchanges of an exciting nature. Senator Garraway will

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make sure of that, and I look forward to engaging with you in this House. So, again, Senator, welcome. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Senator De Allie.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President, and, a big welcome Senator St. Clair. I can't add more to what was said. My interaction with you have been very business-like and just as Leader of Government's Business said, he's a very forthright, very frank. You know where you stand with the individual. And, I suspect and I know that you will represent your constituents well, based on how you have articulated in the past. And, just to let Judd know, I am from the other side, I am from the West. I do not have the privilege to be on the St. Andrew side, yet. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator. Honourable Members, I think, at this time, we would give Senator St. Clair the opportunity to respond to this whole litany of recognition, and the floor is now yours, so to do.

I have given a commitment that we are going to put together a booklet, and it is fortuitous that we haven't done so as yet, because had we done so earlier, you would not have been in the booklet. But, the idea is to put together all the Maiden Speeches, to record all those who served, because that is one of the defects and deficiencies, that you can't go into a single place in our archives and find Senators who have served. You have to go through bits and things of documents, so we are now doing some documentation and so on, but it struck me, as a very good project. So, you can rest assured that your maiden contribution would grace the pages of the booklet that is going to come. And before this Parliament is dissolved, we'll be able to do that, and to give each of you an opportunity, as we have those speeches on record. So, the big day and the big time is now. Over to you, dear Senator, you have the floor. Thank you.

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Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President, and good morning to my Colleague Members of this Chamber. As you say, this is my first time, and so, I will try my best.

I had to give my Maiden Speech, Mr. President, a topic, a title, so I can be guided for this presentation this morning. After much reflection, I realised that I need to refer to it, as **“Rebooting Agriculture - The Time is Now.”** And, rebooting, both from a technological standpoint, when you think about rebooting a computer and also rebooting in terms of putting our boots on as a Nation and engaging in agriculture.

A lot was mentioned about St. Andrew and my good friend, Senator Lewis, gave a history of myself, I would say, already, yeah. I have done a lot, as a little boy growing up in agriculture, as you said, the spices, fishing, hunting, getting up in the morning, going in the lands with my father, you know, eating the coconut bakes and all of those things. I think we all know that. Brother Garraway on the “Other Side”, Member, would have gone through all of those.

But, what we need to recognise for this whole Agriculture Sector is that I remember going to school and on days you didn't see some children in school. Why? Because they have to go in the lands, they had to go on Banana Day. And so I understand very much, as an individual, what this means for our country and we all would have lived that same life.

As I said this morning, my navel string, my Member friend, Cadet, was born in Grand Bras land, in Grand Bras. That's where my navel string is. That's where I was born. I grew up in La Digue, and in all those cases, it's about farming and agriculture. So, fishing, as I mentioned, we went in La Tuna and up in the Grand Etang and interfaced with the environment. All of that became part of our upbringing.

I went to the Mt. St. Ervans Primary School, that school is no more. It's a sad moment. I then went on to St. Andrew Anglican Secondary School (SAASS), as we know it, a Sports School. I couldn't win a race **(laughter)**, but I tried some little bit of running. I practiced very hard. I didn't make it, but my Principal, then, Mr. Julien, said: “Go, go, go, St. Clair.” I guess he knew where I was going to, I never gave up. Okay,

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so that was some of my past. I also had my stint at the Institute for Further Education (IFE).

But, I think what is more important, at this moment, is that, as my friend, Brother Cadet mentioned, when I finished school, I had nowhere to go. I was home for almost one (1) year, and I had to be farming, literally, not going with my father or my mother, but actually doing it myself, because that was the only thing I could have done, and then of course, play a little tennis and cricket on an evening with my colleague André.

I remember during that time, you had people like Finbar Hopkin, up in Mt. St. Evans. He had a Farmers' Group, and so I was very close to them, so I was able to learn a lot from these elderly persons.

I then remember having to go on a visit. They said they were having a Field Tour. I said Field Tour? Young boy eighteen/nineteen (18/19) years. And, they said yes, the Minister for Agriculture is coming, Sir George Brizan. At that time I didn't even know who this person was, may his soul rest in peace. And we went and we visited Paradise and Pearls, and he was there with his boots actually, visiting with the farmers. And so I had my experience way inside up there. So, it is these sorts of energies that continue with me today.

I then worked with Dr. Marcel and his team at the Produce Chemist Laboratory. This was very important. So I moved up the value chain, if you want to say. As they said at the time, I moved from planting and I moved to the Lab. We were testing things, we were assisting people like Pappy, may his soul rest in peace with his agro products and so on, and we were adding value to products to some of the cottage persons. So there I had an appreciation for adding value and able to do things right, customers, consumption, healthy living, so I learnt a lot of those things there. And, through my travels and studies abroad, I was able to understand within the US system, the importance of agriculture, apples, and all of those things, strawberries, garlic. We used to be planting those things in the backyard where I was living. And so, I never lost sight of that.

But, I was also involved in another angle. I actually thought Agricultural Science at the Secondary School. Many of the farmers today, in the St Andrew area, would

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have had some little teaching from me and be able to make a better life for themselves today. Some of them, now, I still would represent at this level and they would assist me in their various ways to contribute better.

But the turning point, I think, is when I entered the MNIB where I spent over twenty (20) years there and being able to be exposed to so many things that I didn't even know before, locally, regionally and internationally, and that gave me a whole new perspective, in a lot of different things, the use of groups, dynamics and so on.

But, what I think was most important, Mr. President, is in my travels, I tried to look at things that can help this country. So, for example, when I went to Rwanda, in Africa, I saw the cassava farmers, they were bringing in their cassavas in bulk, and they were actually producing Cassava Flour, packaging it and selling it within the local space, providing it to the schools and institutions, right in Rwanda. And so, sometimes we sit here and we wonder what is going on in Africa; good things are happening.

When you go to Ethiopia, where I have been also, the Mother Land, where they say you have to go right down to Ethiopia, I saw what they were doing with honey and bee-keeping and their bees were wild bees. They have to climb on the trees, like Africanized bees. In Grenada, we have nice, friendly bees. But, things were happening.

I went to Costa Rica and I saw at the end of the day, they will take all of the agricultural waste and make composts. So, you wonder what is happening in Grenada. So all of those things gave me that sort of inspiration, and I could give you a long list, which I would not go into more now, but through networking, we will share.

My background, broadly, is in Total Quality Management, it is in Value Chain and Market Development. So I always look at, how can we do things better and that is what drives me, all the time. I believe that there is always a solution to anything that will come up to you. We may not find it today. We may have to packet it a little bit. We may not find the correct solution, but a solution we must find.

But, as I present this morning, Mr. President, it wasn't necessarily my favourite subject in school, History. But I thought, what has really happened to agriculture? I listened to the elderly and they speak about what used to happen before. So I said, you

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know, we teach Agricultural Science, we teach History, but we never taught the history of agriculture. What has happened in Grenada, regarding agriculture? We may speak about Fédon and all of the others, but what has happened to agriculture?

And, so, history will teach us that within the period of the 50s, up to just before the Revolution in 1979, agriculture was on a slope, heading downwards. And it was because of the whole political climate and under-development going on in this country. I was able to read a report by a Professor out of Manitoba University in Canada, published sometime in 1985, and he spoke about five (5) fundamental problems that they were able to observe that caused this decline. They spoke about the Land for Landless Programme by the then, Sir Eric Gairy Regime, taking away lands indiscriminately from Estate Owners, so they were scared to develop it. They spoke about the shortage of labour for farms. They spoke about poor extension, poor roads, and they also spoke about civil unrests, leading up to the Independence in 1974.

So, I reflected and I said, but Sir Eric Gary has passed away, Independence has passed away, but the more reports I read and the more I listened to our farmers, Mr. President, I realised, the same thing is here. So I took a little journey further, and I said, you know, people speak a lot about during the Revolution. I am not too sure if because in our generation, a lot of the persons who are alive can speak about this era of the Revolution. And, from my own personal experiences, I said, but yes, we had a Mirabeau Agriculture Training School, training persons to be Extension Officers. So there was some effort to revitalise, because if something was going down, what needs to happen? We had the MNIB, which owned a boat so that it could move fresh produce through the Caribbean, and I hear people today say, you know, we need to get a boat. Well, we had a boat.

We also had a Perfume Factory with investors from Europe participating and which Government actually had shares involved in that. People speaking right now about we need to do fish fillet and we need to smoke fish; we had that. We even had a Fishing School, and of course, our good friends from Carriacou, you know, you had your Lime Factory. We used to be shipping to Trinidad, the livestock. Where is that today? In fact, someone said to me, yesterday, Senator, you know, those boats are going down

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empty now, you know, to Trinidad and they are coming up full of other things, which I don't want to mention.

So, something has changed. And so, up to last night, I was speaking to someone and they said: "Well, what changed?" He said, "well, if all that you had is not there anymore, where is it, what happened to it?" And, of course, it was only last night, so I didn't have enough time to do more research for it this morning, so I cannot give the rest of the answers to that.

But, while I was sleeping, I recalled we had Agro Industries. We were making juices and fruit punches. In recent months, we would have heard that there was no lettuce in this country, but we used to export lettuce, we used to export grapefruit during the Revolution. So, what has happened? And so, when I've been told, you know, you have a huge task on your back, I am kind of saying, but, it looks so in truth, because there are lots of things, maybe I wasn't aware of, and maybe if I was aware, I might have said, well, no, no. But, sometimes it is good that you only know afterwards.

But, I know some things of today, Mr. President. I know there is CaneCo, actually, right in my neighbourhood, a stone's throw. If I throw a stone, I could throw it right on the Factory, where I live in Conference. And I said, but, there is CaneCo. But a lot of persons forget we used to be growing sugar cane and we had a Coffee Factory.

Now, what has CaneCo done? And, it's a proud moment for us in Grenada and agriculture, because lots of youths are employed, technologies are available. I saw an advertisement that they wanted Drone Operators, tractors, so you need persons to service them. You have local persons, good, well-trained individuals running the operations. And, then I said, but they have to have a lot of money to do this. That's a lot of money, how did they get this money? Well, there are different ways. But, at the same time, you may have another gentleman down the road, trying to get a Shade House that he can plant lettuce and cabbage, so that we can always get. So, the issue of technology, the issue of finance, they become issues and challenges.

But, there are other little initiatives taking place. We have the NUTMED; we have Miss La Grenade Industries; we have the Jouvay Chocolate; we have the goat milk; we have the Grenada Chocolate. So, there are lots of other little start-ups, and they are

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good. But, we need something to take us in a more meaningful way, in a more sustainable way that our farmers could live, or anyone of us could say, let us go and plant five (5) acres of land, because we know we can sell and able to make money. We can pay people; we can provide jobs and so on. This is the confidence that this sort of agriculture that we need to think about going forward, we need to be able to create. And so, this is the vision and of course, Mr. President, we had a nice discussion and this is the vision we have to create. We won't get there tomorrow, but we will get there.

So, are the farmers ready? The farmers are ready. This morning, I was speaking to one of the farmers and he said: **“Farmers are ready.”** So, then, I asked: **“Well, what is holding you back?”**

Mr. President, Grenada's agriculture has been diversified throughout the years. We had cocoa, nutmegs and bananas. We see right now, we have beekeeping, we have floriculture, we have poultry, so we have many. Livestock is growing, and there are different challenges in those different sub sectors. I wouldn't go into the whole long list of that here today, because we are going to discuss that at a later stage. But of course, the issue of stray dogs, running all over, all hours of the night and day destroying our sheep and goats and so on, that's a problem. It's an issue for those who want to engage in livestock.

The issue of apiculture, the market is untapped, but they need finances to help them to improve. The issue of poultry, that needs a whole conference to address but there are great opportunities for the country to reduce its Import Bill there. We have the issue of nutmeg and cocoa, a great opportunity, again. We have road access and we need to look at how we could add more value to those Industries.

We have other spices. One farmer said to me: **“Roderick, make sure, we have to do something with spices.”** And, I said to him: **“What are you saying?”** And, he said: **“Well, we are in the Isle of Spice.”** But, it's not only that. You would find that our spice production in this country has declined, and I can speak to that, because I was involved in a lot of that spice business, as a young boy and fish.

Sister Williams on the “Other Side”, Member, sometimes I spend a lot of time in Gouyave. I find it to be a very relaxing moment, and so I understand the importance of

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fishing. Of course, we have other parts of the country, but on the ground there, I could see and understand what fishing needs to do for us. I know Petite Martinique and so on, the longliners, but we need to do something with fishing. We have issues there, finance, ice machine and so on and floriculture is a thriving business where we need to look at the issue of Greenhouse Technologies and so on.

So, in a nutshell, I realise we have some problems that I summarised in a few key points. We are losing lands, buildings and buildings just keep going up, and we are looking good agriculture lands. Our whole marketing system and infrastructure is very weak. Farmers cannot plant or grow a crop knowing how they would sell it, easily. And so because of that, sometimes, financiers are also scared to support.

Technology is also underdeveloped; the same stories of the Gairy time. We also have some of our Policies and Legislations, we need to help to fix them and make them better. And so, when I was speaking to a colleague once, he said, “you know you would be dealing with Laws and Legislation.” So I said, “well, Laws and Legislation?” So, here we have an opportunity to look at that.

We also have the issue of governance, and I need to say this, Mr. President. We, as the farmers, we need to do a lot by way of fixing our governance and our groups and so on. This, we need to do a lot of work on. This, I have given a commitment to both Minister David and Minister Bain-Horsford that we have to work to fix it. We need to get our house in order, and I have spoken to many of the different groups, already, and say we need to get that going, because without that we cannot move forward. We need to move towards a National Body of farmers and fisherfolks charting the way forward, in a very progressive way, to provide the confidence for the Nation that we will take care of them, in terms of food security and so on.

And of course, our value added is totally underdeveloped, and I will say, totally underdeveloped. We need to get it to the point where we can have it in terms of affordability, both for local, overseas, accessing markets, based on the quality and all of those things like that. So, these are areas, and of course, human resource and capacity building is another area.

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Look for example, Mr. President, as I slept last night, I was dreaming, too. During the Revolution, when we started and I said, “we”, I was young, the Farm School, as we called it, we had over one hundred (100) persons trained. Today, look at the age, if you work it out. It's almost forty (40) years ago, so it means that we are sixty (60) years. So, it means that without any big Math that most of those folks who would have gone through that training are out the door, retired, or on their way to retirement. So, who is going to be helping our farmers?

I know the Ministry is working on that, but it is too much, too late? But, we have not lost time. So, it reflects to me, it's how we do things, because what we are seeing here in Grenada is no different in my travels, in my communication, to different persons in the world, or even if you read on your own, it's not different. But you know it's how you approach things. And I like the spirit of the House and the sentiments expressed. We have to find ways to solve problems, and I am very happy to hear this. It is how we approach problems. How we approach challenges, but how we also approach opportunities, because sometimes we could squander opportunities and lose them.

So, I then said to myself, you know we cannot afford for our farmers to go further down. We cannot afford for our farmers to be poor or poorer, because according to a Polish Proverb, it says: ***“If the farmer is poor, then so is the whole country.”*** We cannot afford that. And so when you say and you gave me the challenge of now, I smiled, because we need to stop it. We need to stop it.

So, what does our farmers and fisherfolks want to see? What is their vision? What is their aspiration? Because anytime you identify a problem, you need to have some ideas, have some solutions that you want to put forward; of course, it has to be tested. But I have some thoughts that I want to share of not just me personal, but it's distilled from discussions with other technocrats and operators in the Industry.

We need markets, strong, robust, vibrant markets, not just locally and overseas. How we do those things, I would not get into that right now, that's the strategies, so we want to see that.

We want to see our agricultural lands safeguarded, safeguarded. I don't want to say, protected; I don't want to say secured, safeguarded and fixed farm access road.

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Some people say, well let us repair the road. I say, fixed road, meaning that the road we know at the end of the day will be fixed. We need to have a strong functioning National Farmers' Organisation and I have made a commitment that this has to happen. We need more youth, but I am not hearing the women's part and women in agriculture. We need that for continuity. We need to have more monies available, and I am not saying where the money has to come from, but we need more monies.

In Africa, for example, right now, Mr. President, countries there are saying we have Investment Programmes in different areas that the Government wants to stimulate and is asking the diaspora to invest back into those areas. So it's their Homeland, rather than having their monies stay away in some bank, they can bring it to develop their countries. And so, we need to look at that, and I'd like to highlight this point here, because I think it is very important for persons following us on this matter.

Of course, we need supportive Government Policies and Framework, and of course, I have heard a serious commitment from everyone inside here today, so I am very happy that we are almost there with this. And, of course we need to have a proper Disaster and Food Management Plan for this country, so that we can withstand the shocks of not only natural disasters, in the form of weather and climate change, but also in matters of the COVID, for example, or a pests and disease outbreak and other such like.

Capacity Building and Skills Training are very important, and during the Revolutionary Government Administration's time, today, I will say close to maybe 60%, 70% of our technocrats have benefitted, and that's a legacy that we need to keep pushing, because more education, more capacity, we were able to do better.

But when you look at it, again, Mr. President, these are the children and cousins and nephews and nieces from the landowners, the farmers and so on that have grown up through the years, and they have different positions, in different parts of the world and different parts of the society, contributing, in their different ways.

For me, personally speaking, I have maintained my presence in this Sector. I have never gone over. But, what I have done is that I have merged and taken other interest areas to help me develop. So, whether it's ICT, whether it's Information,

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whether it's Marketing, as the case may be, to help to build, to make me a better person, so I can add more value to the Sector.

Farmers are happy at the end of the day, when they start making money, that's the first thing. So, you go into Clozier and they would speak about when bananas were being exported, we had money spending. When Nutmeg was growing, business in Grenville was fully operational and so on, fishermen could sell fish. They know where the money was coming out, because you go and sell your cocoa and your nutmegs and the bananas and so on. So, we need to bring this life back; we need to bring this life back. So, this is where I think I come in.

So, I have been reflecting since before even having been appointed, because it's just my whole life. How do we move forward? What are some of the key approaches? It's not an exhaustive list, of course, and I am not going to go into details, as I mentioned earlier, but I am going to share. We need to have communication, dialogue. A lot of times things are happening and we're not sharing and we're not discussing, so we are wasting resources. So, we need to be able to share, in some dialogue platform, how do we move forward in addressing issues?

Already for me, I have used some of the technology and I have already started a Facebook Page, YouTube Channel and so on, to communicate within my Constituency, but also to communicate with persons outside of the immediate Constituency.

In addition to that, I will be engaging throughout the country in a structured way, different Parishes, different villages with the farmers, so that we can get their input. But of course, as you mentioned the dialogue with our Ministers, I already had meetings with the two (2) Ministers for Agriculture and Fisheries, and the future is bright, and so a lot is expected, as you say.

So, this takes care of my second point of the lobby to unlock the bottlenecks that are going on in Agriculture. They are not difficult. If we have a pipe at home, that is not giving water properly, we know how to find the solution and fix it. Why is it difficult sometimes, to find solutions to other things? And sometimes the solution that we need to find may not be a high-tech solution, but what we want at the end of the day, is water running through the pipe. But we need to involve people, who also know, people who

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can share in the knowledge on getting things done. We cannot leave persons out, because they're making noise or they are giving trouble, we have to be inclusive.

I want to also suggest, Mr. President, and I am not too sure if it is within my jurisdiction of speaking, but we need to have, at the Government level, what I would say, an Inter-Ministerial Body, or Committee, or even at the Parliament, to address this significant pillar of agriculture, because we have opportunities of Health in Disaster Management, in Infrastructure, in Education, to find ways to add more value to the agriculture contribution in Grenada. And this becomes even more significant, in times where we are in this Covideous situation and we don't know what is going to happen with our Tourism Sector, whilst we wish and want it to come back. So, in the meantime we need to safeguard agriculture before it slips away from us. And of course, I will continue to engage local, regional and international Organisations through my Network, to see whatever support that we can get to advance this important Sector.

Mr. President, as I go into a very important part of my presentation, **“Progression to the new Agriculture.”** I need to follow this closely, so I would keep on track. This new Agriculture that I am referring to is one which would involve correcting the mistakes of the past; one that embraces the opportunities of the present and delivers real results to our Farmers, Fisher Folks, their families and everyone. That is what we want to see in the new Agriculture. One that is transformational, not just something new, because it's new, so what? It mustn't be that, you must feel the change. One that is driven by modern agro-industrialisation, which means that we're looking from the farm or from the primary stage right through to the end, how do we mechanise and use all those different technologies and techniques and technical personnel to be able to drive more market utilisation and drive the economy. One that will involve, I am not saying eat what you grow and grow what you eat. I think that, what has done to us is that we continue just eating, if it's the same thing and growing the same thing. I say we need to eat more of what we grow and we need to grow more of what we eat, so that at the end of the day, we could have more markets for our local farmers and fisherfolks. We want to also add more value, real value, not the supermarket one, but real value, one where we have the brightest minds, at work. Put

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them to work. There are lots of bright minds outside there that we're not utilising. Let us make them work towards the future. Let us help them. Let us target their minds, where will we see this country in the next ten/twenty (10-20) years and they know that they need to do something, some nuclear something, or something to be able to make that change that we want to do.

When you look at countries like Japan and Singapore and all of those progressive countries, they would have done that. The Revolution started it. As I said, something changed, maybe, when I was sleeping.

Mr. President, we need a new agriculture where our Grenadians, our Carriacouans and our Petite Martiniqueans can feel proud, not only proud about the output, but they can feel proud that the younger persons, the children, the women are getting more and more involved in this important Sector, because if you are not having more optic of new persons, what are your proud about? As Brother Lewis said here, he feels proud. He was here all along and he was feeling proud maybe for himself. Today, I came, and I know he feels prouder, and of course, that is because there is a new optic.

Mr. President, we speak of history; however, Mr. President, I speak of history as being in the past. History, as you know, is something that happened. But I want to put a new tone on this and say, however, I put forward that this must be the history of the future. We must start writing the future, because if we're not writing the future, we will continue to remain where we are and keep reflecting on the back. But it cannot and will not happen by chance, it will happen, when all hands come together and working, in an integrated way, for this child, Agriculture and Fisheries in Grenada. It will happen, Mr. President, when we love and care for this child, and we want to see this child grow and develop into success, that we want to see into success.

Like many of us, in our own lives, our parents would have wanted to see us grow into success. We were too small, maybe, to know that there was something called success. But, they knew what they wanted for us. We got here, because someone cared, our parents, our grandparents, strangers, the community took care of us. It says that it takes a village to raise a child. This child of agriculture, where is the community?

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Of course, Mr. President, we may not have gotten everything we needed, as a little child. We may have had to postpone, we had to sacrifice, our parents made sacrifices, we made sacrifices, but, at the end of the day, in our different ways, we would have achieved. As some would say, it may not have been an easy road. Let us, in the broadest sense, beyond this Honourable House, Mr. President, let us be the community for this child, Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. President, as one of the fellow farmers said to me, yesterday. I was chatting and I said: ***“I have this speech to give and so on.”*** He said: ***“Watch Senator, agriculture is not an outside child, you know. Agriculture is not any foster child. Agriculture is all of us child.”*** And so I left there, with a sense of energy, knowing that there were others, who already started taking ownership and want to be part of this community. We must own it, it's urgent. Farmers are getting old and they are worried. They are worried and they are not too sure where this child may be and it may die. That is the urgency, Mr. President.

In the next three (3) to four (4) years, maybe five (5) years, we would want to look back, should we still be alive, ourselves, and say: ***“What have we done? How have we helped this child? Have we found solutions to make this child better?”***

Mr. President, a new Agriculture and Fisheries Sector that we cared and nurtured is what we're looking for. Amidst the challenges, we must say that we found solutions. We must say that we stood up for Agriculture, because the community stood up, because I stood up, because everyone stood up. This begs the question, who is ready to stand up? I know I am standing and there are many others standing, some of you, Honourable Members, may be seated and I know you cannot stand up while I am speaking, but you will stand when you are called to stand.

When we look forward into history, and I say look forward into history, how much of us want to see our names written in the soils saying that we stood up here, or see our footprints, the boots prints, that you stood up here. Time is limited and time is running out.

I signed up for this many years ago, as a little boy, and I would have worn different size of boots and I walked different roads, but I continue to stand up. Today, I

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have been given the opportunity to act on another level and I welcome it. I appreciate it to the farmers and of course, Mr. President, you said it for me, but I think it's onus that I say it from my own voice. My parents, friends, my wife, family, the community, locally, regionally and internationally, who have helped me along my journey in becoming a better person. I assure everyone that my mind is very clear, it's very, very clear regarding the commitment and the responsibility and obligations that this current status, (not the status on the phone), holds. I understand very clearly.

And, as I part, Mr. President, this new agriculture will happen, when we have a consistency of purpose. We have to constantly be going after it and focus and not give up and say, well, I give up on this child, because it's for the good of this country. It's the good to help our income, our livelihoods, our Healthcare System, the whole works. It's a good thing. A good that will ensure food security, good health and will ensure a sustainable environment; would see our young person's actively participating and entering into this Agriculture and Fisheries Sector, and when you start seeing that, we know that it's time to move on. A good that will create a sustainable economy and a good that will make us all proud and knowing the future will be kept bright by the thousands of torches of the Agriculture and Fisheries Sector.

The way to know and understand is to get your torch and join. We all have to be in it, not to win it, but to see it. I am calling on all, wherever you are at this moment, to get your torch and let us light the flame of Agriculture and Fisheries for a brighter future.

Let it glow, Mr. President. I am not a Prophet, I never claimed to be. But as I learnt as a little boy in Primary School, there was a little Nursery Rhyme. I wouldn't go through the whole Rhyme, but I will say it: ***"But, the Time to be Happy is Now"***.

Mr. President, Honourable Members, I say to us, I say to our Nation, I say to our diaspora: ***"Light your torch. If you don't have a torch, we can find you one. Let us glow Agriculture and Fisheries."***

Mr. President, finally, as our farmers and fisherfolks would say: ***"The moon is right. The time is now."*** Thank you. **(Applause)**

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Moment of Silence – Former Senator Dudley Andrew
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Mr. President: Thank you, Senator St. Clair, for your very profound opening contribution. I know that you will be proud of it, when you sit back and read it, or in the years ahead, when your grandkids pick up that booklet that we have contemplated, to read your contribution, very instructive.

Honourable Members, it is fortuitous at this time, although on a somewhat somber note, to ask of us, in the wake of this sterling Maiden Speech by the Honourable Member from St. Andrew, to pay tribute to the memory of another Honourable Member, a fallen soldier of this Senate, whom I had the privilege to serve in my early sojourn here in this House, and who was also a Farmers' Representative. He was indeed, a specialist in agriculture, in that he was one of Grenada's leading banana producers. He passed away on Sunday, October 11th, at age seventy-two (72). It is my understanding that his wife also died earlier this year.

Dudley Andrew was a simple man. He was fiery. Quite often I looked to him for partnership, as I carried the workers' struggle in this Chamber and he carried the farmers' struggle in the same Chamber, and we became very good friends.

So I will ask of the Senate, in our tradition, to stand at this time for a moment of silence, and to have the Clerk convey to Dudley's surviving family members, our most profound condolences, to convey to them also, that we, at this time, share their grief, and we stand for a moment of silence to pay tribute to this outstanding Grenadian farmer, who has done much to carry us to where we are, at this moment in time, Dudley Andrew.

(One Moment of Silence Observed)

Mr. President: Thank you, Honourable Members. The Nation is grateful to him.

Clerk: Item 7 - Ministerial Statements.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

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Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I stand to give an update on the Ministry of Health, one of those Ministries I am charged with the responsibility to cover within this Honourable House.

And, as we are aware, Grenada continues to grapple with the issues of the COVID-19 pandemic, and also, on the heels of this, Dengue. And the need for us, as a People, to continue to respect the protocols and all the safety measures that are being advocated by the Ministry of Health, WHO and PAHO, and so forth. It becomes increasingly important for us as a People, to recognise the dangers posed by these diseases, and the need for us to not only be concerned about our own safety, but the safety of those around us.

To date, Mr. President, Grenada has recorded thirty-two (32) positive cases of the COVID-19, since the start of the pandemic and it's equal among both genders, sixteen (16) males and sixteen (16) females.

We would remember that on the 22nd March, 2020, Grenada would have confirmed its first positive case, and today, we are now up to thirty-two (32), a very good mark within the sub Region, in terms of numbers, and also, extremely good results, in terms of those, who have been to hospital and we have had no deaths. The median age of cases is fifty-six (56) years, and it ranges from eight (8) years to seventy-three (73) years.

Since the reopening of the borders at the beginning of October, eight (8) new Lab confirmed cases of the COVID-19 have been identified. Seven (7) were imported and one (1) import related, and the breakdown of countries are as follows. We had: two (2) from the United Kingdom; one (1) from France; two (2) from Canada; two (2) from the USA, and of course, one (1) import related.

The latest case, Mr. President, was confirmed on the 7th of November, imported from the USA, on a flight that arrived on November 1. To date, there has been five (5) hospital admissions for COVID-19, with zero (0) deaths. Twenty-seven (27) of the thirty-two (32) cases have since recovered, so in short, we have five (5) active cases on-Island. A total of some seven thousand, five hundred (7,500) PCR tests were done so far, in Grenada. But I just want to take a moment to commend our people, in large

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part, for following the protocols, the social distancing, the wearing of the masks, the sanitising and so forth.

But, there have been a few indiscretions that have been painful to this country and we have to be reminded of this. And as the Nation was in an uproar, over the last weekend, with the 32nd case, we had a situation where the Nation had been brought, almost on its knees, because of the indiscretion of one person. We had to deal with this. You would remember Case No. 25, Mr. President, breached quarantine and was all over the place. And as a result of this indiscretion, some seventy-seven (77) persons were in quarantine and had to be tested twice, to ensure that they were not infected. It also slowed down a major construction operation in the North of the country; so, in this period, productivity would have dropped, family income would have been curtailed, because of the indiscretion of one individual.

But, added to that, Mr. President, of the seventy-seven (77) persons, who had to be tested and tested twice, the burden had to be brought to the State, four hundred and ten EC dollars (EC\$410.00) is the cost for one PCR test. So let's do the Math, and we will realise that the Nation in this period, in this, as people would say: "grugru days", brought about because of COVID, the State had to find resources to conduct those tests.

With this last case, we trust that the extent of the exposure to the Nation would be less than Case 25, but as we would say: **"One is too many,"** because that is four hundred and ten dollars (\$410.00) that could have gone, or probably it might be four hundred and ten times ten (410 x 10), you never know, that could have gone towards providing more services for our vulnerable people. So, I just want to reach out to the Nation and ask our people to continue to be vigilant and to wear a mask and do the necessities, as being advocated by the Ministry of Health.

As it relates to dengue, Mr. President, Grenada is currently experiencing an outbreak, which began in August of this year. The Type (3) Dengue virus has been confirmed, as the cause. To date, a total of three hundred and seventeen (317) cases were reported, so far. Unfortunately, this is about more than twice the amount we had for the entire period, last year. And what is of major concern to the Government is that

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of the three hundred and seventeen (317), two hundred and seventy-eight (278) of these were recorded only, in the past thirteen (13) weeks.

I just want to remind the Nation and remind our People, to protect yourself from dengue and all sorts of viruses, it's a personal responsibility we have. We know what cause the breeding site of the Aedes Aegypti Mosquito, as the main vector responsible for dengue. So, let's keep our surrounding clean. Stagnant water, we need to remove those and every area that possibly could cause the breeding of mosquitoes, let's try to deal with it. As a Ministry, our response to this is by one, public sensitisation and public education and awareness, we're doing the necessary fogging and so forth. But, we, and I'm saying we, as a Ministry of Health alone cannot do it. We need the cooperation of all our citizens. And it is painful at times when you as a homeowner will do the necessities, do all that it takes to keep your surroundings clean, but down the road, those sanitisation methods or so forth, are not practiced and it's an open space. So, you might say, well you keep your place clean, but your neighbour's mosquito will come and visit. So, it is the responsibility of all of us. Let's do our do and do our bit to curb the spread of the dengue and of course, the COVID-19. Let's continue to follow the protocols. Let's continue to do the necessities to keep our country safe. Thank you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Garraway. Senator Chris De Allie and then Senator Lewis, I think I see his light.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President. Through you, and directed to my senatorial colleague on the "Other Side," giving a report on health, in particular, on the COVID virus and the quarantine issues that we see coming forward and the violation of the quarantine procedures. I want to ask the Member on the "Other Side," if there is any consideration from the Ministry of Health, to reconsider how the Home Quarantine Programme is administered, in particular, and if the situation with the watch that is put on people's hand to monitor them, if that process is working properly,

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because my information is that it has not, and there is need for us to tighten, or review that process.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. And, I just want to thank the Honourable Member for these questions, extremely important questions, and what we have realised from the Ministry of Health, our biggest challenge, at this point in time is Home Quarantine. So, of course, we had to reassess the whole situation and come up with some more stringent decisions, as it relates to ensuring that we have this thing under control.

Let me start with the geo-fencing, or GPS watches, as you rightly asked and raised. Yes, there is no secret, the current watches that were on the market, there were some issues with them, serious issues and the Service Provider would have reached out to another company, a new company to get watches that are currently used in Jamaica and St. Lucia, and the watches should be here today or tomorrow. And from a practical standpoint, we believe with the new devices, we'll be better able to detect if persons were to move out of the radius where they're supposed to be, that is one.

Secondly, and I think extremely important, what we've been able to identify is that the violators of the quarantine are for a certain age range. So persons over sixty-five (65), how we will treat a person over sixty-five (65) asking for home quarantine will be totally different to a person forty (40) and under. And children, five (5) and under, how we will treat with them would be totally different, in terms of the ease we will allow those minors to get the necessary quarantine.

However, if they are with the family and it's one setting, they will remain together. We also looked at persons who are sick and disabled how we treat with them. But the bottom-line is and we all agree, Home Quarantine has provided the biggest risks for this Nation and we had to tighten up.

I heard someone complaining this morning, via social media, and saying it's like we're just changing the thing arbitrarily. We were four (4) days in quarantine, because

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this person from Canada violated and we moved from four (4) to seven (7) days. The bottom-line here and I am speaking to the Nation, the bottom-line here, is the safety of this country and the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. That's the bottom-line. If it means that you will have to move the quarantine period upwards to protect this country, then so be it. Other countries, First World countries, they still hold on to fourteen (14) days. Seven (7) days is not bad. But if that is what it will take to keep our country safe, that's what we are going to do. Thank you.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable André Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President, and Senator De Allie, basically touched on some of the concerns I have, but I want to make the following point.

Through you, Mr. President, we will all agree that the aspect of calling on the community to assist in the different ways possible is extremely important; a lot of it has to do with confidence. We in the Labour Movement have consistently called upon people to follow the protocols. We have called on and supported the draconian measures that have been taken and there need to be stiffer measures and implementation of penalties, because if there is any further lockdown, the workers are the ones who will, undoubtedly, bear the brunt. **(Applause)**

But permit me to ask, so far, in relation to patients Nos. 32 and 33. I think it's 32 and 33, or 31 and 32, if I get it wrong or right, how many persons are in quarantine, as a result of this and, are the restaurants closed? And, I go back to the aspect of confidence. It has been felt outside, by a number of people that I have interacted with that patient 25, I think he is about thirty-two (32) years old or so, there seemed to have been a bigger, a more public issue in relation to this.

So, you heard the news about the construction company having to close, you heard the news about the seventy (77) people having to be quarantined. But in relation to patient Nos. 32 and 33 or 31 and 32, whatever, you are not hearing what is the direct impact. We have heard that, I think, four (4) restaurants were visited. If that information

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is correct, I think from the Ministry of Health. But we need to know how many people have been quarantined, so that these messages can go out there to reinforce to people, and then our citizens can rest assured that not because it is a Doctor, and I am not saying that this is the case, but perception is reality in this thing, not because it's a Doctor, one seems to be able to not hear about the potential impact.

So, it is important for us to hear this, and Senator Garraway you touched on an important point. The aspect of the age range, we would want to see, based on the sixty-two (62) and fifty-three (53) year old, that consideration is given to tightening, not in relation to just the eighteen (18) to forty (40), or whatever it is, but we have seen that the Home Quarantine by itself is not working and therefore, for the different age groups, whatever it is, stiffer monitoring procedures should be put in place. And I want to end by re-asking the questions: what amount of people have been quarantined; are the restaurants locked down/shut down, as a result of patients Nos. 32 and 33 or 31 and 32?

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Just a reminder, because you may not have the information, this could always be deferred and be placed in a written answer that will give you the time to get the information.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, well, thanks again, to the Honourable Member for your support and your commitment towards ensuring that we work together in this pandemic in protecting the country, protecting our workers. As I speak, the Contact Tracers are still on the job, re cases 31 and 32. But, we have asked a number of persons to isolate themselves.

Yes, four (4) restaurants were visited, but the beauty of it, if there is any beauty in this sort of madness that would have transpired, the population in the area of those

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restaurants were very small. And, in one case in particular, one restaurant wasn't open to the public. One of the other ones, when visiting the area, the protocols were fully followed, have them on a table by themselves, kind of isolated, and the staff who visited them were in their full PPEs and so forth. So, a lot of measures were in place, because one of the things that I want to commend the Ministry of Health for is their continued vigilance, in this regard, and training and to ensure that the establishments follow the protocol.

I am going to say, what we have identified going forward, is that some of those Establishments that have been given the right to open, will be asked to close. If you cannot follow the protocol, if you will cause people to assemble in large numbers, tables more than the numbers that are required, because you cannot get the spacing, we will have to do those things, and those are the decisions that will be made going forward. But to answer you, yes, the Contact Tracers continue to do their work and persons have been asked to isolate themselves. Of course, tests will be done to ascertain whether persons are positive or negative and I hope, in this regard, that they are negative.

Mr. President: Senator Tessa St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Garraway for that report. I too, wish to commend the Ministry of Health, for the work that they are doing. But one thing seems very clear to me and that appears to be the ignorance of the fact that a critical part of Public Health is the social and behavioural aspects of that. So, to me, the Ministry of Health seems to be focusing quite heavily, on the Epi and Biostats Surveillance, the contact tracing, the environmental part of it, the Health Policy part of it, but they're not paying particular attention to the social and behavioural aspects of Public Health, which really is where people's behaviours are going to be monitored or changed and so on.

Having said that, I would like to ask a direct question, because I would have listened to the Press Conference with Dr. Charles, and there was a thrust to have a stricter or more stringent monitoring security. So, maybe the Honourable Member could

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tell us what initiatives are currently being taken to ensure that this does not happen again?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much. Mr. President, I want to also thank the Member for her continued support, in this regard. I know she's within the Public Health domain, so she understands exactly what we are dealing with and what needs to be done. And, I thank you for the commendation that you've given to the Ministry of Health, well taken.

As it relates to the whole idea of behavioural changes or patterns and trends and the likes and so forth, we are very much aware, as to what happens if you restrict person's movements and ability to be free and so forth. There are reactions to it.

So, what we have been able to do within the Ministry of Social Development, the necessary counselling and so forth and observations, that is being done at this point in time, because, yes, it's one thing, Mr. President, to protect the entire population by restricting freedom of movement of others, but that in itself, has its own disadvantage too. So if you do not take the time to psycho-social training, and counselling and so forth, we could have another issue that you have to deal with. So all those issues have been taken into consideration and the Ministry of Social Development, as you know, the Minister is now within the Ministry of Health, as well, and I think it's an excellent match, to deal with the fallouts from the pandemic.

As to the question, in terms of strict and stringent measures, to enforce the Laws of this country, that has been given, entirely, to the Royal Grenada Police Force, and we will have to ensure that they do that and do it forcefully.

Yes, as a Nation, we're very peaceful and hospitable, but when our safety is threatened by those who want to flout the Laws, there is a zero tolerance towards that. And when we talk about stringent measures, yes, you will have the Security Forces throughout the length and breadth of this country, ensuring that the monitoring is done, the devices that will be used to track and so forth any violations, and I want to say, any violation would be treated with the high level of seriousness that it deserves.

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One of our Caribbean Nations is reeling with community spreads of this virus, because somebody came through the cracks and just moved around and infected people throughout the society. And with small jurisdiction like ours, Small Developing States like ours, if there is an outbreak in one part of the country, let's look at just how the buses move, daily. So, you can take it from Grand Anse and drop it into the Bus Terminus and from the Bus Terminus either in St Andrew, or St. Patrick, or wherever, and before you know it, the entire country could be engulfed. So, we take this very seriously, and thank you for raising it, because the Nation has to realise this is a serious time. When we look at what is happening in our First World countries, and how they are grappling with the second wave and they have to shut down and so forth, we can't afford this here. So, we will continue to be tough and even tougher. Thank you.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, before we receive any further questions, if I could suggest, based on interest from the "Other Side," COVID is an issue that concerns all of us, but I just wish to remind the House and on "This Side", we don't actually have a formal Representative from the Ministry of Health, and I believe we are getting some quite detailed discussions on this. So if I could urge Members on the "Other Side," if they have specific questions and require more detailed answers, that they can be put in writing and we can address them at the next Sitting in the Questions section.

Mr. President: That's why I reminded Senator Garraway, that if he felt that there were limitations to the knowledge that he has, he just had to indicate that he would prefer to have that in writing. And that was a way, diplomatically, of indicating to the "Other Side," exactly what you have just indicated. But I am just sharpening my diplomatic and plenipotentiary skills, so to do. Senator Noel.

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Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Thank you, Mr. President. Senator St. Cyr, my colleague has already touched on the security aspect, one of the questions I was going to ask. However, there is a concern, in terms of the arrangements, in regards to the Guest Houses or quarantine areas, in regards, especially to weekends, as people having access to the necessary things that they need, in cases of food and so on. Because there were some Committee members, who called me on the issue of last weekend where the owners or whoever in charge of one of these quarantine areas, a Guest House in particular, where the people didn't have food, and they told them to go and get their food and come back and that was the case. So in terms of the arrangement, what kind of arrangements are made for these kind of things, one.

And two, is the Ministry of Health or the Government, keeping its end of the bargain in the sense, when travellers, when people come into the country, after the four (4) days, is there enough staffing in the Ministry of Health to test these people to give them the all clear, because we are hearing, it's a problem; that we can't bring people here and people paying their monies to come here, and expecting after the four (4) days, that they're tested, and you can't keep them confined, they're going to get frustrated and so on, because we're hearing these things are happening. So, does the Ministry of Health have enough staffing and experts in terms of to test these people to give them the all clear after the allotted four (4) days, so that they could move on, or whether they should stay in quarantine or not? Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, if I could suggest again, very detailed question. I would suggest that the Member on the "Other Side," put this in writing, and we can provide the appropriate response rather than covering it here in the Ministerial Statements, which as far as the Standing Orders concerned, are not the appropriate place for such detailed debate on Ministerial matters.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

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Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: All right. Mr. President, I was just going through the Standing Orders to just bring us into conformity to the Standing Orders. I know, you would have given leeway to Members to ask questions, and that becomes the order of the day. But really and truly, we have deviated from the Standing Orders.

(Inaudible comments from Mr. President)

Mr. President: You are presenting a Ministerial Statement and the questions are confined to the Ministerial Statement. If when the question is put, there is an insufficiency of information, you indicate that, but this not a breach of the Standing Order.

In every Parliament, there is a question period. This is a Ministerial Statement. You are reporting on a Ministry and granted you are reporting on some Ministries of which you don't have direct responsibility for, so your knowledge will be limited.

But, if we refer to the Constitution of Grenada, it makes it clear that the Executive is responsible to the Parliament. And if you issue a Ministerial Statement, a question can be asked. If you, for whatever reason, as I just repeated to you, find there is an insufficiency of knowledge on your part, you just simply indicate that and we move on, because a question doesn't lay the basis for a debate. There's no debate. It's just a simple answer. So, I just thought I should correct this, because there seemed to be a growing misconception that people can't ask a question under Ministerial Statements.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: That was not the intention, Mr. President, but I stand guided. I just want to look at Standing Order 18, and I am looking at (f). **“A question shall not contain arguments, inferences, opinions, imputation, ethics, ironical expressions, or hypothetical cases.”**

The last question that was asked by the Honourable Senator was not based on facts. It was based on opinions, based on hearsay, based on, just name it. I am not able to answer this question, because there are no facts here. What I would suggest, as the Leader of Government's Business would have intimated earlier, given that the

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Ministry of Health, who has ultimate responsibility for this and the Minister so is not here, I will be more than grateful to provide all the answers you require, if those questions could be given to me in writing. Thanks.

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

Mr. President: Senator Simon Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move that the following Papers and Reports be laid on the Table:

1. Report of the Fiscal Responsibility Oversight Committee (FROC), 2019 - Response of the Minister for Finance;
2. Report of the Director of Audit on the Resources Managed for the period May, 2016 to 31st October, 2019 for Solar PV Demonstration and Scale-Up Project;
3. Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Confiscated Assets Fund for the year ended 31st December, 2018;
4. The Annual Report of the Grenada Development Bank (GDB) for the year ended 31st December, 2019;
5. Annual Report of the Grenada Tourism Authority for the year ended 31st December, 2017;
6. Report of the Supervisor of Insurance for the year ended 31st December, 2019;
7. Annual Report and Financial Statements of the National Insurance Board (NIS) for the year ended 31st December, 2019;
8. Audited Financial Statements of the Grenada National Stadium Authority for the Financial Years ended 31st December, 2016 and 2017; and, finally;
9. Financial Statements and Audit Report thereon of the Grenada Airports Authority for the financial year ended 31st December, 2017.

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Mr. President: Honourable Members, these Papers and Reports are so laid.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Mr. President, through your leave could I just make a quick comment on Papers that were laid?

Mr. President: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Five seconds. Mr. President, you know, every year we come we do this and we do this in a lot of areas. I want to, through you, and I know we have a strategic plan that was released for how we go forward, if we could get a Committee in place and start looking at these things?

Mr. President: If you could?

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: A Committee in place to start looking at these statements, because you know, GTA, 2017 and Airport Authority, 2017, that information is of no use to us now in 2020. And Airport Authority is sending a statement now for 2017 results. We need to debate that in another Committee and not here. But, these are things we really need to look at seriously. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Senator, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) should be addressing all of these matters. I mean, this should come to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), which is chaired by the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition, and that is where the details of all of these things, and you can actually summon individuals to appear before the Committee to explain a number of matters.

Another route, of course, is, as I said to you before, and I have been preaching, nonstop, I guess that's what preachers do. Preachers don't stop, if people stop listening, they keep preaching; that one of the methodologies that is set up within the very system that we have are Resolutions. So, one can frame a Resolution on a Report, and you can debate it, as the case may be, so it's up to you. But, the idea of a

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Committee is not a bad thing, except that there will be limiting powers on such a Committee, whereas the Public Accounts Committee has all powers that are necessary. And, it is in fact, a Committee based on Principles of Accountability, and this is why it's not headed by the Executive, at all. It is headed by the Leader of the Opposition; one of his principal functions in the House is as head of that Committee to do this work. So, it's very important work and I'm agreeing with you, that we should. I will give further thought to us, maybe an informal Committee could be set up, you don't need the blessings of a Resolution of the House. There's absolutely no reason why different Members of the House can't get together and study these different documents and prepare questions out of them, or Motions to be debated. I mean, these are things, you know, we've done in the past. But, like everything else, a lot of the things we did in the past are just falling by, because current persons are not picking up where we left off.

So, I just thought I would make those comments in response to your request for a special Committee. And, I am saying there's no reason why an informal Committee can't meet. The proper place and the more profound place is the Public Accounts, because these are Public Accounts, these are Public Accounts. These are Public Reports to the Parliament. And, as I said, you have the powers to summon people. Yes. You have powers to summon people to appear before you, to explain a number of issues. Yes. Clerk.

Clerk: Item 9 - Petitions.

Item 10 - Government Notices.

Item 11 - Unofficial Notices.

Item 12 - Questions.

Mr. President: Senator Noel.

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Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, with your blessings, I have three (3) questions here, and question one has (a), (b), and (c) and so on. So, I'll like to know if I should go ahead.

Mr. President: Yes. Just go right ahead.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Okay. All right. **Question 1:** As it relates to the official opening of the Grenville Bus Terminus and Market:

- a). Does the Government of Grenada have any plans to officially open the Grenville Bus Terminus?
- b). How soon does the Government plan to officially open the Grenville Bus Terminus? and;
- c). When will the Government of Grenada hand over the booths at the Grenville Bus Terminal to the owners for business? That's Question (1).

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: If I could suggest, Mr. President, if the person asking the question could indicate who that question is directed toward. We have the information in front of us, but I think it would be useful, in terms of being able to direct the discussion, as we move forward. But, that first question was directed at myself. So, for all subsequent questions, if you could indicate that and that will help us, on "This Side."

So, Mr. President, in terms of the first question: Does the Government of Grenada have any plans to officially opening the Grenville Bus Terminus? The answer is, yes.

How soon does the Government plan to officially open the Grenville Bus Terminus? The plan is to officially open it in 2021?

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When will the Government of Grenada handover the booths at the Grenville Bus Terminal to the owners for business? They'll be handed over after all of the remedial work is done and the completion of negotiations with the Grenada Ports Authority, who will be managing the Bus Terminus after official opening.

Mr. President: Senator Terry Noel.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Thank you again, Mr. President. Question 2 is directed to Senator Simon Stiell, again:

Concerning the regular flooding in the Town of Grenville, St. Andrews:

- a. Does the Government of Grenada have any plans to solve the flooding problem in Grenville?
- b. How soon will the Government of Grenada address the flooding problem in Grenville?

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: So, in response to the first question: Does the Government of Grenada have any plans to solve the flooding problem in Grenville? The answer is yes.

How soon will we address the problem? Government has recently tendered a Flood Mitigation Study for the Town of St. George, Grand Anse, the Town of Grenville and other areas with flooding issues through grant support. Expressions of interest have been received, and a contract will be selected before the end of this year. The study will inform remedial actions to address the problem of flooding in Grenville.

Mr. President: Senator Noel.

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Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Thank you, again, Mr. President. Question 3 is directed to Senator Simon Stiell, Leader of Government's Business, and it reads:

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Government of Grenada proposed one million dollars (\$1 m) in grant and two million dollars (\$2 m) in loans to the GCNA:

- a). What were the conditionality proposed by the Government, should the grant and loan be accepted?
- b). Did the GCNA accept or receive the grant or loan offered to them by the Government?

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. With regards to the conditionality attached to the two (2) Loan Agreements, agreement, Mr. President, agreement has been reached between the Government of Grenada and the GCNA with regards to the grant component of that support package. So, it is that, that I would I would speak to. The loan component is still pending. The key conditionality attached to the loan funds is that those funds can only be used as price support as a subsidy to the Nutmeg Industry to maintain business continuity due to the impact of COVID-19.

In other words, Mr. President this is to directly support and benefit our farmers and not to cover operational or administrative expenses of the Association. The GCNA will be required to provide monthly reports to the Ministry of Agriculture detailing the use of those grant funds to ensure that they are being used for the purposes intended. In the event of a breach of contract, then repayment of those portions of monies used in that material breach will be repaid to Government. And, on completion of the grant period an Audited Financial Report for the period is to be provided by the GCNA. Mr. President, these are grant funds, these are taxpayers' money; therefore, it's important that those funds are adequately accounted for.

Part b, did the GCNA accept or receive the grant or loan offered to them by the Government? The response, Mr. President, the GCNA has accepted Government's

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grant offer and the funds will be dispersed within five (5) working days of the execution of that Agreement. So I believe the formalities of signing that Agreement are to be completed at this time.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President, and this Question No. 1 is directed to Minister of State with responsibility for Disaster Management, Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway:

1. a) Is there a legal framework for the operations and/or functioning of NaDMA?
- b) If there is not any legal framework, then, why not?

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, the question: Is there a legal framework for the operation and functioning of NaDMA? The answer is, yes. The second question is non-material. That's the two questions you asked, so the second one, which was: If there is not any legal framework, then, why not; and that is immaterial.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you. Question No. 2:

- a). Based on the disaster preparedness, how many shelters should there be in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, respectively?
- b). How many shelters are existing in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, respectively?
- c). If all the shelters are non-existent, what are the reasons for that?
- d). What resources are given to Shelter Managers to work with within the Shelters?
- e). Are all Shelter Teams in place?

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f). If all the Shelter Teams are not in place, what are the reasons for that?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. The first question is not fully put together. As it says: Based on disaster preparedness... I am not sure what it intends to mean, how many shelters should there be in Grenada? I want to rephrase this to understand, I think you're asking how many shelters are required for the population size of Grenada? I want to believe that's the question you are asking.

Mr. President, based on how this thing is done and given that we have a population of one hundred and ten thousand (110,000) divided over three (3) Islands, Disaster Shelters are based on what is available in terms of within your Constituency boundary, what facility that is available. But to answer the question directly, as you said, there is no right answer to this. What is important and based on the rephrasing of the question, the Government is satisfied that based on current available data, the shelter allocation, per District, is adequate, that's what is important.

b). How many shelters are existing in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique? The response, Mr. President is, one hundred and seventeen (117) Emergency Shelters, which is broken down as eighty-two (82) Primary Shelters and thirty-four (34) Secondary Shelters. And let me just break this down further: A Primary Shelter is a Shelter that can be occupied prior to and during an event, or an impact. And a Secondary Shelter can only be occupied, after the event.

c). If all Shelters are not existing, that question, again, is immaterial.

d). What resources are given to Shelter Managers to work within the Shelters? And the response is, they are given gloves, masks, sanitisers, stationery, handheld radios, medical kits, sleeping bags and sanitising and hygiene kits.

e). Are all the Shelter Teams in place? My simple response, no. We have one hundred and seventeen (117). But, what I can say, Mr. President, if there is need for a Shelter to be opened, we have teams to occupy those Shelters. As the last episode we had, we had Shelters opened in the South, we had Shelters opened in the North, and

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we had opened in the South and only one person showed up. We had in the North, in Carriacou and we had about four to six (4-6) families. On Island, we have enough Shelter Managers to take control of the Shelters wherever we need to open. That was it? Did I miss one? No. I think that's it.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Oh, sorry, sorry. I missed (f).

(f) If the Shelter Teams are not in place, what is the reason for that? Mr. President, Disaster Management operations across the District are run by volunteers, and occasionally, there are times when you have more volunteers than you need and there are times when you have less than you need. But, what we have been able to do, at all times, if there is need for activation of the Shelters, we have those Shelters fully staffed.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Mr. President, can I seek further clarity just on the answers provided.

Mr. President: Yes, certainly, yes.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Okay. Thanks, Mr. President, and thanks for your assistance, as we work together. A National Disaster is what it is, and, therefore we all have equal concerns about it.

So, based on the Disaster Preparedness Plan, based on even your help in constructing the Plan, the question, am I to take it that we do not have for Grenada that required 'x or 'y' amount of Shelters? In your help, you said that based on Disaster Preparedness, one would expect there is a National Disaster Plan. And, if there is a

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National Disaster Plan, because Shelters must be an integral part of the Plan and because we have Constituencies, or locations and one would expect that there will be locations identified for Shelters and what would be the appropriate Shelters required. If this is the case, then, according to your answer, we have not been given a total, as to how many Shelters are to be based, if everything is ideal. And therefore, the answer has left me a bit worse off than when I started. As a matter of fact, if I was to accept the answer provided by the Minister, we are in a bad state.

Mr. President: Well, let me just clarify one thing here, Senator. A question cannot be used, as a pretext for a debate.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Point taken.

Mr. President: This is engendering a debate. The Minister has given an answer. You may not be satisfied with the answer and if you are not, then the next procedural step is to come with a Motion of some sort. But we can't be debating whether his answer was proper, improper, fully, not fully, accurate, or not inaccurate, as the case might be. He has provided an answer and the Rules, expressly say that an opportunity to ask a question cannot be an opportunity to debate. So, I just thought I would just highlight this. I did not write the Rules, but these are the Rules and it's heading down that route. So, if you want to debate the answer, then you would have to come with a substantive Motion dealing with the issue.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Question (b) was very specific. It asks; how many Shelters are existing in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique respectively? The answer provided said, as follows. I hope I am not entering into a debate, but guide me here please. The answer provided, as such, that there are one hundred and seventeen (117) Shelters in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

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(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes, the question specifically asked...

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: The question specifically asked.

Mr. President: Okay. That's okay. Now, it says respectively.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes. How many Shelters are existing in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, respectively? The answer provided did not address the specificity.

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes. Thank you.

Mr. President: So, the answer did not address the clarification that you are seeking. Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I just have to do the research and I will pull up the itemised Shelter list for the country. But, I will give you that before the Sitting finishes.

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes.

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Mr. President: Yes Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Question No. 3, directed to Senator Winston Garraway. What is the budget allocated for Disaster Management?

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, thanks very much. I will answer the question, but before I do, I just want to take this opportunity to bring my esteemed colleague, back to the Standing Order, more or less, the Bible of the Senate, and we should be guided by this, and I will oblige to give you the information.

Let us go into Standing Order 18 (ix), and I will read it, because I want the Member to start making this an order of business going forward in the Senate. Going back to (g), we are looking at (g): ***“A question shall not be asked...”*** and let us go to (ix): ***“if the answer to which can be found by reference to available official publication.”***

The question you are asking me here is found in the Statement of Revenue and Expenditure for 2020. So, you have wasted the Senate's time by asking this or probably because you're not so versed with the Standing Order, but, let me just give you what is stated.

The Capital Budget for 2020, five million, three hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$5,350,000.00) and the Recurrent, six hundred and twenty-five thousand, one hundred and sixty-six (\$625,166.00). You want me to tell you the page too?

Mr. President: Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Question No. 4 directed to Senator Winston Garraway:

a. Are all committees and sub-committees fully staffed?

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b. If they are not fully staffed, then what are the reasons for that? Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, again, thanks for this question. The function of Disaster Management in this country is fuelled by volunteerism, as I have said before. We expect our people to volunteer, to ensure that the work of the Disaster Management is carried out and carried out effectively.

One of the things that we have identified, Mr. President, is that within a number of the Committees, the same volunteers are repeated and we have realised, in a lot of sense, that has created, in some cases, burnout, and as a result, there has been discussions and discussions are being finalised. So, in our next update of the Committees within the Agency, we will be collapsing some of the Committees into one, because they basically do the same thing.

Take, for example one with hazardous materials and hazardous waste; search and rescue. You have marine pollution and oil spill; we are going to bring them together, because they virtually do the same thing. So, in short, the answer to what you are asking, if we have all the committees fully functioning, and I won't say staffed, because it's volunteers, no, not all are fully functioning.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis. Thank you, Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you, Senator Garraway. Directed your way again, question No. 5: What resources do District Co-Ordinators receive to work within their Districts?

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

(Inaudible comments by Senator Garraway)

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Mr. President: Question No. 5: What resources do District Co-Ordinators receive to work within their Districts?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: You've asked before and I gave response to this. Oh, it was the Shelter Managers. So, could you ask the next question, and I will come back to five (5).

Mr. President: Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much. Question No. 6, directed to Senator Garraway:

- a). Is there a Deputy to the National Disaster Co-ordinator?
- b). If there is no Deputy, then what are the reasons for that? and
- c). If there is no Deputy Disaster Coordinator, should there be one to assist in the absence of the Coordinator?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: So, this is No. 5 on my order list here, so that's where the problem is. (5) (a): Is there a Deputy to the Disaster Co-ordinator? At this present time, no. (b), if there is no Deputy, then what are the reasons for this? During the fiscal year, 2020, no request was made to fill that post; and (c) if there is no Deputy Disaster Coordinator, should there be one to assist in the absence of the Coordinator? The answer to this is, yes.

Mr. President: Senator, I know there is a problem with the numbering. Are you in a position to come back or you want more time?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thanks, Mr. President. I need some more time, because only five (5) questions I received, but I will look to see what happened here.

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Mr. President: Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, and I do appreciate the answers, as we continue to ask questions and seek answers and provide answers to the Nation, who may be listening and will not be seeing this as a waste of their time.

These questions are designed now for the Minister for Climate Resilience, the Environment, Forestry, Fisheries and Disaster Management, Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell.

Question No. 1: In relation to the Government of Grenada's COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Package:

- a) How much money was and/or is allocated for the Economic Stimulus Assistance?
- b) How much money has been expended as of August, 2020?
- c) How many workers have received assistance for the months of April, May and June, 2020, respectively?
- d) How many workers have received assistance as of September 31st, 2020?
- e) Has there been any case of fraud/misappropriation/corruption of the Economic Stimulus Assistance by any Company/employer?
- f) If there has been any case of fraud/misappropriations/corruption of the Economic Stimulus Assistance, could the Leader of Government's Business inform, as follows:
 - i. What was their nature?
 - ii. The name of the Company/Employer.
 - iii. What is the total sum of money involved?
 - iv. Could the State have pursued any legal charges/actions?
 - v. Did the State pursue any legal charges/actions against any Company/Employer?
 - vi. If not, why not?

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Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. Through you, in response to the first question:

a), how much money was allocated to the Economic Stimulus Assistance? The supplementary Budget of 2020 allowed for an allocation of twenty million dollars (\$20 m) and that was for payroll support to specific Sectors/subsectors and was specific to Hoteliers, Restaurants and Bars, small Travel Agents and income support to public buses, Taxi Drivers, Tourists Vendors, Market Vendors and other identified hospitality-based business and contingencies for other overruns.

b), how much money has been expended, as of August, 2020? As of July 31st, 2020, approximately \$7.5 m has been expended on the Income and Payroll Grant Support (IPGS).

c), how many workers received assistance for the months of April, May and June, 2020 respectively? The following number of workers received assistance under the Payroll Support Programme (PSP) for the following months; for April, three thousand, two hundred and twenty-four (3,224) workers; for the month of May, three thousand, one hundred and forty-eight (3,148) workers, and for the month of June, two thousand, seven hundred and sixty-seven (2,767) workers.

Question d), how many workers have received assistance, as of September 31st, 2020? Mr. President, through you, in addition to the amount stated for April, May and June, one thousand, five hundred and forty-two (1,542) workers in the Hotel Sector received assistance for the month of July, and this is the only Sector approved for an additional one month stimulus payment.

e), has there been any case of fraud/misappropriation/corruption of the Economic Stimulus Assistance by any Company/Employer? Mr. President, through you, some irregularities were found and when persons were contacted, they indicated there was either an error, which was made, or a misunderstanding of the information that was

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provided. Mr. President, these errors were corrected to the satisfaction of the Ministry of Finance.

With response to question f), if there have been any cases and then you've gone through points (i – vi), in terms of the nature and names of employees, sums, etcetera. So, wrapping up all of those points, the response is, all matters observed and reported have been investigated by the Secretariat and the relevant businesses have been advised, and to date, the necessary adjustments have been made by these businesses, and as a result, there has been no need to pursue legal action.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Stiell. Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President, and thank you, Minister Stiell. But, permit me to get specifics. I understand the lumping of (i – vi), and I understand no action was pursued. But, Roman Numeral (ii) asked, what is the name of the Company/Employer. Aren't we entitled, if Companies committed irregularities as you called it, shouldn't the names be provided to this House. The question came from this House, I have not heard the names, one. Two, the sum total of the monies involved, these are specific questions. What has come our way is a lumping of issues, but these questions are extremely specific. I am seeking clarity. These questions are absolutely specific. The name of the Company and/or Employer, what is the total sum of money involved, these two, I am asking for the specifics. These questions have been asked very clearly.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I think my answer was very, very clear, and I am not going to debate this at this time. As stated in my response, the irregularities were found, errors, which were corrected. So, there is no question here of

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fraud, or misappropriation, or corruption. So, providing the information that Senator Lewis is requiring is inappropriate, in terms of the findings of the investigation and the response that has been provided.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Stiell. Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Mr. President, through you, for clarity, so that I can make sure that I understand the answer. I have my Constituents to report to. We represent workers in the Hotel Sector, so just bear with me by giving the background. I do not come here to represent myself...

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, are we debating this matter? In terms of the Standing Order, questions should not be a pretext for debate, and I think that is where we are going with this. So, your guidance will be appreciated, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Yes, Senator. Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Just for clarity again, finally. Is the Minister saying that there was no misappropriation?

Mr. President: Well, I thought that's what he said; that's what he said.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Okay. Noted.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I did promise to come back, as it relates to what will be now Question No. 6, and it would have asked: What

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resources do District Coordinators receive to work within their Districts? In the past, we have provided spades, forks, gloves, garbage bags and a small Telephone Allowance to District Co-ordinators.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you, very much, Senator Garraway, for the completion of these issues. I now move to Question 2 to Senator Simon Stiell. This question has to do with: In relation to the Marine Protected Areas (MPA), could the Leader of Government's Business, in the Senate, provide the following answers?

- a). How many MPAs (and MPAs would be Marine Protected Areas), so, I will just stay with the MPAs. How many MPA's are there in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, respectively? And just to repeat, respectively;
- b). Are they functional and/or enforced?
- c). If there are they are not fully or partially functional, then why not?
- d). How many Rangers should there be in Mainland Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, respectively?
- e). How many rangers are currently engaged in Mainland Grenada?
- f). Is there an MPA Manager?
- g). Is there an MPAs Communications Officer?
- h). If there are no MPAs Manager and Communication Officer, what are the reasons for this?

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. In response to question a), how many MPA's are there in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, respectively? Mr. President, through you, there are three (3) designated Marine Protected Areas on Mainland Grenada and one (1) in Carriacou. There are no MPAs in

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Petite Martinique. So, the MPAs that do exist are in Molinierre/Beausejour, Woburn/ Clarks Court Bay, Grand Anse, Mainland Grenada, and in Carriacou, Sandy Island Oyster Bed.

Are they functional or enforced? The answer is, some. Question c), if they are not all fully, or partially functional, then why not? Mr. President, through you, Sandy Island Oyster Bed MPA in Carriacou is fully functional; Grand Anse MPA has only recently been designated, Mr. President, and that was in March of 2020, so just before the Lockdown. Implementation plans for Grand Anse were recently designated and Woburn Clark's Court Bay is currently being developed to bring them into operation.

The operations of Molinierre/Beausejour MPAs were project funded through external Agencies. Those funding sources have now expired, those projects. Project supports come to an end, and efforts are being made to secure the additional resources to continue its operation.

d), how many Rangers should there be in Mainland Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, respectively? The response; Mr. President, the required number of Rangers, per operational MPAs is five (5) and that's to provide twelve (12) hours per day, seven (7) days a week coverage.

e), how many Rangers are currently engaged in Mainland Grenada? I will go through each of the MPAs: Sandy Island Oyster Bed, currently serviced by four (4) Rangers. And, then we are in the process of reappointing Rangers to Molinierre/Beausejour, and we are in the process, as I said, of operationalising Grand Anse and Woburn/ Clarke's Court. I will reiterate that Grand Anse was designated just a few months ago.

Is there an MPA Manager? The response is, currently, a dedicated MPA Manager is not employed. However, the Management functions are overseen by Technical Officers within the Fisheries Division.

Is there an MPAs Communications Officer? The answer is no, not currently. However, the Communications function, once again, is being overseen by Technical Officers within the Fisheries Division.

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h), if there are no MPA Managers and Communications Officers, what are the reasons for this? So, Mr. President, through you, the Communication's Officer was employed under one of these external project, the Grenada Ridge to Reef Project, but that contract has now ended and efforts are being made to seek additional funds.

That's it, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Stiell. Senator St. Cyr.

(Inaudible comments by Members)

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. Question 1 is directed to Senator Garraway.

1. Could the Minister provide details of the Integrated Solid Waste Management Project?

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much. As I speak, Mr. President, the Sergeant-at-Arms is distributing the responses to the questions that have been posed by the Honourable Senator.

(Answers circulated to questions 1 and 2 directed to Senator Garraway)

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Question 2, again, to Senator Garraway.

- a) What plans are being made, or under consideration for the old Telescope Waste Disposal site?

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- b) The Minister is asked to provide details of the World Bank (IUCN) Study conducted at the old Telescope Waste Disposal Site.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much. Mr. President, I want to advise that the...

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes, I just want to advise that the responses that were circulated, the answer is within that package. The Members have the answers at this point.

Mr. President: Senator, because it requires a verbal response because there is an asterisk next to it, you may wish to read the answer that is already contained there, because it requires a verbal response. But, you have gone beyond the call of duty and provided a written one. So, in conformity with the Standing Order, you must now read into the record to comply fully. As I said, you have gone beyond the call of duty, but to comply fully, you must now read, unless Senator St. Cyr; well, I ought not to be inviting violation, but anyway, let us...

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: What I am observing, if I may, is that question 1 is not asterisked, and I think that is the document that has been circulated.

Mr. President: But, Senator Garraway explained that the answer to question No. 2 is also contained in the document. Isn't that what you are saying, Senator?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Okay. Mr. President, Integrated Solid Waste Management Project Report, the Government of Grenada received approval for

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financing from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) towards an Integrated Solid Waste Project for Grenada. The protection of Grenada's environment...

(Senator St. Cyr rose)

Mr. President: One second, Senator. Are you standing on a Point-of-Order?

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: On a Point-of-Order, Mr. President. The Honourable Member is reading the response to question 1 and I required an oral answer to question two 2.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway, are you clear on...

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: I need to just look back at the question.

Mr. President: Just give him a minute while we sought this out.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: I am not seeing it here.

(Senator Williams rose)

Mr. President: Yes, Senator Williams.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Mr. President, if I may...

Mr. President: And, you are...

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: I am standing on a Point-of-Order, Mr. President, or rather just to inform the House that all of the previous questions asked

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were not marked with an asterisk, and therefore did not require an oral answer. But the Members of "This Side" of the House were gracious enough to provide oral answers to all of them.

Mr. President: Well, that's what I said. I said he went beyond the call of duty.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Yes. Yes. So I just find it a bit discourteous that our Member here, Senator Garraway, has gone out of his way to provide more than any of us would have expected, in answer to those questions, but he is being asked to stick strictly to the Standing Orders.

Mr. President: Senator, I got the point again, but we ought not to be debating the questions, and you are dangerously close to a debate.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: No, no. This is a Point-of-Order, Mr. President, directly addressing the Standing Orders, and I am seeing in the House that there is discretion being extended in relation to the procedures of the House, in regards to certain aspects, but in other aspects, where Members of the House are being gracious enough and to go beyond the call of duty to meet the needs of the House, there is, I think, some lack of leniency being extended to a Member of the House, who is doing his best, very best to answer those questions, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Let me just see if I can clarify this Senator. Question No. 1 is a written response. Question No. 2 is a verbal response. My understanding of what Senator Garraway said is that in the written response attached thereto, is a written response to the question under consideration, which is question No. 2. So he has responded, but in writing. And that's why I raised the issue, because there was a clear asterisk, I mean, I can't engage in the subtraction and addition.

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The questions before, never required a vocal response, but Senators gave it and I allowed it, because really, the mischief here is not severe or acute, and I am bearing in mind that the citizens are listening to this debate, and the citizens would want to find out, and it's all in the interest in a healthy engagement. So, the question is asked and it does not have an asterisk and you supply a written response, the citizens don't have an opportunity to understand what's really going on, and so I have, in an attempt to, I would say embrace the democratic engagement, I have given an opportunity for people to expand vocally, so that the citizens who are listening to the debate will have a deeper understanding. So, I understand that in the strictest clinical sense, yes, the Rules were breached.

But, in order to maintain order, the breach is not sufficiently acute to create a mischief, otherwise we will have a very straight jacketed; you know. So, I understand your point, your point is valid, I am not putting it down. I take guidance from your point, and this is why I said to Senator Garraway he may wish to vocalise. If the responses are here he may wish to vocalise, and the reason I am enticing him or endearing him to vocalise is that the citizens of Grenada would have an opportunity to hear the response, because as it stands at the moment, this written response is not shared with anybody else, it's just us Members here and the Senator, who, primarily, moved the question in the first case.

Thank you for your intervention. I mean, it's quite an order. I have no difficulty with it. I mean, you have to keep the President on his toes, that's what you're here for. You're not here to kowtow to the President. Keep me on my toes. If there is a breach, stand firmly and say, Mr. President, I stand on a Point-of-Order, this is the breach, and then the breach might be an honest omission on my part, or it may be a calculated omission, in order to achieve a particular greater objective, which is why I moved in that direction.

So, as you know how your Courts interpret the Constitution, it's a dynamic document. So, at one point, a particular behaviour is totally unconstitutional, totally repugnant to the conscience of the Nation, and at another point that very said thing,

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according to the Courts; and we've had that experience. The Constitution, which allows liberty for all and recognition that we are all born with certain inalienable rights, was never extended to black people, you know that. I don't want to get into that history, but I am just dealing with the dynamics of the interpretation of presiding people who have judicial responsibility. And, I am no Judge but certainly, I have a quasi-function of maintaining the Order and the Rules.

So, I take your point. It is meritorious, I am not striking it down, but I am just explaining that. So, Senator Garraway, the floor is now yours. You decide how you would wish to proceed with the matter.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Okay. Mr. President. So, in answer to a) of question 2: What plans are being made or under consideration for the old Telescope Waste Disposal Site? There are no plans at this moment.

b), The Minister is asked to provide details of the World Bank IUCN Study conducted at the old Telescope Waste Disposal Site? Here is my response; the Asia Pacific Waste Characterization (APWC) Study is presently being conducted on Grenada, as part of the Plastic Waste Free Island Project. The project was initiated on July 8, 2020, and expires January 31, 2021. The following was executed: hiring and training of local staff that would be tasked with the fieldwork aspect of the study; conducting interviews with householders and commercial enterprises in various demographics; collection and sorting of waste from the various homes and businesses; Desktop Data Collection from various stakeholders including, Grenada Solid Waste Management Authority, Customs, Port Authority, Tourism, Recyclers, Producers, Cruise Ships, Fishing Vessels, Airplanes and others. The APWC has set up an Online Platform where individual collection or interview sheets are uploaded online, from the point of contact, either by the interviewer, or interviewee and this is accessed directly, by the overseas Statisticians.

An Enterprising Group of fourteen (14) young Grenadians has been engaged and trained to participate in the Data Collection, most with an academic focus on the areas

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related to environmental studies. The Grenada Solid Waste Management Authority authorised contact with Waste Collection Contractors and a route established for the collection of some two hundred and twenty (220) samples of garbage from householders across the Island, divided by demographic. Samples of garbage were collected curb side from communities' designated high income, medium income and low income. The collection in all three (3) categories were done in St. George's, representing urban area, St. David, representing a rural area, and St. Andrew, Grenville, representing a peri-urban area.

The samples were taken to the Solid Waste location in Telescope, St. Andrew during the month of August, for sorting, which was modified by a collaborative effort with a project at the Grenada Solid Waste Management Team, to ensure safety and adherence to strict Protocols established. Samples were sorted daily and then disposed of by transporting away from Telescope to the Landfill at Perseverance. Household interviews were also conducted in St. George and St. David with fifty (50) interviews remaining to be conducted in St. Andrew, to be completed by the end of November, 2020.

Members of a team travelled to Carriacou in September and conducted a total of 30 household interviews and household sample collection and sorting as well as a Landfill audit of the Dumfries Landfill in Carriacou. A Desktop Data Collection continues, coordinated remotely by APWC Project Manager Martina De Marcos. Over the next few weeks, it is expected to complete a seven (7) days visual Landfill audit of the Perseverance Landfill, as well as collections and sorting from a sample of commercial enterprises in Grenada, including Supermarkets, Banks, Insurance Companies, Saloons and others. According to requested demographic of the Study, a sample of waste from fisher folks will also be collected and sorted, as part of the data set. Here ends my answers.

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr.

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Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Senator Garraway, much appreciated.

The following questions are directed at Honourable Simon Stiell. Question 1: As it relates to the Pilot Project implemented at the Grenville Secondary School:

- a. The Minister is asked to provide to the Senate a description and an update of the Pilot Project.
- b. What criteria were used for the selection of the Grenville Secondary School for this project?
- c. To what extent was consultation for this project done with stakeholders, namely Teachers, School Board, Parents, students and past students?

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Okay, through you, Mr. President. In response to question 1 (a), it asks to provide the Senate description and update of the Pilot Project. Mr. President, the STAR Intervention Programme is designed to identify and create an actionable plan for addressing the needs of students, who are at risk of not completing school.

STAR provides instructional, psychological, physical, social and spiritual support to students, and is focused on providing all necessary mechanisms to help each of the students identified, to stay in school, to graduate, be responsible citizens and contributing members of society. Mr. President, the STAR Programme started in September of this year, and is scheduled to run over a six-month period.

b), what criteria were used for the selection of Grenville Secondary School for this Pilot Project? Grenville Secondary School has experienced a disproportionate number of behavioural challenges in recent times and there have been calls from teachers, parents, and the Commissioner of Police for a formal and structured intervention. The STAR Programme is a response to this request, but also offers an

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opportunity to develop a model that can be applied to other schools experiencing similar challenges and a number of schools, Mr. President, have already been identified.

c), to what extent was consultation for this Pilot Project done with stakeholders, teachers, School Boards, parents, students and past students? In response, the programme was developed in the first instance, drawing on information collected from the principal, teachers and other staff at the school, including information obtained from Historical Stakeholder Consultations on the issue of student behaviour. Initial consultations were also held with parents and students...

Sergeant-at-Arms: Mr. Deputy President, in the Chair.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. Deputy President, initial consultations were also held with parents and students to identify those who wished to participate in the programme. Further consultative sessions were held with the eleven (11) students and their parents, who agreed to participate in the programme, prior to the commencement of the programme. Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you very much, Senator Stiell. The following question is for Senator Cox. In relation to the National Youth Ambassadors Programme:

1. The Minister is asked to provide a copy of each of the completed application forms for the Youth Ambassadors' Programme.
2. The Minister is asked to indicate the stratification process used, if any, in the selection of the Youth Ambassadors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Senator Cox.

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Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy President. Through you, Mr. Deputy President, question (1), Mr. Deputy President, in response, we had a challenge in answering that question, responding to the question fully, and I will explain and maybe, with the Member's understanding, may accede to that limited response. Mr. Deputy President, we have the application forms and more so the questions speak to completed applications forms. Some of the forms weren't completed, but we have all the applications. There were fifty-nine (59) applicants, thirty-four (34) of which met the criteria and twenty-five (25), who didn't meet the criteria.

The challenge, Mr. Deputy President, is that those applications contain personal information, not only of the applicants, but also of next of kin and other siblings. We thought it a little bit tricky in making that information public. I am not certain that we have the right information to make other persons personal information public document. As such, we believe that we can and I think that might be satisfactory, because I do not know, in its entirety, the purpose for requesting the entire application form, but we can make available the names of all the applicants, if so, is accepted. But, because of other personal information on the form, not related to the applicant only, we didn't want to do that at this point-in-time, Mr. Deputy President. I'll sit, so that the Member may want to respond to that.

Mr. Deputy President: Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Mr. Deputy President, thank you. I find Senator Cox's response very interesting indeed, because there are ways of de-identifying the application forms. Copies can be made and they can be de-identified. But I also choose to look at the point where he said I asked for completed application forms, and some of them were not completed. But I am not going to raise a debate on that issue. So, for now, I will accept the response given.

Mr. Deputy President: Senator Cox.

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Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. Deputy President, I believe what I did offer the Member is the same thing that she is suggesting. But I didn't want to take it upon my own to present redacted information without the Member acceding to such, because the question did ask for a complete application form. So, that is where we are right now. But if the Member is satisfied with having those other personal information redacted, those applications forms can be made available. I don't see any challenge in that regard. So, Mr. Deputy President, that is where we are.

I think, in honesty, Mr. Deputy President, we need to be fair and principled. And, I don't know what the legal ramification that may lie with us just putting out somebody's personal information without their permission in that regard. So, that is where we are. So, it's not a matter of us not wanting to do it, as I said, the information is there. It's just that there are other information on the form, so that is where we are.

Mr. Deputy President, as regards to the second question, and the question reads: The Minister is asked to identify the stratification process used, if any, in the selection of the Youth Ambassadors. And the answer, Mr. Deputy President, selection was based on a number of set criteria and applicants selected throughout to ensure countrywide representation. Mr. Deputy President, and just to add, the criteria was shared with the Member, even without her asking for it, formally. I just want to put that on the record. So, thank you very much.

Clerk: Item 13 - Personal Explanations.

Item 14 - Motions.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

WHEREAS the debate on the Gracious Address delivered by the Governor-General on the occasion of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Fourth Session of the Tenth Parliament, on Friday, 9th October, 2020, was further deferred to a date to be fixed;

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BE IT RESOLVED that said Address be now debated by the Senate.

Sergeant-at-Arms: Mr. President in the Chair.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to amend this Motion to read:

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

Mr. President, I think it would be the next Sitting quite probably, would be the Budget Debate and the Budget for 2021 is founded on the Gracious Address by the Governor-General. So, at that point, that debate will take place, hence, the request to amend this for that debate to be deferred to a date to be fixed.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved as amended.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, according to my watch, it's nine minutes to one. We started promptly at 9:00 o'clock, which has become the great tradition of this Senate. We start dead on time, unless there's some compelling, extenuating circumstance, which prohibits that from happening.

Under the provisions of the Labour Relations Act of which Senator André Lewis would be most familiar, without the consent of the worker, we can't go for more than four (4) hours without the right to have access to something to eat. I want for your consideration now, although it's my privilege so to do, but as you see, I never like to really conduct the business of the Senate by imposition, but more by the invitation towards consensus. I want to suggest that because it's a few minutes to 1:00 and that will take us to the four (4) hour break in accordance with the Law, I want to suggest, and given the fact that lunch is here and my understanding is, it may be still piping hot. I want to suggest that after a very robust and extensive round of engagement this morning, that we take the luncheon recess now for one (1) hour, and we will be back here, at 2:00 o'clock to recommence the work of the Chamber.

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If there are no objections, and if there is concurrence, and I take it that there is concurrence, I now hereby declare the Senate adjourn for the lunch break, to resume promptly at 2:00 p.m., in the afternoon. Honourable Members, this House now stands adjourned until 2:00.

House adjourned for lunch at 12:55 p.m.

House resumed at 2:00 p.m.

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

Mr. President: Pray be seated. Good afternoon, Honourable Members, this House now resumes. I think were at the point of moving Resolutions to fill the Standing Committees of the Senate. Senator Stiell, you have the floor.

(The President locates the documents)

Mr. President: Yes. Senator Stiell you can proceed.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 63 (1) (a) **(The Committee of Selection)** of the Senate's Revised Standing Orders provides for the appointment of a Committee to consist of the President, as Chairman, and two (2) other Senators to be known as the Committee of Selection;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Senate doth now appoint the two (2) other Senators to the said Committee.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

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Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, by way of explanation, for each new Sitting of Parliament, it is necessary to appoint Senate Members to the following Committees: the Committee of Selection, Standing Orders Committee, House Committee and Committee of Privileges. The role of each of these Committees, the Committee of Selection has responsibility of selecting Members of Committees, or other such matters. The Standing Orders Committee considers matters concerning the Standing Orders, as may be referred to by the Senate. And, the House Committee considers and advises the President on matters concerning the comfort and convenience of Senators. And the final one, the Committee of Privileges addresses any matters that affect the powers or privileges of the Senate, and will be referred to the Committee by the Senate.

So, Mr. President for the Committee of Selection, the nominations for this Committee, are: myself, Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell, and if a Member on our side could second this; and Senator the Honourable André Lewis, as a Member, and this will be under the Chairmanship of the President.

Mr. President: Senator Williams.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Mr. President, I rise to second the Motion put forward by the Leader of Government's Business.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, the question is that Senators Simon Stiell and André Lewis be nominated to constitute the Committee of Selection.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved.

Mr. President: Senator Simon Stiell.

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Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: WHEREAS Standing Order No. 63 (1) (b) of the Senate Standing Orders provides for the appointment of a Committee to consist of the President, as Chairman and two (2) Members to be known as the Standing Orders Committee, which shall be elected as soon as may be, after the beginning of each session;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Honourable Senate doth now appoint the Members to the said Committee.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, the nominations for the Standing Orders Committee are: Senator the Honourable Norland Cox (Member); Senator the Honourable Tessa St. Cyr (Member), under the Chairmanship of the President.

Mr. President: Seconders?

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Mr. President, I beg to second the Motion.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved.

Mr. President: And just let me take the opportunity to point out, we have an urgent business that we have to address, and that is, we have to update our Standing Orders, so we need to begin to do this. I have some work and ideas that I have been noting over time, where I believe that we need to improve the functioning. And the entire objective here is to make our conduct more democratic, to make it more responsive, and to make it more informative, as we handle the people's business.

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I just want to just state what I think are the principles in mind. As the Americans would say, ***“It aspires towards a better union.”*** In this case, it will be aspire to be a better Senate. Senator Stiell, we now move to the House Committee.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: WHEREAS Standing Order No. 63 (1) (c) of the Senate's Standing Orders, provides for the appointment of a Committee to consist of the President, as Chairman and two (2) Members, to be known as the House Committee;

BE IT RESOLVED this Honourable Senate doth now appoint the two (2) Members to the said Committee.

Question proposed.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, the nominations for the House Committee are: Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway (Member); Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie (Member), under the Chairmanship of the President.

Mr. President: Senator Judd Cadet.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Mr. President, I wish to second the Motion put forward by the Leader of Government's Business.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway and Senator De Allie, there may be some work for you to do to consider matters related to the work and business of the House. So, the Privileges Committee, I think, is the last Committee therein.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President.

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WHEREAS Standing Order No. 63 (1) (d) of the Senate Standing Orders provides for the appointment of a Committee to consist of the President as Chairman, and four Members to be known as the Committee of Privileges, which shall be elected as soon as may be after the beginning of each session;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Senate doth now appoint the four (4) Members to the said Committee.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, the nominations for the Committee of Privileges are: Senator the Honourable Cathisha Williams (Member); Senator the Honourable Judd Cadet (Member); Senator the Honourable Roderick St. Clair (Member); Senator the Honourable Terry Noel (Member), under the Chairmanship of the President.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved.

Clerk: Item 16 - Bills.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell. No. Sorry. Senator Winston Garraway, you're the one that's piloting the Tax Administration (Amendment) Bill, 2020. You now have the floor, Senator.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading, a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Tax Administration (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

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Mr. President: Senator Winston Garraway. Could I ask Members? Don't you feel a little bit warm? I am. I don't know if it's because I have on an extra coat, but I am.

(Laughter)

(Inaudible comments by Members)

Clerk: A Bill to amend the Tax Administration Act No. 14 of 2016 shortly entitled, Tax Administration (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the Senate be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through all of its stages, at this Sitting.

Question put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

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Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, what we have before us today is a very important Bill. It seeks to amend the Tax Administration Act No. 14 of 2016, which was brought into force on May 1, 2016.

The Bill contains four (4) Clauses and seeks to clarify the procedures for administration of penalties under the Tax Administration Act and other Tax Legislation. But before I proceed further, I just want to back up a little, Mr. President, and to say that, as we all do agree, and are aware of, that the paying of taxes are extremely important and vital for the economic development of any society, any country.

And, the World Bank Doing Business Report provided some information, as to why paying tax matters. And, just permit me to read, it's about eight (8) lines, Mr. President. It says: **"Paying of tax is important: to foster economic growth and development Governments need sustainable resources of funding for social programmes and public investments. Programmes providing health, education, infrastructure and other services are important to achieve the common goal of a prosperous, functional and orderly society. And they require that Governments raise revenue. Taxation not only pays for public goods and services, it is also a key ingredient in the social contract between citizens and the economy."** And, I just want to take this last sentence. **"Taxation not only pays for public goods and services, but it is also a key ingredient in the social contract between citizens and the economy."**

And, in this present environment, Mr. President, of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we have seen countries around the world grapple to deal with basic social benefits for its people, we understand how important it is to pay your fair share in the development of your country. And, early this morning, we had a question as it relates to the stimulus package. What was this? The stimulus package, as outlined by the Government was a contingency measure that was introduced to provide subsistence for employees and employers, to ensure that families didn't go under. The basic bread and butter issues of providing food on the table were not taken away. Of course, if you do not have a salary and you do not have a job, it's difficult for persons to take care of the basic needs of the family. And Government would have provided this stimulus package for a number of

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months, to ensure that families were taken care of. And today, what we have before us, this Tax Administration Bill, primarily seeks to ensure that we all pay our fair share, we all make our contribution towards nation building. It is so important.

There are three (3) primary objectives of the Bill, Mr. President. Clause (4) seeks to insert a new Schedule, Schedule 3, to insert a form for administration of the Fixed Penalty Regime, the “**Notice of Opportunity to Pay Fixed Penalty**”. So, what we have as is currently obtained with the Ticketing System by the Traffic Department, a Fixed Penalty Ticketing System, what Clause (4) seeks to introduce is to ensure that, that form is brought into the sphere and a fixed penalty, a Ticketing System can be introduced, so persons, who, for one reason or the other, would have not complied with the Regulations and they have admitted guilt rather than going to Court, they can pay a fixed penalty and move on.

Clause 2 seeks to amend section 12 to establish the regiment for a Registration Certificate to be issued to every body corporate that is registered with the Comptroller of Island Revenue for the purpose of the principal Act and to establish a requirement for the body corporate to display the registration certificate. So, as is currently obtained with your VAT Registration Certificate that you have to display in your business, the Tax Registration Certificate that we’re talking about is of the same nature. So, you are a registered taxpayer, with a body corporate, you will be issued with a certificate and that certificate has to be displayed in a prominent place in your business establishment, so when your Inspectors or so would come to inspect your business that will be an indication that you are compliant with the Tax Regulations. If a body corporate does not display that certificate, it is an offence and you can be charged for that. You can be ticketed, or if you choose not to agree with the ticket, you can take it to Court, that’s up to you.

But, in this period of introducing it, there is a six (6) month transitional period in which after this comes into effect within the six (6) month period, if you did not display the Certificate, you will be pardoned, but after that, it will be an offence and you can be charged, as a result of not displaying the certificate.

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So, the Inland Revenue Division undertakes to issue the Registration Certificate of all body corporates that are currently registered. And, no body corporate would be charged for failure to display a Registration Certificate in this period.

3, to formerly establish that non-compliance under sections 77 - 85 in Division II of Part IX constitutes the specified criminal offence, which attract the specified maximum penalties and the specified fixed penalties for persons, who wish to accept guilt and pay the fixed penalties instead of challenging the charge before the Courts.

Mr. President, we have under consideration, three (3) pieces of Legislation that this Fixed Penalty Ticketing System will cover, and as we saw in sections 75 - 85 in Division II of Part IX, they constitute a specified, criminal offence and the specified fixed penalties for persons, who wish to accept guilt and pay the fixed penalties instead of challenging the matter before a Court.

But, what is apparent, Mr. President, while this was stated, the principal Act failed to formerly establish the criminal offence. So, what we seek to do today is to establish the criminal offence, and if an offender fails to pay the prescribed fixed penalty within the prescribed time, it gives rise to the criminal prosecution for the offence.

So, if a fixed penalty has been issued on a business or a body corporate and he accepts his wrongdoing, maybe a mistake, an omission, but he admits guilt, he has thirty-one (31) days to pay the fine and that's the end of the matter. But, if he chooses not to, Mr. President, or if he has agreed to pay it, but somehow forgot to pay it, and thirty-one (31) days elapsed, eleven (11) days after the 31st day, if he came to make the payment, that money will not be accepted, it would be returned, and of course, the matter will be adjudicated in Court.

But there are benefits for persons accepting to agree to pay the fixed penalty. Let us take for example, what will constitute a penalty? Why would a person be fixed with a fixed penalty? So if for some reason, the authorised Officer, reasonably believes that a person has committed a fixed penalty offence, the authorised Officer may serve on the person, a fixed penalty notice, informing the person that if the person does not wish to be prosecuted for the alleged offence, in Court, the person may pay in the

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manner and by the time specified by the notice and as I said, within thirty (31) days that will be cleared.

But, it is important to note, Mr. President, that if a person pays the fine within the thirty-one (31) day period, not only will he pay the minimum that is possible for that offence by paying the fixed ticket, he also will not have a record against his name. So, you want to maintain a good character and so forth, yes, you've violated the Orders and you have been issued a fixed ticket penalty, you pay and you move on. But, if you choose to challenge the matter in Court and you lose, the ratio here will be 2:1. And let me give you the offences: **"77 (i): Failure to register your business. A fixed penalty Ticket would be two thousand, five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00)."** But, if you choose to pursue the matter in Court and you were not successful, the criminal penalty would be five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00), and of course, there will be a record against your name.

77 (2): **"Failure to display Registration Certificate."** Again, a fixed penalty will be two thousand, five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00). You pay that on the spot, you're affixed your certificate and then you move on. If you choose not to and the matter proceeds to Court and you lose, the charge will be no more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) and no less than two thousand, five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00). So you stand the chance of, of course, the time it's going to take to be in Court and so forth. There might be some other charges or fees that you would have to pay, if you have to have your Lawyer with you or so, and on top of that, if you were to lose, you now stand a chance of having to pay double the amount if there was a fixed penalty.

So, the first thing is, comply with the rules, so there will be no need for fixed penalties. But, if, for some reason, you did not obey the rules and a fixed penalty is issued to you, the second thing is pay it and move on, rather than taking it to Court and you may lose in Court, and it moves from two thousand, five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00) to a maximum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00).

However, you may have a good reason for wanting to pursue the matter in Court, because you felt there is a good reason why you didn't display the certificate, as the

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case may be. But, as I have said before, the lowest charge will be imposed on you is at a fixed penalty, so pay it and move on.

78, **“Failure to notify of specified information;”** again, businesses are required to provide information and if they fail to do this, it's an offence, with a fixed penalty of two thousand, five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00) and the maximum for a criminal penalty, five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00).

The bigger one is **“falsification of invoices, receipts, credit and debit notes.”** This here speaks to a deliberate effort to deceive. If you look at those before, you could make a mistake, you could probably forget, but if you were to write up a receipt that is false, deliberate effort and for that... because I heard the Member on the “Other Side” saying fraud. Deliberate effort to mislead, the fixed penalty is ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00), and the criminal penalty, a maximum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00).

“Negligent or Fraudulent Underpayment;” the criminal penalty here is two times the applicable fixed penalty, that's the criminal penalty, and the fixed penalty is 25% of the underpayment, if not exceeding one hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000.00), or not exceeding 75% of 25% of tax liability for the period, or underpayment, if greater than one hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000.00), or greater than 25% of tax liability for the period. So, as you would realise, the last two (2) that I cited will take much more and the penalty is heavier, because it speaks to a deliberate effort to mislead.

In section 81, **“False or misleading statements,”** that again, would be taken very seriously. And, if the competent officer or the responsible authorised officer were to request information and false or misleading statements were made, and it is picked up that the information provided is not accurate, it's misleading and is designed to throw the Officer off, a fixed penalty will be of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00); **“if an amount payable by the person would have been less, if it were determined on the basis of the information provided in the statement, the amount by which that amount would have been so reduced; or if the amount of a refund that the person applied for would be increased if it were determined on the basis of the**

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information provided in the statement, the amount by which that amount would have been increased.” So, again, misleading or false statement would be heavily penalised.

82, **“Failure to maintain documents,”** and that is a big one. Every body corporate, as well as we, as private citizens, we need to have accurate information, as to our income, expenditure and so forth. So, in the business sense, the business needs to ensure that it maintains accurate information. The Accountable Officer may request information of the body Corporate, and if they fail to provide the required information, the fixed penalty will be fifty dollars (\$50.00) per day, as the failure continues, or two (2) times the applicable fixed penalty. So, if the authorised Officer enters the premises on the 1st of the Month and requested information on the 15th of the month; so he requested the information on the 1st, and you were unable to provide the information and he returned on the 10th, and you still didn't have that information, it means, therefore, that the last ten (10) days, the rate would have been fifty dollars (\$50.00) per day.

The importance here is, it's for our body corporate to ensure that they maintain accurate documents. The owner of the business may not be able to do it, so that's why you have Accountants and others around, who provide these services, so you hire the competent skills in the business to ensure that you comply to the Laws of the Land.

83, **“Failure to comply with third party notices.”** Again, it said, for the fixed penalty it's **“25 per cent of the difference between the amount payable by the third party and the amount paid to the Comptroller by the due date specified in the Notice under section 68.”** And the fixed penalty is two times the applicable fixed penalty.

For 84, **“Failure to provide facilities”** and again, in this case, the fixed penalty would be one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) or the criminal penalty would be two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) should you take it to Court and lose. And 85, **“Failure to comply with the notice to give information;”** again, this is another issue here where persons may, for one reason or the other, choose not to provide requisite information that is requested by the authorised officer and for that there is a fixed penalty offence for

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failing to comply, which is two thousand, five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00) or if the matter is taken to Court and you were to lose, it is some five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00), as the charge.

As I have started, I want to end saying the same thing, Mr. President, the importance here or the value of this here is to ensure that persons comply with the Regulations. Persons put their house in order, and to ensure that they have their certificates up, they provide information as requested. You do this and there should be smooth sailing. There shouldn't be an issue of having to pay a fixed penalty. But the minute time persons choose to go contrary to the Regulation, that's when you have an issue. So, with this, Mr. President, I want to commend the Bill for its second reading.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Chris De Allie.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I have taken a close examination of the amendment being proposed to the Tax Administration Act, and I have a few general comments I want to start off with, as being moved by Senator Colleague on the "Other Side."

I didn't hear the mover of the Bill give some context, apart from saying that they believe that the best way to proceed with this amendment is to ensure compliance and to some degree simplify what we do in Tax Administration where it comes to infringement of the Act in some area or not.

The other thing that bothers me with this approach, Mr. President, is the fact that in the Tax Administration Act, there is a very detailed and very open process for taxpayers, who have an issue to have the matter revert to an Appeals Tribunal if they are aggrieved by a certain matter or they cannot get compliance or agreement from the Tax Department on a particular issue that is being looked at.

This process here seems to say to the taxpayer, you either accept the fixed penalty now and make your life simple, and if you plan to challenge it, we're going to Court, and if we go to Court, the penalty moves up to a certain figure depending on what the penalty is.

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And, I go back to the issue of context, because you get the feeling that based on how we have proposed to move with this that the average taxpayer in Grenada is not compliant in a number of areas, whether it be displaying of certificates, or other issues that will seem to represent itself as it relates to how the business community operates. Now, I am not standing here to say that we don't have issues on the business community side, far from the truth. Some of us would look to exploit whatever loopholes there are in the Law to evade the tax, and do what we have to do to create issues. I am not speaking about those. I am speaking about the businessman or the businesswoman, who may, legitimately be involved in some business and may legitimately have an issue and the issue need to come forward and be discussed. But this particular amendment is sending the perception that if I have an issue; so, for example, you talk about displaying the certificates. I may have had my certificate up, you have a storm that passed, the area where I have had it up got wet, it got destroyed, I took it down. The Tax Officer passed by two (2) months after and doesn't see it up and writes up a fixed penalty. I am supposed to pay that right away and if I challenge and I say, well, listen, no, well, you know I had issues and so on and so on, is there room in this for discretion from the Tax Officer or if he or she is able to refer it to the Comptroller?

But, this says I am simplifying the process. I see you have an infringement, here is the fixed penalty, take it, accept it, because you are infringed. There are not circumstances around this infringement that I want to discuss. So it sends the perception to the Taxpayer that I am accepting no sort of compromise. You either go with this fixed penalty or not. I cannot see how that could encourage compliance and encourage businesses to do the right thing.

One of the fundamental rules of tax and paying tax is that the taxpayer must feel that there is room for understanding and there is room for discussion, for us to get maximum compliance. It's not supposed to be held as a big stick over my head, the Legislation, so that, if at any time I make a slight infringement the hammer comes down. I don't think that is the intent, and I don't think that is the intent that we want to convey in making amendments to these Acts. And I am wondering if there is any room for us to

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have some sort of discretion being available to the taxpayer in the case of circumstances where there are infringements and the infringements need to be looked at.

I have a difficult time understanding the eleven (11) day non response, the section that deals with the eleven (11) day. So, the fixed penalty is issued, after thirty-one (31) days I have not paid, and then eleven (11) days after that, it is said, if I paid within the (11) days, I am giving you back your money. I must be misinterpreting that. Probably you need to explain that for me a little further. But I am trying to understand why we have eleven (11) days, first of all. What is the rationale for eleven (11) days, because that is forty-two (42) days that I have not paid the fixed penalty, and after that eleven (11) days, I am saying to you, I don't want your money, hold your money. So I come on the 12th day, you give me back my money and you say, listen, I am taking you further, we're going to Court, because I want to increase the penalty we get and the possibility of going from two thousand or two thousand, five hundred dollars to five thousand (\$5,000.00). So, there is discretion there for the Court to move from two thousand, five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00) to five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00), you are sure. Once you take me to Court, the least the Judge could charge me is two thousand, five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00). The Judge could always go anything higher and up to a maximum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00). Again, I am saying, is that what we want to communicate to our Business Community? I don't know.

If I come on the 12th day and we have a thing about the 12th day of Christmas. If I come on the 12th day, and I say, here is my money, what is this issue of giving me back my money? I thought that tax and paying tax and if we have an infringement is to satisfy both sides and to say, alright, guys, I accept this, let us move on. Now, if I have a taxpayer that is constantly infringing me and constantly coming on the 12th and 13th day, I could understand that, because then, I want to send a message that you have an intent that is not an honourable intent. So, I am trying to understand this eleven (11) day thing, and the whole thing appears to me, Mr. President, that for the gain of simplicity and for the gain of issuing something like a fixed penalty, we are giving up the ability to say to this community that has to pay tax that we are now going to be using the

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big hammer approach and the heavy stick approach, and I have a difficulty with that, because that does not ensure compliance down the road. It doesn't. It will get all of us more polarised, taking to our sides and getting more litigious in this matter, because once I have a genuine issue why I feel I had an issue and I am not seeing in this and probably when you look at the principal Act, I know the Comptroller has the discretion. But how this amendment is going in that section, it doesn't appear so because there is no time it is referred to, that there is discretion that the Comptroller has to deal with some of these issues, if it's escalated to the Comptroller, or even to the Appeals Tribunal. I am not certain how that fits in there and probably the mover of the Bill could explain that after, when he comes to respond.

There is a section, section 84 that speaks to reasonable facilities that have to be provided to the person that comes to do whatever they're doing from the Tax Department, whether it's an audit or not. Again, I haven't seen what is defined as reasonable facilities. But here again, this Tax Officer may come and it looks to me, as though we have opened up ourselves to subjectivity here. This particular Tax Officer may come and say listen, I don't believe the facilities you have given me here is reasonable. What is that? I know if they come, they are supposed to be given a desk. But suppose the washroom facility is downstairs and not upstairs, where they're operating, and they have to run downstairs to the facility, is that unreasonable or reasonable, Mr. President, and could I be given a fixed penalty for that, because the Officer believes it is unreasonable for him/her to have to run downstairs, or run upstairs to avail themselves of some basic amenity?

I am saying that if we have to put in these kind of words as "reasonable facilities," we need to be clear what it is we are referring to as "reasonable facilities," because then, it opens up ourselves to a level of subjectivity that, now you are saying to me that I have the power to issue a fixed penalty and you either accept this fixed penalty from me now, or take me down the road, and if you don't accept it, it could be more dangerous for you, because you will have to pay me more. So, I have an issue with some of these under section 84. And there are other areas where it talks about two

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times the penalty and so on, which, Mr. President, can be significantly more than what we have now.

But, generally, Mr. President, I think when we try to do amendments, especially in Tax Administration, there is a need to understand what the problem is. Is it that there is a high degree of infringements to the Act? And is it that the Tax Department is now so overburdened by this, that we have to put in a Fixed Penalty System to simplify it? What is the context that this amendment is being proposed in? Is it that the Business Community is highly responsible in what we do, when it comes to Tax Administration? I am not understanding why we want it come to this and say to the public and to the Business Community that we're going for an amendment, and I know the mover of the Act says we have six (6) months.

You know, Mr. President, six (6) months, if we were to pass this amendment here, I supposed not "if," but "when," it's June next year, June, 2021. COVID is still going to be around with us, because the vaccine they just got, they say you have to keep it at minus, I think, at some ridiculous temperature for it to be valid, for it to be used. I don't know which Doctor in Grenada has a fridge at minus twenty something degrees to keep a vaccine. So, I say that to say in a COVID environment, our businesses are going to be seriously still affected, in terms of fluidity and what happens.

And here we are in the House now, passing an amendment to the Act to take effect and to give at least six (6) months' notice that these penalties will come and will say to me that if I don't have up my Tax Certificate in my business and certified copies in other businesses that I may have, I subject myself to a fixed penalty immediately, and I have some sorts of concerns about that. Are we saying that now is the right time? This is the time now to do this, or do we want to consider this, and have; I don't want to use the word "consultation," because we could consult forever and nothing happens. But, you see, Mr. President, I go back to context. If this is a severe problem we are having, I could understand the immediacy for it. If not, are there ways and means we could do this and not have to go down this route? Thank you, Mr. President.

(Applause)

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Mr. President: Thank you, Senator De Allie. Any other Senators? Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I listened to my colleague Member on the "Other Side." He didn't say he supports the Bill, but he had some concerns.

I just want to dispel the notion, he didn't refer to it, but it is out there, that whenever a Government and he referred to it by saying, if now is the right time to impose such penalties, because COVID is still around and the challenges businesses will face. But this is the right time to introduce it. Let us get it out of the way, because what we have seen here, Mr. President, these are very simple and clear principles to follow, simple and clear principles to follow, displaying your certificate, providing facilities for the Administrative Officer to function in.

And, as you asked the question, what are reasonable facilities? If an Auditor is to come into your business to do the necessary audit, of course, he will require a facility that will make his experience in the business conducive to do what he came to do. So, if a desk is required, you provide a desk; whatever to make the work experience smooth and transparent, that should be provided.

But what I have realised, Mr. President, every time there is an introduction of some piece of Legislation, Legislations are introduced to correct some defects, and you ask the question, there are defects and you're looking to correct them, and you're correcting them.

This should have been enforced since 2016. There was an oversight. So, let's look at what would have happened. We could say probably you had a grace period of four (4) years to get it done, just a little over four (4) years, because May 1 is when this was brought into being. So, over four (4) years and you haven't displayed your certificate? Well, it is time to do it, and you still get an additional grace of six (6) months to make it happen. So, this is not being hard. We have allowed four (4) years to elapse and didn't ask our people to comply with the Regulations.

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You asked about the eleven (11 days), because it seems kind of strange and odd, you didn't understand it. This is added grace that has been given to the Business Community, thirty-one (31) days is when you have to pay this. The Fixed Ticket Penalty, you have thirty-one (31) days to do it. But, an additional grace of some eleven (11) days is provided and that's a benefit, because let's put it this way, the Government understands that for some reason, you were not able to get it done in thirty-one (31) days. Sometimes you forgot, but the thing is, you were given an additional eleven (11) days and that is grace. And when you look into the Bible, God provided Grace for us, mankind. We are ever so often messing up, and He still has His arms open there to protect us. This is the grace for the Member, who would have asked the question.

But let me dispel the notion and the belief that whenever a penalty is introduced, it's because the Government is looking to raise revenue, far from it. Government is not looking to raise revenue. The penalty is introduced to ensure that there is compliance to the Regulations, that's what we are trying to do. And I can link it to the point my colleague Senator Tessa raised this morning, as it relates to psycho-social issues that arise as a result of this present pandemic. You could look at it. But this is not really to cause you to deviate, or think that Government wants to raise money. No. If you comply, there is no money to be paid. So, the importance here is to comply with the Regulations and that is what is important at this point in time.

So, let us take for example, persons have been saying Government introduced a charge. If you didn't wear your face mask, you could be charged up to five hundred dollars (\$500.00) and persons are thinking Government is looking to raise revenue, because you have to pay stimulus package and so on, and we want to raise money for that reason. No, far from it.

What Government is trying to ensure, is there is compliance with the Regulations and persons protect themselves from COVID, because if you don't and you were to become the source of spreading the virus, you ultimately will end up in the General Hospital and it will cost the Government more to protect you and the other citizens of the country. So the easiest thing to do is to encourage compliance and that's what the

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fixed penalty is all about, to encourage compliance, nothing to do with trying to raise monies on the backs of people.

And to answer the question, why now? Why not now? You had four (4) years and four (4) months to get it right, and we didn't do it, and you're getting a further six (6) months to ensure that you are complying. And let us take for example; I am going to use the example my colleague Senator on the "Other Side" would have used. What if some water damage and your certificate got damaged and you had to pull it down and so forth and two months later you forgot and you still didn't have it, and the Inspector should come? I mean, I understand the context; you're looking for some form of sympathy and saying you could be lenient with me, and yeah, I understand. But if you feel that your case is so strong, take it to Court, and let it be adjudicated by the Magistrate, and the Magistrate may agree with you and release you. But that is the risk you have to take. So, I mean, your certificate got damaged, and you mean two (2) months after you still didn't put it back up? No. That is on you.

So, the other thing that this is seeking to do is for persons to become more responsible, clear, and simple. We have a responsibility to display our certificate. That's the least of the things, put up your certificate. Let's do it. But, as I've said, four (4) years and over four (4) months, well, my Maths is a little bit wrong, because May is the fifth month and today we are in July... sorry, the 10th of November. **(Chuckles)** I am thinking of something far. So, we have four (4) years and six months. **(Chuckles)** Okay. Okay. Okay. Yeah, I exposed my hand. I exposed my hand. So, four (4) years and six (6) months we could have, at least, got it right.

So, Mr. President, as I said, it's simple principles to follow, and I want to give more credit to my business people of the country, that they will adhere and to ensure that they display their certificates and follow the principles that have been requested of them. And, for these words, and I thank my Member for, at least, the issues you raised and clarity that is given. I want to present the Bill for its second reading, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Garraway.

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Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate resolves itself into a Committee of the whole Senate to consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

Question put and agreed to.

House in Committee.

House resume.

Mr. President: I have to report, Honourable Members that a Committee of the whole House considered the Bill, with the amendments, which were already stated. Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I move that the Bill be read a third time.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

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Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Norland Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Clerk: A Bill to amend the Road Traffic Act. CAP 289A shortly entitled, Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the Senate be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through all its stages at this present Sitting.

Question put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, thank you very much. Mr. President, before this Honourable House is the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill, 2020. Mr. President, I think it is important for us to lay some context and some background, as

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to how we arrived where we are at this present moment. It's an important Bill for the country. I think it's important to prepare and present such context.

The Government of Grenada, Mr. President, over a number of decades, has been receiving feedback from the general public, as to ways and means as to how we can improve this sector of transport in Grenada. And, Mr. President, this, as we know, from time to time, there are a number of issues that arise, as the sector continue to evolve. And so, Mr. President, we have a number of engagements ranging regarding issues, not limited to either bus routes, dealing with bus routes, bus fares, road safety, road condition, pollution, derelict vehicles, a number of issues, a number of issues ranging over a period of time and which the public do normally discuss over and over. And because of this backdrop, Mr. President, those are some of the issues that are facing the current structure of what governs the Road Authority, or the Transportation Sector in Grenada, currently.

Mr. President, this Bill basically seeks to change where we are currently, which this sector is governed by a Transport Board, and through this amendment we are recommending and asking this Honourable House, Members, to consider moving from a Transport Board to a Statutory Body, a Body Corporate, by way of the Grenada Transport Commission. That is in essence, what is taking place with the said amendment, Mr. President.

Mr. President, we have received numerous calls for a comprehensive overhaul of the current Road Traffic Act. But what we have recognised is that such an overhaul would only make sense if we do it logically and this amendment today, is just one of the first steps in a series of amendments that this current Road Traffic Act will have to go through in the years to come.

Mr. President, we believe that the time is now to have this done and because the sector... one of the things that we are recognising, Mr. President, the sector has been bombarded by a number of opportunities. Currently, about one third of our population is a representation of the amount of vehicles that we have in Grenada. So, that gives you a picture of what we are facing. And with the current construct of the Transport Board, it presents itself with limitations for satisfactorily managing this sector in the best manner

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and presenting the opportunities of dealing with those opportunities as we move forward. And so, we believe that the time is now for us to start making those logical adjustments, so that this new Transport Commission will consume the current responsibilities and also add new responsibilities to the Commission going forward, so that we have, what you call, a seamless transition from the current Transport Board to a body corporate, which would be the Grenada Transport Commission.

Mr. President: Not wanting to stop your flow. I really do hope that it doesn't consume it, but it assumes it.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I mean not to scare you in any way, when I say consume, but to ensure that we capture everything that it currently does, so that there is no gap, but to add and to compliment, whatever is there.

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: I realise, Mr. President.

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: There'll be nothing left. So, Mr. President, one of the most important things in the process, where we are, and I want to put on record, the Associations, the National Bus Association, the Taxi Association, the Truck Drivers and the Commercial Drivers that are attached to the Business Sector. Mr. President, the only how that we could be where we are today, is only because of their support and contribution to this amendment. I want to put on record, that they have been vigilant in terms of ensuring that they are part of the process. I want to say, even the Permanent Secretary with responsibility for Transport, she has been doing a marvellous job, in terms of working with our primary stakeholders to ensure that what we do, we harness a

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relationship, one, that will bear fruit going forward, Mr. President. I think that is something that I have identified, that is really indicative of where we are today.

One of the things that we noticed too, and we want to express our gratitude towards those primary stakeholders, is that with the advent of COVID, we had to take a new approach in how we engage the passengers or customers. And they were on board, they worked with us, we provided assistance, they themselves have expressed gratitude for the assistance that Government will have given to them, as to where we are today. So, this is a critical, critical step, probably not mentioned enough, that the primary stakeholders, they are part and parcel responsible for where we are today. And of course, they are going to play a significant role, as we move forward, in terms of having the Statutory Body up and running to provide services for that sector in question.

Mr. President, the question is, why are we doing this? Why are we doing this now? There are a number of things that are happening, which lends itself for us to have the necessary structures in place. Mr. President, sometime earlier on, right here in this House, we made amendments to Road Traffic Act to establish the services of our Traffic Wardens. There has been a call for support for the Police in that sector, in terms of managing the day-to-day traffic activities, and we see the Wardens have played a significant role.

Mr. President, I really want to place on record my commendation for the Traffic Wardens. **(Applause)** They have been standing in the sun, in the rain. I have not seen a passion from young people in such a long time in doing their job and we are very pleased about that. And going forward, Mr. President, I know we do have plans to add more persons towards the Traffic Wardens to complement the quantities that we have to increase them going to provide more support. So, we'll hear more about that, Mr. President.

Mr. President, one of the challenges with the current Board is the limitations. It doesn't afford for the Board to have that administrative structure to administer a number of the regulatory functions that are required to administer to persons within the Transport Sector. And this Statutory Body, body corporate, the Grenada Transport

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Commission will have that capacity to do so. So, I think that is one of the limitations, hence the reason why we're doing it.

Mr. President, the Royal Grenada Police Force, they have been a beacon throughout this whole process. I recall, at some point-in-time, they were responsible for issuing bus stickers and then when it got a bit unbearable for them, because what you find happening is that, they are the ones who found themselves in a position where they're being the regulators, and being the enforcers at the same time. So, it posed a significant difficult amount of challenge for the Royal Grenada Police Force. And so they had asked, tirelessly, for us to remove those activities from the Royal Grenada Police Force and replace them with the Transport Board, who managed it for a short while. But now, those regulatory functions will now be performed by the Grenada Transport Commission, going forward.

But I want to place on record, the support and the contribution of the Royal Grenada Police Force, in terms of giving us guidance, in terms of the traffic. Some of the Officers within the Traffic Department do have quite significant knowledge, in terms of helping us shape the policies about where we place certain traffic structures, why we put them there and how effective they can be in the whole administration of the traffic, even when we have to route traffic and things like that. So, we want to commend them, and they definitely have been with us throughout this whole process. And of course, they have to continue to be with us to ensure that we bring success through this Transport Commission.

Mr. President, I also want to thank the former Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, who has worked a lot on this amendment to bring it to where it is. I cannot take any credit; I am only just facilitating the end game. I am just the person at the last leg of the race, just bringing the baton to the end. So, I must commend the person who started the first leg. So, Mr. President, I want to place that on record. So, Mr. President, in essence, what we are trying to do is basically to improve the Transport Sector, by establishing this corporate body to provide a better facility for the sector to grow.

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Mr. President, I can say that on the backdrop currently, we have projects that provide opportunities for the sector to evolve, new technologies. We are looking at the access to electric vehicles and stuff and things like that. We do not have the infrastructure from a regulatory standpoint to treat with that, so all this is important at this particular time. We have the Immobility Project that is currently being just commissioned in Grenada, Mr. President, and I think we have to be prepared for the changing times. I myself, Mr. President, would love to see, or love an opportunity for, maybe each of us to be driving a Tesla, instead of burning gas, you know. So, those are some of the things that we will be faced with.

Mr. President, just in actually going to the amendment itself, the Bill itself before us, the Bill consists of ten (10) Clauses, Mr. President. I think it's important that I go through some of the significant contents of this Bill, so that persons listening and Members here can get a full understanding and appreciation for what is it that we're seeking to do. And of course, we expect a feedback from them in areas that we can improve on as we move forward. We may not be able to make those amendments today, but we will take due note of them, as we continue to improve the Transport Sector in Grenada.

So, Clause 2, Mr. President, provides for the amendment of the section 2 of the principal Act, basically to repeal the definition of the "Board," because for obvious reasons, we are moving from a Board to a Commission, a body corporate. Mr. President, Clause 3 provides for the insertion of new sections 2A to 2G of the principal Act to establish the Grenada Transport Commission as a body corporate, as indicated earlier.

I will use an opportunity, Mr. President, to go into more substantive matters under that specific new section that is being included in the principal Act. And we see, Mr. President, under section 3, 2A – **"Establishment and functions of the Grenada Transport Commission,"** some of these functions are, at present, carried over from the current Road Traffic Act. But the new additions, Mr. President, I just want to draw your attention, what is new from the principal Act in this amendment, basically,

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commences from subsection (g) to (j). Those three (3) inclusions are new in this amendment and all the other sections here are contained within the principal Act.

So, from (g) it speaks to standards prescribed for vehicles to be used as public, commercial or private transportations; (h) speaks to regulation of the Public Transport Infrastructure, including car parking facilities, terminal facilities, bus stops, roundabout. So things like those, there were no facility, from a legal standpoint, to treat with those before, and so this amendment is treating with that, measures for controlling public, private, and commercial transportation, establishing the condition under which they may operate.

Mr. President, it is highly possible and so, in a developmental way, that just now we may see Parking Metres in Grenada, where we are having paid parking. Right now, parking is basically free, if you want to say so, unless you park in a place that you're not supposed to, and then it costs you, by way of a beautiful clamp on one of your front wheels. So, Mr. President, these are some of the significant amendments.

Mr. President, in that same section, subsection (3), it speaks to, if someone were to be aggrieved by any order or decision of the Commission or Licencing Authority, then that person may make an appeal. What this does, it affords the Minister responsible for Transport to compile a Tribunal to hear appeals for persons who have been aggrieved. This was not there before; there was no mechanism like this before. I think the Commission is the one who used to hear the appeal. So I tell you, you cannot get through with say, a Bus Sticker and then you appeal back to me, the same person who denied you. Now, this has been changed, now, where a new group of persons will hear stories from both parties, and to provide a more fair and practical approach to resolving disputes. I think this is significant and progressive, if I might add.

Mr. President, in moving forward, also, this Bill provides for in 2B, the Board. The Commission is going to have a Board of Directors that will see to the day-to-day matters of the Commission. Mr. President, I want to say this particular Section is one that has garnered significant discussions between the Ministry, and, of course, our stakeholders, in terms of representation of the composition of that Board of the Commission. And as recent as last Friday, even after the Bill was presented in the

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Lower House, I had a meeting with Members from the National Bus Association speaking on the said matter, in terms of clarity in understanding how their concerns and their voice can be absorbed in the whole context of this new Commission, Mr. President. And, I think after a three and a half hour meeting and explaining what are some of the challenges, why they cannot be directly included, and how, what we plan, what the plans that we have to include them from a Policy standpoint, in a more formal way, we all left there in good spirits, and of course, where everybody understood and accepted the new approach, in terms of moving forward, Mr. President, and I'll speak a little bit more to that, as we move forward.

So, Mr. President, when you look at the Constitution of the Board, the Board consists of seven (7) members, which a quorum is four (4). We have the Commissioner of Police, or his or her designate; the Permanent Secretary with responsibility for Transport, whoever that person is at the time; one senior representative from the Ministry responsible for road infrastructure with expertise in engineering. So, if you notice, these positions are basically specific, in terms of responsibilities and expertise, because of the nature of what we are hoping to achieve from this new Board of the Commission; somebody with expertise in policy and management of transport; somebody with experience in insurance and somebody with experience in law, an Attorney, I presume, in this regard. So, this constitutes, in essence, what the Board will look like, going forward, the Board of the Commission, Mr. President.

Mr. President, there has been a call by the National Bus Association to have somebody sitting on the Board, and after looking at everything in aspect, in terms of a legal standpoint, and even in terms of optics, it was seen and felt that being there, having somebody there, actually making regulations for oneself, is deemed somewhat inappropriate and may lend itself, as I indicated to the management of the National Bus Association, to also, maybe, adding some level of compromise to the Organisation, going forward. And so, I think after a lengthy discussion and explaining, they understand. And so what we did, Mr. President, is that we have agreed that we are going to approach them and we are going to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with our primary stakeholders, taxi operators, where we are going to sit and agree how

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we are going to engage with any major decisions, amendments, whatever it is, regarding the Transport Sector, going forward.

Mr. President, even in the absence of that formal approach, I cannot see us making any meaningful amendments, or any meaningful changes to regulation of the Transport Sector without proper consultation with persons, who actually use the sector on a daily basis. It would not be making sense. So, in essence, we cannot move forward in getting an understanding of what is happening within this sector, and to make decision for it, it just wouldn't make any sense for us. So, they will be engaged, they have to be engaged and we will continue to engage them, moving forward.

Most importantly, Mr. President, one of the things that we have already embarked on, in terms of creating a level of improvement, we are currently embarking on a Transport Study of the sector within Grenada, and our stakeholders are ready and they're working with us to capture all the baseline data required for us to be informed, as to what is taking place with the sector and where the opportunities lie. Because what is really happening, Mr. President, what is really required, what they're asking for, is for them to be able to make a living, a career within or out of this Transport Sector. That is what is at stake here. That is basically what we're trying to do. Somebody can say, listen, I want to be able to go in the Transport Sector and that is where I want to make my living, that is where I want to ply my trade, or career for the next ten, fifteen, twenty years, and that is what is at stake, and so we are very happy to get those feedbacks. And so it is very easy for us to go forward in a structured manner because we know what the objectives are, Mr. President.

Mr. President, section 2C speaks to the Tenure of the Board. In this case, we are saying that persons can sit on that Board no more than three (3) years. We think that is satisfactory. The reason why we try to achieve that, if you have good resourceful people, some of the initiatives that we have to implement, as we go forward, may take some time to materialise. You do not want a situation where you have a lot of changes, a lot of transition, at that level because you want to lend itself to continuity for persons with those strong qualities, to ensure that we get some results going forward, Mr. President. Mr. President, I think that is critical.

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One of the things that the current Board cannot do and does not allow to do, which the Commission can do, it will be able to collect fees, collect fees for itself. Currently, whatever the Board collects, it has to go into the Consolidated Fund; that will no longer happen under the Commission. The Commission will have that authority to collect fees, on its own, raise monies on its own, via through projects, wherever, loans, grants, whatever the case may be, that is necessary for running the Commission. I think that is very instructive, in terms of adding that function for the Commission to stand on its own, as any other Statutory Body within the State of Grenada.

Mr. President, I think one of the important things too, is acceding to this Legislation, our Public Finance Management Act. This Commission also conforms to it by way that, reports have to be done, audits have to be done and this morning we had a discussion about the reports coming to this House, a report from the Transport Commission will have to come to be laid on the Table in Parliament, as well. With those gaps that we had identified, I do hope with this Commission, that we are a little bit more efficient, in terms of generating those reports that seem to be at some level of consistency, in terms of timely reporting. And most of those bodies, I think that there is an opportunity for us to find a way to see how we can improve that through our Parliamentary process here, and I fully support that, Mr. President.

Mr. President, something very important; whatever functions currently, that the Transport Board has, whatever property real assets that the Transport Board currently has, whatever obligations, liabilities that this current Board has, whatever person that is employed under this current Board, all that through amendments, from amendments, subsections (2), (3), (4), (5) and (6) are all carded towards having those transferred seamlessly, to the Grenada Transport Commission. And, in the case of employment, all of our Traffic Wardens are currently employed by the Grenada Transport Board, and when we pass this and it is enacted, they now will be employed by the Grenada Transport Commission. So, that is something that we ensure, that seamless transition, that is what we were trying to achieve, that is what we are seeking to achieve through this amendment. Mr. President.

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Mr. President, there are some other amendments, some typographical and some just some procedural amendments, I will not mention that. But I think it's pretty straightforward. I think it is critical for us to understand in its entirety, what is it that we're trying to do here. Really and truly, we are seeking to improve structure, administrative structure, to take our Transport Sector to a different level, to allow for any opportunities, whether current or future, to be taken up under this Transport Commission.

Mr. President, most importantly, I think I left out, two (2) things I want to mention, that this amendment will see the hiring of a CEO (Chief Executive Officer), who will handle the day-to-day operations of the Commission, and will also have an opportunity to hire staff, as he or she may see fit with support from the Board of the Commission. But it also provides, Mr. President, for the Public Service Commission, by way of secondment, to transfer persons, who have the current expertise, maybe, either secretarial or otherwise, to the Commission to kind of, as we normally say, in local parlance, to hit the ground running, instead of having to wait for somebody that you may have to train, or something like that, so that affords that opportunity and that responsibility through this amendment. So, Mr. President, Members, with these contributions, I commend this Bill for a second reading. Thank you very much.
(Applause)

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Cox, very comprehensive, indeed. Senator the Honourable André Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. And, let me just compliment what you have done, the detailed explanation given by Senator Cox in his new role, in terms of specific responsibility. And I do believe, I have said so before, in your competence and your commitment to seriously undertaking whatever responsibility you have been given. So, I want to wish you all the very best, especially on Transport. This thing is absolutely important. And for us in the Labour Movement, we made that proposal to the Government, earlier, during the COVID period, and I want

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to repeat it, that we stand willing and ready to assist in the discussion on Transport, in terms of providing advice and suggestions for an adequate Transport Service, because, after all, this is what moves, probably 98% or 95% of our workers and members throughout the State.

And, we do believe that the COVID period provided and still provide an opportunity for us to get it right, to be able to discuss the provision of an almost 24-hour service. A number of our workers are exposed, when the night comes; a number of our members reach to work late, there's a cost to production. People reach to work late many times, because of the unavailability of timely transport. And, people get back home at periods that make it sometimes difficult to get up to work on time. So, it is with this in mind, I am making the following suggestions and observations.

I recognise that you had, as usual, given the depth of your understanding and your thoroughness, have addressed some of these, but I still want to just highlight them. Under the Board of Commission 2B, and the fact that the Minister is the one that would be appointing all seven (7) people, and we have, where (a), (b) and (c) have been identified, in terms of their background, and (d) speaks about four (4) people, I think it is important to have, for instance, someone nominated by the Bus Association. I know you have addressed this issue. I think it is important, probably, to look at an Insurance Personnel, in terms of being nominated by them. What that would seek to do, in my judgement, is that it will allow these significant players in the market to be able to independently, nominate someone. Obviously, they would have to be appointed by the Minister.

But, as we speak here, if we do this, it will allow for a wider diversity of personnel. I really believe that the Bus Association... I know you have addressed the issue, taking into account the important role that they play, this will lend itself to buy-in. And, it takes me back to the discussions during the height of the reengagement of the buses to transport people and the challenges that had confronted the Ministry and the buses. I do think that if they are given that sort of prominence, it will assist. That's the concern that I have, anything that we can do, that will lend itself. The concern that you have raised, which is a valid concern, the concern about whether or not it may appear as

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though one is given an unfair advantage, or there is the aspect of conflict of interest, if I am from the Bus Association, or from the Insurance Company for instance, now, I'm speaking to the bus. I hear that, but if the Commission is composed of seven (7) different people and background, I do not think that, that would be a major factor, and there's absolutely nothing wrong in an interest group, advancing its interests. What is important is the collective decision that will be taken, at the end of the day.

And, I am confident that with the different compositions, the interest of the Nation is what will give prominence, because it is absolutely important, absolutely important for this national transport issue to be addressed. It has security implications, it has violence implications, in terms of the exposure, especially of our women folk, and I see this as a golden opportunity, Senator Cox, through you, Mr. President, to demonstrate that we want to do something in a new and significant way. And that's the contribution I want to make in relation to this, that it is, certainly a welcome step, but more can be done, as we go forward and give serious consideration to identifying. It might be useful, if we can identify four (4) interest groups, indeed, like the National Bus Association, Insurance, etcetera, etcetera, to be able to nominate someone for the appointment through the Minister, and I want to compliment the explanations that you have given and the thought process behind it.

And to finally end by saying, that if at the end of the day, the Commission is not allowed to function, independently, (we know the issue of influences, I have seen it in a number of Statutory Bodies). It is not enough just to say that we have now set up an independent body, in name, but all that we need to do is to look around at the Statutory Bodies that are extremely successful versus those, quite a number of them, that are struggling and you may find that the aspect of, for want of better words, "political influence," for want of a better word, not necessarily "Party Politics," but "political influence" from the Administration sort of hamper the professional functioning of these organisations. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Senator Noel.

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Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Thank you, Mr. President. I couldn't let this pass without saying two words on it, and I share the same sentiment like Senator Lewis, in regards to the Bus Association and the Busmen. I think they should be considered, due to the fact that here in Grenada, most countries have a Transport Board, or a Public Transport System, and we don't. And, over the years, they have been filling that position and have been doing an excellent job and I think they should be commended.

I, myself, at one point in time, used to drive a bus, so I know how it is, and I think at some point in time, they tend to be overlooked at the significant role they are playing, taking people to and fro to their jobs and back home. When you think about other countries, in terms of accidents and so on, in Grenada it has been very minimum. So, I think they have been doing a very good job, and it is an expensive thing to operate a bus. And, in some cases the owners are not the drivers. If you happen to be the owner, you might be better off, but I know from experience, almost every weekend, you have to be by the Mechanic talking about brakes and tyres and so on. And, that was way back then, so you could imagine now, how expensive it is and the contribution to the economy that they make too, in terms of parts and so on and fuel. And, we in Grenada here, I think, we have one of the highest taxes on fuel, so the significant role they are playing in this country, in terms of economics should not go unnoticed, and I think that should be considered, that they should be part of this Board. Thank you.
(Applause)

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Noel. Senator Judd Cadet.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to give my support to this Bill, and before I delve into my presentation, I want to commend my dear friend and colleague Senator Cox for his great presentation and I also want to congratulate him on his recent appointment. I believe this is the first Sitting since after the appointment. **(Applause)** Mr. President, he surely hit the ground running, and I wish him all the best in his new position.

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Mr. President, transport plays an important role in our economy and it plays an important role in our economic development. Mr. President several studies have been done on the role that transportation plays in our economic development, and it was found, Mr. President, that when Transport Systems are efficient, they provide economic and social opportunities that result in positive multiplier effect such as better accessibility to markets, employment and additional investment. Alternatively, when Transport Systems are deficient, in terms of capacity, or reliability, they can have an economic cost such as reduced or missed opportunities and lower quality of life.

Mr. President, this is why I could not have just let this Bill go through its stages without giving my sentiment of it, because I think this is a very important piece of Legislation that is being passed here in this House. It shows that the Government is thinking, in terms of its role of the Transportation Sector and how it is planning to drive the economy forward with transportation playing a great role. Here, in Grenada, I understand that we have serious limitations. I understand that, in terms of our Transportation Sector, infrastructure is an issue. We understand that we are seeing now with congestion, that's a major issue, the view that there are too many vehicles on the road, the statistics that I have heard of. I mean, I've been trying to get the statistics. I have heard it now that one-third of the population represents the amount of vehicles on the road. This is approximately forty thousand (40,000) vehicles that you have on the road.

And, Mr. President, that is expected to grow exponentially, in the upcoming years, as people's economic status improve, their ability to buy vehicles, it will be something that will be part of everyone's lives. I mean, every young person these days, the first thing that own, they head to the Bank, or to any Lending Agency to get a vehicle. So, you will see this number in ten (10) years, or five (5) years' time would increase exponentially.

Mr. President, you also have the factor of limited space. Mr. President, we have to take into consideration we are a Small Island Developing State, with just one hundred and thirty-three (133) square miles, and we have to take into consideration, seriously, how are we going to create the infrastructure, how are we going to model our

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transportation system, to take into consideration our land space? If we don't think critically about this, if we don't think critically about this, Mr. President, in years to come, Mr. President, it will be crazy.

I mean, I am very sure, maybe thirty (30) years ago, we probably weren't thinking about when you leave home 7:30/8:00 o'clock, you have to leave home, maybe, two (2) hours earlier to get to work on time. So, I see this as a very important piece of Legislation and I am seeing the construct in how this is going to play an important role in our economic development. And, therefore, Mr. President, I share the view of the transition from a Transport Board to the Commission. I think that is a very important transition that must be commended.

Mr. President, we look at the functions. We look at the ten (10) functions of the Commission. I would only just highlight a few. Road safety, this is very important, Mr. President. Mr. President, sometimes, while I'm travelling around the Island, you sometimes meet humps that are not painted, they are not signed. If you're a tourist moving around the Island, it is not very welcoming that you sometime travel at a speed and there are some big humps that will cause serious damage to your vehicle.

Mr. President, traffic lights is another issue here, and I think the Commission needs to take a serious look at that, as well, because as we're moving, as I said, towards development, we need to look at our traffic lights. For example, the bridge in Paradise, the traffic lights there are not working. Sometimes, at night the lights tend to confuse you. So, I am hoping that with the fact that we have the Commission, there will be staff. I think this will play a greater role, in terms of the efficiency in certain services that we will get, in terms of our road services.

Mr. President, regulation and control of traffic and transport, that is also an important part as well, Mr. President. Because, when I think about regulation, I think about research, I think about science, I think about data, because this regulation needs to be guided by that, and I am seeing an important role here needs to be played by our Commission, as well. Because if we have to put the regulation in place, we have to understand what are the issues that we are going to address, and therefore, the research, in terms of we are now moving towards, I heard, electric vehicles. We have to

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ensure that we have the infrastructure in place, the Charging Stations and all those things needs to come into place and other things, Mr. President.

As I mentioned earlier, take into consideration the size of our country, and what does that mean? I have heard the Minister for Finance mentioned about whether or not we are going to look at some part of the Transport System owned by Government, in terms of public transport and private, what sort of percentage arrangement, they are doing a study on that. And, Mr. President, there may be some level of consideration to that, in terms of dealing with the twenty-four (24) hour Transport Service.

Now, also, we look at globally, the way the Transportation System is moving, in terms of access to transport and you're seeing things like Uber and Lift, these sorts of Companies that seem to be doing very well. I know Trinidad has Drop and other Caribbean Islands have different Ride Sharing Companies. I know there are a number of young entrepreneurs, who are looking towards that sort of Companies here as well, and I am hoping that maybe, they, through the regulations and the Commission may have, they may see some level of research, in terms of how their regulation would address some of these Companies, because just like Uber, the struggle that they are facing with the yellow cab taxis, the possibility exist that when it does gets here, that what happens is that you might have some level of conflict.

And, Mr. President, also, a couple months ago, I remember I was listening to a podcast and I know, for example, like in China, there are times in which you will get the trucks to use the road, like early in the morning you hear the trucks moving very early, and that is, one, to beat traffic and also, two, to not inconvenience the other road users.

Mr. President, this needs to be looked at, as well, because sometimes while travelling in the mornings, sometimes you have to deal with a big garbage truck taking up great space and that sometimes inconvenience a lot of the road users. I am not sure how the research would guide that policy, but I think all those things needs to be taken into consideration, in terms of the different road users, the size of the vehicles that are on the road, these are some things that sometimes inconvenience the road users.

We have made some progress and the ban than we have placed on vehicles over ten (10) years, that will help deal with some of the issues that we currently face. I

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guess as much, in years to come, we will see the effects of that. But, Mr. President, all in all, I believe that this Bill is a great Bill.

I just want to make another point. When I look at the efficiency in the Transportation Service, one of the examples that I normally look at is the SGU Bus System. It is one of the most very efficient services you can think of. I know, for example, when I am in SGU that at about 7:30 I think, it's the last bus that leaves Campus, so I know I can go up to the Library, and let's say my class finishes at 5:00 and get two and a half hours (2 ½) hours in the Library, or let us say two (2) hours, and by 7:30, I'll get the bus. I think SGU is a good case study, in terms of how they have done it and how we can infuse the technology with our Transportation System and have an efficient Transportation Service here in Grenada.

I think this is an excellent Bill, Mr. President, because, as I said, when you look at our land space and we look at our economic development, transportation plays an important role. And, therefore, Mr. President, I want to give my unwavering support to this piece of Legislation and give the Government credit for the step it is taking in transforming the Transportation Sector. Thank you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I am going to be short. I rise to give support to the Bill, as well, and from where we sit in the Private Sector, we, certainly, would support any Bill that will tend to improve the situation with transport and at least bring some level of regulation and control on various aspects of the Transport System we have in the country.

I want to make two (2) observations to my colleague Senator on the "Other Side". The first one is, when we speak about appeals and going to an Appeal Tribunal, I want to suggest that you consider Mediation, as well, instead of going straight to the Appeals Tribunal. And in all our Legislation, I want to make a general comment that Mediation is an aspect that we should consider before going to Appeals Tribunals. It is less costly, in terms of resources and time and most of the times you can get matters resolved quickly.

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So, that is an area of consideration. You may want to put it in the ¹Regs and not necessarily interfere with the Act, as we have it.

But, Mr. President, there is an issue that I want to put on the radar of my colleague Senator, who is the Minister responsible, an issue that really rises me up. So, I am going to apologise for my passion, if I do get passionate, and that is the whole issue of cement trucks and how they really destroy our roads. You know, Mr. President, and there is absolutely no reason why our mixing trucks with concrete, must be travelling with their mix, wet, absolutely no reason. I have made this plea in this House already and I am going to put it again, Minister, on your table. When cement mix has to be delivered to a project or a site, from the time you put water into the mix, the reaction starts and the only way the concrete mix could go is down. It could never go up, so there is no reason why mix must be delivered to a site, wet. And could you imagine, with the traffic we have now, what will happen to a cement truck, if they have to deposit cement to a site and you get stuck in traffic? What happens to the recipient of the mix? Most of the time if you don't have a good engineer on site to check it, you're getting substandard mix and if the engineer checks it, they will refuse it, they will reject it and they have to go and come. So, I say from a structural and safe; and I will get to the safety part, but from the structural point of view for the builder and for the person who have to use that, you have no advantage with it coming to your site wet.

And, you know, Mr. President, what is the difference in having the mix, mixed in the truck whilst it is going, dry, and when you reach on the site you put the water, because everything is done by weight and we know with a little formula in school, density, how you could use density to calculate weight. So, there is absolutely nothing technical, or super technical that we cannot have mix delivered to a site, dry and when you reach there, you put in your water, you activate the cement, you mix it and you deposit. Why we can't get there? There are many countries where you could never move cement, wet on the road, and deliver to a site. They just would not accept it.

¹ Regs is the shortened term for "Regulations".

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And now I will get to the roads. When these guys move with these trucks, apart from the size and the issue, I think, my Senator friend just spoke about it; when they move and they're going up, guess what, last week when you were going up St. Paul's, you would have seen the line of concrete droppings from where the Police Band used to be, way up, pass White Gun, on the entire side of the road, how much concrete have fallen there. And, then, just pass the Police Band, just a little higher up on the road and you will see how much mix they just throw on the side there, when they cannot do anything more with it. Indiscriminate dumping of the concrete; that is another problem we face. And, when you narrow the road, as a lot of us would have seen going up the Lane, around High School corner and all the mix there, everybody moves to the centre, so the road gets narrower and the possibility for accidents increase, significantly.

Mr. President, this is a simple thing. We have to meet with these guys, Ministry of Works and say to them, the rule from now on is "x." The weight of the concrete truck on the road, with water, versus no water, is significantly different. So, the impact on the infrastructure of the road will be less and even for the truck men, the guys who are moving the product. If your truck is carrying less weight, the wear and tear on your brakes, on your tyres, on the mechanics on the truck working, would be far less, the wear and tear. So, what is the issue of us moving concrete, wet, versus dry? Minister, I am putting this one on your radar and I am hoping you would come through this House or through Regs and we could see a significant change in policy, regarding this. All of us have to win in this one. There is no win/lose. This is win/win. All it requires is a change in policy and procedure to bring it dry to the site, you put your water, you start your mixing, it will take you probably, five, ten or fifteen minutes more to mix, and then you dispose on to the site. I mean, I think that is so simple and the impact and the things that we could get positively, from that, and that must fall under the Commission, because it falls under the section dealing with '**Safety.**' It falls under the section: "**Control of the Traffic on the Road.**" So, that comes under the Commission, and I am hoping, as we put this in place, a Regulation could come, speaking to that almost instantly, Mr. President, and I am begging you, please let us look at that one first. Thank you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

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Mr. President: Thank you, Senator De Allie. Before the other Senator takes the floor, just to embellish a little bit what you said about the concrete droppings, also there is aggregate droppings on the road, which makes it exceedingly dangerous, especially now as our roads have less and less drivers and more and more steerers. Old time drivers like me, who would know how to use the compression in your stick shift and not your brakes, are much safer on the roads than those who are only licenced to steer, just a little humour. But, that's an important point, and it's absolutely no reason why this can't be stopped, because a proper tarpaulin, backed against the crevices, when you dump that, could take care of that problem and limit the overloading of trucks with aggregates. But, aggregates are a serious problem on the road, very, very serious problem, and I just wanted to add that as well to the contribution you have made. Thank you, Senator. Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President, I'll keep my comments...

Mr. President: Just for a brief moment. There is no... **(Inaudible comments)** ...waiting for dinner. **(Laughter)** Just thought I would say that, for all those who have agronomic desires, to know that there is no dinner.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: I will be very short. I promise you and this is after your commentary at the end. Mr. President, it's just a very short edition to Senator Cox's presentation, which was very comprehensive and the feedback that we are clearly receiving around the Chamber is highly supportive of the initiative and the principles that are laid out in this Bill.

But, one piece to add is that this is just the start. This, I believe, is going to be the first of many amendments under the Road Traffic Act that will be coming before this House. And, the range of comments that this amendment has generated, I think, is a signal, as to the amount of work that is needed to enhance the framework and the establishment of the Commission is that starting point and the development of those Regulations, and those Regulations will continue to evolve, as our traffic situation, and

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not just traffic, but our national development pushes forward. Senators Cadet and Lewis spoke to the role of transport in our national development. So this, I think, is just going to be the first of many amendments, which will all have a positive effect in the management of our traffic and contributing to our national development. I thank you.

(Applause)

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Norland Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I want to extend gratitude to Members for their advice and suggestions on this important legislative amendment. Mr. President, Senator Stiell is correct, we do have quite a way to go, and the reason for that, Mr. President, is because we understand the magnitude of the sector, in terms of its economic impact, what it has currently, and the potential that it has for this country to grow, in terms of providing job opportunities, in terms of providing auxiliary job opportunities and direct ones, as well; so, this is very, very important for us.

To Senator De Allie, through you, Mr. President, Senator De Allie is correct in his utterances regarding the concrete trucks. Everything about it is correct. It's a clear opportunity for the service providers to improve their service by moving with the mixture dry. And, not wanting to laugh, but I recall, I think, it's once or twice a truck actually breaking down with a load of wet concrete. So, I asked what is it that they would have to do. He said tomorrow they have to get a torch, cut a manhole in it and a guy going inside there and jack hammer concrete for the next couple days until he gets everything out. So, that, in itself, is a waste of money. It's an expense in itself, and it's a risk that they can avert, if they do it the other way.

Likewise, every time the truck moves and the drum rolls and concrete spills on the road, that is basically money going on the ground, so they can reverse that by doing it mixed, so it's a clear opportunity. I think it is an easy fix; it's a win/win, as you indicate, and I too, believe so.

Your suggestion on Mediation, I too, believe that by discussions, we can resolve things before we get to that level. So, there is an opportunity that we can do that

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through Regs, and so I take that on board. Thank you very much for those contributions, Senator De Allie.

I want to just through you, Mr. President, respond to Senator Lewis. And as I said that has been the issue of how we agree that our primary stakeholders must be part and parcel of the discussion, in terms of how we move forward. But where there are challenges, how do we engage them in this participatory process? And we believe, from a legal standpoint and what we foresee going forward, in terms of the number of responsibilities that the Commission will have to handle going forward, we believe it will not be a benefit for them to be directly involved at this point-in-time.

We discussed it and I tried to show them the wisdom and vision in being able to stay away, but being part of, so it doesn't affect their operations and there is another challenge. They only represent a certain percentage of the stakeholders, and so it also presents some level of unfairness for persons who are not formerly engaged through an Association, because we have the trucks that move food every day, throughout the country. And we only became aware of those trucks during COVID and how important those trucks are, as important as the buses in moving our passengers every day, and so I am not certain that they are formerly organised, as well, but they play a critical role.

So, because of that gap, we believe that it may present a better opportunity, going forward, but currently, we think that the current structure that we propose by having them be part of a formal policy structure, in terms of engagement, being there, to give us the guidance going forward, be it the Taxi Association, be it the Bus Drivers' Association and the Truckers, it will help us.

And even now, as we are speaking about the concrete mixers, that in itself is a separate sector. And we know for a fact, that more of those trucks are going to come into Island, because they are pre-empting a number of infrastructural developments going forward, and there is demand in the market, so that is the reason why we have to move. But we observe the need to have that engagement, but both of us believe and we have come to that consensus, and we are satisfied, let us start where we are now and we will address it going forward, in that regard.

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As regards to the concern of interference, be it political or otherwise, it's a genuine one that is always existent in any structure, in terms of a Statutory Body. But, we feel confident that where we are, because of the engagements and the discussions that we have, the relationship that we have currently with our stakeholders, we believe that, that may not be an issue, there is no reason for that. While there are certain policy decisions we may share different opinion on, but in a broader sense, we see a smooth, working relationship, going forward in that regard.

But, Mr. President, most importantly, the busmen are fully aware of the contribution that they make on a daily basis towards this sector and towards the country on a whole, and they understand Government's role, as well. I mean, as it stands currently, Mr. President, and sometimes, even from the general public's standpoint, they overlook the contribution that Government makes towards that sector. Currently, we have to soon start, a forty-six million dollar (\$46 m) project, in terms of road infrastructure development, that is significant, and all that lends itself towards that sector, and we have more roads to be built. So, we are speaking in excess of sixty million dollars (\$60 m), or so, currently being expended for road infrastructure development.

So, those are some of the things that we want to highlight as Government is playing their part, in terms of ensuring that the sector continues to improve, because the busmen would say, oh, the roads are bad, too many potholes, tyres, brakes, suspensions, so that is our responsibility. But, they have a responsibility too, as well, in terms of ensuring that they provide an excellent service. So, that will encourage persons not wanting to have two (2) or three (3) vehicles, every person in their house wanting to have a vehicle themselves, but because we have an excellent service by way of our buses, one would say, why do I need to invest thirty/forty thousand dollars or eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000.00) for a new vehicle, when I can get around the country safely and comfortably just for two, three dollars or five dollars? So, those are the kinds of discussions that they must be part of, the bigger picture going forward, so that the persons can approach it differently and they can benefit, and that is the discussion that we are having, Mr. President.

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That is the reason why we also looked at the issue as mentioned by Senator Cadet, the issue of limiting the age of a vehicle. And, there are other discussions around it, why we did it, but we understand. You know what the impact that will be, in terms of want of a better word, “garbage” after a couple years. It is going to be significant. We will have a lot to deal with. Where are we going to put those vehicles? So, we are having the discussion, we are making the changes, the improvements and I think that is significant in this process.

But what does the current Transport Sector represent? What it represents, Mr. President, it represents a public good invested in a private entity, that is what is really represented here, and so that is where the difficulty is. There is a grey area. A man goes to the bank, buys his bus, make the investment for himself. We can say that is his private business, we have nothing to do with that. But it is a public good and so Government must play a role in guiding that individual, or entity in ensuring that that service is taken care of. Because, of course, Government can and sometimes do get many hits from persons saying, look we can give you some grant support for putting a Public Transport System in place, that is going to significantly impact the private bus owners. So, those are the things that we, somewhat, want to not to rush into, but if there is a gap and there is a call for us to do that, then we will so do, based on the information captured, based on the data captured. But, what we are striving for now is for the buses and the truckers for them to improve their service, and for us, in terms of infrastructure, the road and otherwise, regulations and otherwise, road safety, the necessary stuff, to ensure that they can ply their trade safely and make a living from it. That is what is before us with this amendment and other amendments to come; that is the crux of the matter, Mr. President.

So, as I said, I am pleased more than likely, not just with the feedback here today, but very much pleased with our stakeholders, because if the people who we are making these amendments for, who we are working for, facilitated through the Ministry, are not part of the process, are not happy, then everything will be for naught. So, with these contributions, Mr. President, I commend this Bill for its second reading.

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Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Norland Cox.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate resolves itself into a Committee of the whole Senate to consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate in Committee.

Senate resume.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment. Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

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Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Clerk: Item 16 - Public Business.

Mr. President: One minute, could you just...

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President, and I want to move the following Motion standing in my name. It is called the Healthcare Workers Motion.

WHEREAS Healthcare is generally recognised, as a right, globally;

AND WHEREAS doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals and support workers are at the frontline in the healthcare system in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique;

AND WHEREAS they have gone above and beyond the call of duty, especially during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic;

BE IT RESOLVED that all doctors, nurses, healthcare professionals, (such as lab technicians etc.), healthcare support workers, staff (such as cooks, orderlies, maids, etc.), whose status of employment is considered as contract workers be permanently appointed by the Government of Grenada.

Mr. President: Thank, you Senator Lewis. Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to second the Motion.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

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Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I beg to move the following amendment to the Motion that was just proposed by Senator Lewis. I have copies of it here, so if the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms could circulate these please.

Mr. President: I am assuming that you're doing this under the provision of SO 32?

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: That's correct.

Mr. President: Subsection (3).

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: That's correct.

Mr. President: Okay. Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Could you just guide me please, Mr. President?

Mr. President: You have moved a Motion, the Healthcare Workers' Motion, which was properly seconded by Senator St. Cyr, and Senator Stiell, standing under Standing Orders (SO) 32 (3), is moving a Motion. Just to read the provision, it says:

"Where any Motion is under consideration in the Senate, or in a Committee thereof, an amendment may be proposed to the Motion if it is relevant thereto. An amendment to a Motion may be moved and seconded at any time, after the question upon the Motion has been proposed by the President or Chairman and before it has been put by the President or Chairman, at the conclusion of the debate upon the Motion."

So, what Senator Stiell has done, now that I have proposed for consideration of the House, your Motion, he is offering an amendment to that Motion. So, he is offering an amendment and he has circulated the amendment, so he has the floor for the time

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being, because we must get rid of the amendment before we come back to the substantive Motion, provided that the amendment succeeds. If the amendment does not succeed, then we go back to the originating Motion, because the originating Motion will have preference to your proposed amendment.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I think Senator Lewis would recognise caution concerning the sentiments of his original Motion. So, I will go through the proposed amendment, Mr. President.

Mr. President: I have a bad copy here, it's faded. The copy that I have is partially faded.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: I think that is the highlighted changes. So, it should have been in colour. So, what is in light...

Mr. President: So, all the copies are the same, like this?

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Yes.

Mr. President: Oh. Okay.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: **WHEREAS** healthcare is generally recognised, as a right, globally;

AND WHEREAS doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals, and support workers are in the frontline of the healthcare system in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique;

AND WHEREAS they have gone above and beyond the call of duty, especially during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic;

And this is the new part...

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AND WHEREAS Government has, in recognition of the contributions of all Public Officers, to the development of the State of Grenada, made permanent over six hundred (600) teachers and eight (800) nurses under its Regularisation Programme, amounting to the single largest block of Public Officers giving contracts of permanent employment, ever, in the Public Service;

BE IT RESOLVED the Government commits to continuing its process of regularisation based on established policies and within the real limitations of Government's fiscal constraints and the Fiscal Responsibility Laws.

So, Mr. President, that is the amendment in full.

Mr. President: Senator Cadet.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to second the Motion moved by Leader of Government's Business.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: So, Mr. President, whilst the...

Mr. President: So, just to be clear, we are dealing with the amendments now, not the originating Motion. Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: So, Mr. President, while Senator Lewis' proposed Motion recognises and highlights the value of our healthcare workers, especially, at this difficult time, as we battle with the COVID-19 pandemic, it ignores the serious financial challenges that have been brought on, at this time, with that global pandemic. But, asking for the regularisation of all healthcare workers at this time, which has serious financial implications, is not addressed. And, in part, the amendment, a critical part of the amendment that is put before this House, factors that critical component into that Motion.

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Mr. President, the original Motion also does not recognise the significant progress that Government has already made in regularising many temporary workers, not only in the Healthcare Sector, but across the whole of the Public Service, nor does it recognise Government's demonstrable commitment to Public Workers, both in good times and bad, and that provides a much richer context to the Motion that is now being put forward.

And, just to elaborate on that context, Mr. President, since coming into Office, this Government has regularised over six hundred (600) teachers, over eighty (80) nurses and healthcare workers. And many of these, and I believe, and I am sure Senator Lewis will speak to this when he addresses the amendment, but the challenges, many of these temporary workers have faced and are facing, and just through the work that this Government, this Administration has done through its Regularisation Programme, recognising that some of these were temporary workers that have now been regularised, have been temporary for an excess of fifteen (15) years, working fifteen (15) years in the Public Service, without the benefits that are afforded to permanent workers, without, whether it is training, whether it's financial benefits, other benefits, including job security, challenging many of them, when it comes to, whether it is a mortgage, whether it is a loan of some sorts, and they have struggled for many years within this very difficult environment. And this Government, Mr. President, recognised that, which is why they embarked on this expansive programme, identifying those areas, those Sectors within the Public Service where there was significant numbers of temporary workers challenged in this way.

And, Mr. President, it's not only through that regularisation process, part of that also saw many of these workers, six hundred (600), seven hundred (700) workers have been regularised, also receiving salary increases and retroactive pay, the cost to Government for these initial stages of this regularisation process have been significant. But, we've not viewed that as a cost, Mr. President, we see that as an investment, an investment in the Public Workers.

Mr. President, the scale of this regularisation process is unprecedented, amounting to the single largest block of Public Offices given contracts of permanent

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service ever in the Public Sector. And, Mr. President, this must be recognised, which is why it's reflected in the amendment that is put before us. **(Applause)**

And just broadening this further, Mr. President, there is also the hundred and ten million dollars (\$110 m), that Public Workers have received, over this period, under this Administration, in back pay, increments, one off payments, salary increases, under this Government, Mr. President. And, let us not forget the restoration of pensions to those Public Officers, who are affected by the Pensions Disqualification Act and this Government's commitment to pension reforms for Public Workers. Mr. President, this is an issue, a vexing issue that has been hanging over the Public Service for over thirty-five (35) years, and it is this Government, Mr. President, that has brought resolution to that.

There are other examples of this Government's commitment to Public Workers, whether it is in housing, we are approaching the construction and completion of a further six hundred and seventy-five (675) homes under the Chinese Housing Programme, and an allocation of those homes will be offered, will be afforded to Public Workers.

In addition to that, when we look at the other challenging period that we came out of, economically, under structural adjustment, when many of our neighbours were sending home thousands of workers, because of the financial challenges that those countries faced, that we all faced, it was this Administration that ensured job security for all Public Workers during that time. **(Applause)**

Mr. President, recounting these achievements is not intended to sound as if we're beating our chests or we are blowing our own trumpets. It's simply recognising and reminding ourselves where we came from. It's easy to look at the road ahead, look at the challenges that we still face, but ignoring the mountains that we've climbed to get to this point. So, it's simply to bear recognition on the significant strides and achievements that have been made so far.

So, Mr. President, of course, we would like to do more. Of course, if that possibility existed to be able to regularise more, in more Sectors, to do more, we would, but we also have to be realistic. We also have to recognise the fiscal challenges that

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we face, especially at this time when Government revenues have significantly declined, because of the pandemic. We are addressing the healthcare threats that we're facing through the pandemic, but we are also having to deal with the financial pandemic that we now face.

But, Mr. President, it's important to note that Government remains committed to continuing its comprehensive review of temporary workers across the entire Public Service. This is an initiative that is on-going, that is current. So, rather than singling out a specific group, as proposed in the original Motion, it is recognising the need to continue a process that is already underway that will address the intent of Senator Lewis, but doing that in a holistic and strategic way, which is critical to make sure that with limited Government resources, the net that we are able to throw is as inclusive as possible and as comprehensive as possible.

So, Mr. President, and as stated in the last part of the recital, that it's important that all of these initiatives, significant initiatives, which addresses what Senator Lewis is trying to highlight, but it factors in the fiscal financial constraints that exists, it must. It must, if we're to be responsible in the approach that we are taking, and we are adhering to the processes and Laws that govern how we do it. And it's for these reasons, Mr. President, that this amendment is proposed with the support of Members of this House. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Stiell. Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President, and I thank Senator Stiell for his attempt to make an amendment and to highlight all that has been done, so far, for Public Officers.

However, I do not agree to make the amendments for the following reasons. Not limited to, but this Motion seeks to address specifically, the Healthcare workers. Yes, I agree. This Motion that I have advanced seeks to answer the question, why not now? All that Senator Stiell has advanced, I want to compliment the Government, as an

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employer, for all that it has done. But in many instances, many of the workers have worked for over fifteen (15) years on contract, close to twenty (20) years on contract.

Earlier on, the question arose, as to why certain things, in terms of amendments to the tax, why now? The answer was, why not now? This is our labour and the Government is our employer. And I am not addressing this, Mr. President, through you, within the context of Party politics, by indicating what this Government has done. As far, as I am concerned, I am speaking of Governments over the past twenty-five/thirty years. It matters not to me. For the past twenty-five/thirty years, regardless of which Government sat in office for the longer period, it is irrelevant to me and it is irrelevant to the Labour Movement.

What is important is that these workers have been working without proper contracts. As a matter of fact, as a Law-abiding employer, because the Government is an employer, section 29 (5) of the Employment Act, clearly, clearly addresses this issue. It speaks about a contract for a specified time, a contract for an unspecified time and a specific task and there are the definitions. If it is a work that has a timeline and it is for one year, six (6) months, you can give someone that contract. If it is a contract for a specific task, you have to move twenty (20) cases of drinks, you do that and then it ends. But, it also recognises that there may be some employers who may seek to have people continuously employed on contracts, without giving them permanency. And, it says: "Anywhere an employee purports...", and I am paraphrasing: "Purports to give someone a contract for a specified time or for a specific task, that contract shall be deemed to be one of a permanent nature." And, because we are Law-abiding citizens, and because the Government must lead by example and because the Government as an employer has that responsibility to its citizens and taking into account all of the disadvantages that Senator Stiell has spoken about, that someone, who does not have a "permanent contract" experiences, we have that moral responsibility, we have that legal responsibility and all the different responsibilities to ensure that our people are properly treated.

So, I applaud the Government for carrying out its responsibilities. When you made six hundred (600) teachers permanent, I applaud you for this. But you are doing

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what the Law requires of you, to be frank with you, through you, Mr. President. It was not a favour that was done. The Government was righting a wrong that was continuously being done to our members.

And, I came here with this Motion, seeking to right this wrong. And all that you have stated here Senator Stiell, through you, Mr. President, must be commended. Should we say that because seven hundred (700) workers, so I am increasing it, from six hundred (600) to seven hundred (700), one thousand (1,000) workers, because one thousand (1,000) workers were made permanent, we must not make one who was there for the past fifteen (15) or twenty (20) years permanent, right now, because of the costs?

Why are these workers allowed, or be expected, through you, Mr. President, to carry the cost of the State or the cost of the employer. What is in it for them? They go to work every day, they go to work every day. They can't go to a financial institution and secure a proper loan. We give foreign investors breaks. We invest into investments that do not bring any returns. **(Applause)** We spend twenty or fifty million dollars wherever, in different investments, and we take that risk and that's okay, because in the state of managing business, one takes risk and one go into investment to try to make things better. Mr. President, I cannot accept these amendments. I call upon the Government to do what is legal, through you, Senator Stiell. Why most times it appears, as though things are mutually...

Sergeant-at-Arms: The Deputy President, in the Chair.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Through you, Mr. Deputy President, why many times we tend to approach such important issues, as though things are mutually exclusive? What is preventing for all the reasons advanced, Mr. Deputy President, and reasons advanced are, the costs, the pandemic, the period that we are in. When is the right time? How would we feel? How would we feel working for ten/fifteen years, continuously, and you're engaged in an activity that is important for the everyday function of the operation that you're dealing with and we are the Government, as an

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employer? This is not a Private Sector driven person, who is driven by the Profit Margin Motive. As Government, as an employer, we have that responsibility.

Colleagues, this thing has been outstanding for too long. Thousands of our members are out there. Thousands of our members are out there. Many of them have retired, never having the dignity of holding a letter or instrument in their hand. This is not an attack on the Government, through you, Mr. Deputy President. This is not. This is not an attack on the Government. But this is to use the opportunity for all of us as Legislators, to call upon the Government to do what is legal, to call upon the Government to do what is legal.

We can find money to do different investments, we can give breaks. Colleagues, this is about human dignity, apart from the legal. In other words, legal responsibility demands that of us. But, let us step away from this for a moment. As I say, this is not about this Government. It happens that this Government is here, and this is when I am here, in the Senate and I took a responsibility. I took a responsibility, as the Labour Representative in the Senate, to ensure that contract workers are made permanent, not only in Government, but also in the Private Sector. And, we are heading into the third anniversary, 2017, of red December, in another company that we had to take such actions with, and the workers are feeling much better off today. Your productivity will increase, the social problems that you have will lessen, and I chose the healthcare people, recognising that there are others, yes, and we are biting bits by bits. Yes, all workers should be made permanent. But, I chose to focus on the healthcare workers. Just stand, go up by the General Hospital a morning, or evening and just watch the ordinary folks that are coming to work every day, the maids, the cooks, even our pharmacists, our orderlies, our doctors, we are losing our nurses. We are losing our nurses, and the longer that we take to address this matter, it will become worse.

So, the twenty million dollars (\$20 m) or the ten million dollars (\$10 m), or whatever it is, that the workers are entitled to, because they are permanent, that we do not want to spend on them, it will cost us more, because they are migrating, especially the nurses. And, they are not only migrating to the regional and international environment, but some of our better minds that the Government have spent money on,

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in terms of scholarships, etcetera, in the healthcare facilities are down at SGU. And, they are down there, because they do not have that instrument.

Colleagues, we have that responsibility. Why, when it comes to working-class people, why, when it comes to ordinary people? Yes, we have made six hundred (600) teachers permanent, and we compliment that. But, this is a case where all the workers who have satisfied that requirement ought to be made permanent. I am sure that every one of us inside here is aware of scores of people in the Public Sector who have been working for years upon years upon years, and they are not permanent, and they cannot go to a financial institution and get a loan to help themselves. Why we do that? Why are we doing that? Our working-class people have suffered too long. Senator Stiell, do not take this as a lack of recognition of what has been done. No. We want better, and the Law, if it was a case that we were trying to negotiate a benefit, if we were trying to negotiate a benefit that we will like to see, that's a different case, but the Law is absolutely clear, section 29 (5) of the Employment Act, it is now section 31 of the new Act that we are trying to sought out. Yes. 29 (5) is absolutely clear.

So, I am not even going into the aspects of what the healthcare workers do. I am not going into the aspect that they have gone to the frontline. I am not even going there yet. What I am addressing, through you, Mr. Deputy President, is the need to bring relief to that section of workers, that section of the working-class, and I am even using this opportunity to call on the Private Sector to do the same thing too. But, this Motion here is not about the Private Sector.

If the Government takes that lead, if the Government takes that lead, you'll be happily surprised, because I do believe, I do believe that each one of us inside here, love people. I do believe that even if you sit on "This Side" there, it happens you sit on "This side" there because of how the system is arranged, but we are all here to advance the cause of our citizens. As a matter of fact, as a matter of fact, those who sit on "This Side" to my left, sit there, because a process of commitment to the people has been given, and one of these commitments was to make our lives better. And just as those who are arguing that we ought not to take loans to do certain developments such as the airport and other things, which we'll get into at some time, and the Government has

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stood its ground and said: **“We are seeing into the future of what we need to do now for down there,” (applause)** the same principle when it comes to our human beings. As a matter of fact, the loan to the airport can wait and flights can come. But our members, and I am dealing with the human factor, I am not saying you should put it to wait. I am saying that even if we do not get it now, or even if we review it, as we ought to do, as we ought to do in this period, especially in this pandemic period, we need to do that, addressing the status of our members of our workers, your constituents.

This is not about colour, red, green, yellow or blue. This is not about that. This here is about addressing the people who could... Senator Simon Stiell has addressed these issues and I'll expand on it a bit again. When these workers, the fact that they remain on contract, and they're not on contract, according to the Law, but that's where the issues arise.

So we call them on contract, because their letter, when they go to the bank and their status is contract, they are not able to adequately or better take care of their kids or the responsibilities that they have. As poor and working-class people, we understand that our parents do not own the means of production. And the way that we are able to advance in life, financially and otherwise, is to be able to access the Credit Unions or the banks and get a small loan, but the lack of a permanent contract hinders that and that's why I want to focus on this. And, I can go into what the nurses did, or what the doctors did, what the orderlies did, especially during COVID that we all praised, that we all praised.

I want to refer, Colleagues, to a survey that was done, and I must give credit to one of our local Papers. I became aware of it by just reading, and I went online and I looked into it. And, it is called: **“Health workers’ perception and migration in the Caribbean Region.”** And, although it was a Caribbean Region issue, Grenada was part of the survey and for someone who has been around in the Labour Movement a little while, the things that have been identified are things that we hear every day, and there are great possibilities.

This Government has an opportunity to do the following. If we address the issue of Contract workers and make them permanent, it will also stymie the migration of our

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healthcare professionals, and it will also encourage some of our healthcare professionals, nurses, etcetera, who are abroad. These people did not go, because they wanted to go, they want to be around their families, so there's a lot in it. So, to expand the pie, to expand the pie for the Government, I can advance to the Government, through you, Mr. Deputy President, what will be there for you.

One, you would be righting a wrong that has been going on for the past twenty something years or more, although you have done some, so I am crediting that. That's your responsibilities, so I am stating that. You will be stemming the tide of the exodus of our nurses, in particular and our doctors who leave and go in other private practices. To the best of my information, the last set of doctors was made permanent in 2007/2008, or thereabout.

And therefore, it is extremely important to address these matters. Give us an opportunity in the Labour Movement to thump our hands in the air and say: **"Yes, the Government has done that; yes, the Government has made the contract workers permanent"** and we can go to the Private Sector as the lead, rather than having to address these matters in terms of industrial disputes; rather than having to take to the streets; rather than having to take to the streets.

We are not asking, with all due respect, through you, Mr. Deputy President, we are not asking for a favour, this is not a favour. This is the dignity of the workers. We spent a while today speaking of international politics, and we spent a while today speaking about the way, you know, black people are being treated in certain countries like in the US, etcetera. Yes. **(Applause)** Let us deal with home. Let us address the way that our healthcare workers and I am focusing on how they have been treated. Let us address the way. I am talking about the type of contracts. Remember, I am not even speaking salary. We can understand that.

We have demonstrate, time and time and time again, our understanding of financial issues, where salaries, where we have taken one-offs, where we have taken no increases over the years. But this here is about the status of someone's employment. This is about the status of someone's employment. This is not people

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that we are speaking about who are four thousand (4,000) miles away from us. These are our mothers, our sisters, our fathers, our aunts, and it lies in our hands.

This is not a Private Sector, who has to go to a Board of Directors and at the end of the day, they look at the bottom-line, and they try to put people on contract, because they don't want to pay their NIS, they don't want to pay Health Insurance, etcetera. If we make these workers permanent as we ought to, and I give that commitment. As long as I am here, I'll champion that cause, and even outside of here, and it shall become more of a national issue. If we do that, and when we do that, it will redound to the better living conditions of our people.

For these reasons and more, I do not accept the proposed amendment. I am also aware, as we speak about regularisation, I am aware of the promises. I've been involved in it. I am aware of the promises that have been made relative to regularisation, especially to the Public Workers Union. I am aware; I've been involved in it. I believed it. I accepted it. And I helped champion the approach to sit and make workers permanent. And, the only difference here that we now speak of COVID, the only difference here and COVID is a recent phenomenon. I have been part of it. The teachers, six hundred (600) teachers were made permanent, probably over the last two (2) years or three (3) years. What happened to the years that they gave before?

Let me explain to you, through you, Mr. Deputy President, why this thing is so important. Even if there's a Promissory Note to say that at the end of your employment, we will consider you permanent, the benefits that you lost, over the past ten, fifteen, twenty years, could never be regained. And therefore, it is not a question of just wanting to get someone permanent when they are exiting the employment. So that, although we are happy and we are pleased for the over six hundred (600), seven hundred (700), eight hundred (800) workers, whatever number it is that were made permanent, the periods that they lost could never be regained. The opportunity costs could never come back. Let us bring an end to this. Make, as a serious commitment, let us pass in this House, let us pass in this Senate, a Motion that says that we call upon the Government, we as Legislators, to make these workers permanent, and we would have fulfilled a significant part of our duty and obligation to humankind.

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As I said, the Law is clear. So, the Government, just as an employer; I am speaking here of the Government as an employer, is violating the Law. How do you expect the two thousand (2,000), three thousand (3,000) workers or more, particularly, in the Government Service, who knows as a matter of fact, that their employer is violating the Law, is breaking the Law? They are committed, because that's why they come to work every day, but something is missing.

When we speak to them, and I encourage each one of you, and I am sure most of you may have done that, speak to the workers. Do not pay attention to me as one of the leaders in the Organisation; do not pay attention to Sister Rachel Roberts, as one of the leaders; do not pay attention to Brother Marvin Andall, as one of the leaders. Forget us for a moment and go to the workers and ask them how do they feel? What has been their experience? If part of the hindrance may be us, (I am not saying it is), go to the workers for those, who feel that we are speaking, because we want to use a platform to speak. No.

Colleagues, colleagues, I beseech of you. I beseech you of the Government, let us right this wrong, right now. Let today, the 10th of November, 2020, be a historic watershed moment, when the Senate of Grenada, on a matter that there ought to be no difference on, took a decision to help our people and to give them what is right. As I said, we can find monies to do investments, and it is for these reasons and others that I can't support the amendment. The amendment is a Promissory Note and it does not conform to the Employment Act.

Our people are migrating fast. I am aware that once our borders are reopened fully, and the slightest opportunity that some of our nurses get to go, they will go, and it would become worse for us.

Colleagues, when we go to the hospital and our mothers go to the hospital and our fathers go to the hospital and our kids go to the hospital and our friends go to the hospital, there'll be less people to attend to them. And it is not because that they do not care about us, but it is because they go to work every day, their parents do not own the means of production. They work for an income, but the income has to make sense to help them, so they go to, what they see, as greener pastures.

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Let us do something to bring an end to this. Let us serve the wider population by ensuring that we create the necessary conditions to keep our nurses. Give me an opportunity, give us an opportunity, give yourself an opportunity, give the Labour Movement an opportunity to go to our members, call them and say: **“Colleagues, let us stand, as Patriots. Let us not run away from the country.”** Give us that opportunity, so we can say, that: **“Look here what, even if your salary is small, allow us to keep negotiating and struggling for it, but, at least, we did what the Law requires, in terms of your permanent status.”** That's what most of them want, you know, that's what most of them want. If you speak to the hundreds of workers, they will tell you that one of their biggest problems has to do with the fact that they are not permanent. And, they feel like they're not considered. They feel that they are not considered. Twenty (20) years, fifteen (15) years, ten (10) years, five (5) years, without a letter, an instrument, in their hand. We cannot be comfortable with that. We cannot be comfortable with that. And, it is too much a broad brush to amended Public Workers' Motion, it is about healthcare.

We celebrated, I think, it was the 14th or 24th of April, through sounds and music. I think it was 18:00 hours, on that Friday evening that we asked the Nation to stand at attention, and we asked everyone to blow your horns and ring your bells. Let us translate it into action.

There are other issues to be addressed; there are other issues as salaries, because they are some of the lowest paid workers. But that's not what I am coming here with. As I said, the issue of salaries, we can always negotiate those matters. I can go to our members tomorrow, as we have done in the past, we have even done it in the Private Sector and even in periods as now and say: **“Colleagues, the aspect of increases, let's relook this.”**

We have made amendments and compromises in terms of benefits, and here I want to, once again, place on record, our deepest appreciation to SGU (St. George's University). St. George's University has not sent anyone home. St. George's University has paid every single worker, regardless if they are reporting to work, if they are working

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remotely or if they have absolutely nothing to do at the moment. We need to compliment them for that.

Why not now? I mean, the cost, and I am saying: "we". And, it is to be done within the process of regularisation, based on established policies and within the real limitations of Government fiscal constraints and fiscal... No.

Sergeant-at-Arms: Mr. President, in the Chair.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Through you, Mr. President, for these reasons, I do not accept the amendments. The time to do it is now and we should ensure that the Law is being adhered to. Thank you very much.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to give my support to the Resolution that was presented by Leader of Government's Business, and to offer a few thoughts, really.

It has been a known fact, within the State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique and the wider Region, the International Community, as a matter of fact, we have been commended as a Government highly, by the International Community for what we have been able to do and achieve for the workers of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

It's an undisputed fact, that we, as a Government, have been commended for our care, our love and appreciation and what we have been able to do and achieve for workers in a space of tremendous odds.

Mr. President: Honourable Senator Garraway, I would have to take a brief adjournment at this time. I am sorry I have to curtail you, but it's only for a moment.

(Senate adjourns for a brief moment)

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(Senate resumes)

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President, and as I was saying, the International Community has commended this Government for the way, (despite the odds), it sought to take care of its workers. And, we can just go back a few short years ago, 2013, when this Government came into Office, we came in on the heels where Government employees were paid on the 35th of the month, because month-end they didn't see salaries and we had to fix that. And you remember a broken economy, we had to make decisions as to how to fix this, and there was the decision to enter into Home Grown Structural Adjustment Programme, and we got a lot of bashing for doing this. But, we thought of the sacrifice, because we looked down the road, as to, if not fixing this now, some of the challenges, socially and otherwise, we will face, and would not be in a position to provide opportunities for our young people for education and so forth. No one considered there was going to be a pandemic, but this is our current reality. So, the sacrifices we made from 2013 up to 2019 bore fruits for us, and we are at this place, and we've got to move forward.

Mr. President, no one could fault the Member on the "Other Side" for passion and enthusiasm for the working-class of this country, no one could fault him for that. But, with enthusiasm and passion, it calls for responsibility, it calls for knowledge, and it calls for understanding of the times that we are in. Irresponsible, and I have seen it in homes, where we make decision based on impulse and we go into debt, because Christmas is coming up and you want to ensure that you have your house looking spic and span, as we say, but in January you are not able to pay for it. So, you have to make responsible decisions.

Let me dispel the notion and I would say categorically, it's totally inaccurate to say that contract workers could not get support from financial institutions, in terms of loans and so on. This is false. This is absolutely false and we need to correct this. What this has done is to demonise our working-class, as really can't meet any standard. This is not fair to them. For those who have been able to purchase lands, to purchase

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vehicles, to get loans for education, for home improvement, are you saying to me that the contract that they have is not valid?

Mr. President, let me just again, dispel this erroneous notion. Contract employment is recognised as a legitimate form of employment and that being said, wherever you're employed, whichever State, whichever place, you're able to go into Institutions and get support. I spent twenty-seven (27) years of my life in a Financial Institution. I didn't have a permanent employment, but they had a contract and I used that contract to fortify myself. I got my first vehicle, when it was five (5) years into the employment, a young man, just coming from school, and I moved with this, going forward. It is not right to make one believe that a contract does not have that value and weight.

I have relatives, brothers and sisters living in the United States. What they have is a contract and they're able to do different things. So, let us not continue with this fear mongering. Let us not continue with this demonisation of a contract. It is not right. Let us look forward to build rather than pull down. But, I will not fault the Member for his enthusiasm and his passion.

It is important to note, Mr. President, that appointments to the permanent establishment is dependent on the availability of the required position on the establishment, and the Member seems not to know that. Yes, it is easy and okay to say, make them permanent, but based on the system that was handed down to us over the years, there must be a vacant position to put them into it. So, if there is not a vacant position, where would you put them? So, I mean we have to get it right.

The complement of positions such, as cooks, maids and orderlies, etcetera, historically have been fixed. Cognisant of the increase in service demands, Government has decided that the most practical policy option available is to provide these services through an alternative mode of engagement, and that is contract employment, and this is natural, and this has been so, historically.

But, you know, Mr. President, I am not sure what the real motive here is, because I remember, when we came in and the promise was made to the workers of restoration of pension, and quite a lot has been said and I have not seen a real

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meaningful application of honour and giving credit where credit is due for this move that was made by this Administration.

Historically, we have had workers, since 1983, stuck in a position and the Government decided, no, we will restore pension and fix this, because when the Pension Disqualification Act was passed in 1983, it was designed to ensure that based on the system that was established by our forefathers, and yes, the discussion we had during lunchtime is applicable here, because our forefathers would have established a system to provide protection for the people within the Establishment. And, who were the people within the Establishment? Their own people, not our locals, that's what it was, to protect their own people within the system. So, the large majority of Grenadians were dying into poverty, and I give credit to the Revolutionary Government, in 1983, decided once and for all, Mr. President, you know very well about this, because you championed this, and I commend you for this. You championed the cause to ensure that more Grenadians will be given a pension on retirement.

(Senator St. Cyr rose)

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: On a Point-of-Order, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr, is this a Point-of-Order?

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. A Point of Clarity...

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: What is this? Nope. I am not accepting that. So, the point here is....

Mr. President: One second. You understand that I have to get his concurrence, because it is not on a Point-of-Order.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: So, the point here is, Mr. President...

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Mr. President: But, you can hold the point, when you make your contribution.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: The point here, Mr. President, is this, the Revolutionary Government decided that too many of our Grenadian brothers and sisters, who were not a part of the establishment within Government, after serving this Nation, be it on the Estates, be it in the homes, as maids and so forth, decided to fix this and introduced the NIS, as a Social Security to ensure that our workers receive a pension on going home.

This is something that we must remember and give credit to it. So, if we are fighting it now, all the acclaim we gave to the Revolution for building this and creating this, then, I mean we're biting the hand that feed us. We've got to come back to some sense of reality.

But, Mr. President, what is important for us to realise that while this Government would have done the most in history for the working class of this country, for the workers of this country, there is a limit, as to how far you can go, at any one point-in-time. What the Member is asking for, at this point in time, it's a big ask, you know, because you are asking us to bring in on the Establishment, a number of persons where we don't have positions for, that's the first hurdle you have to overcome, and then you are asking the Government to agree to an increase in financial outlay for salaries, which we don't have, because you have to remember, at this point in time, because of the COVID pandemic, we are collecting 50% less in revenue than we have had last year.

So, while your enthusiasm is good, but it must be lined up with reason and some form of common sense. I could say, probably when we get over the pandemic, this could be a good time to probably introduce and say the sacrifice, so let's see how we could probably look at it. But, with all of this that is happening, we have less revenue. Where are the means and the ability to take care of something like this?

And mind you, because of what was done in '83 to ensure that all workers will receive a pension on retirement, these contract workers, whose contributions have been made and so forth are guaranteed of 70% of their final income on retirement. This was never so before. So again, this Administration has done more to ensure that the small

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man on the ground and small workers in the lower trenches, are taken care of. So, it's not within reason at this point.

Mr. President, this Government will continue to advocate righteousness for its workers; will continue to ensure that we put systems in place to protect the integrity of our workers. We will continue to put systems in place to ensure that our workers, when they leave this job, they're not retiring into poverty. And the increase of the pension to ensure when they retire they get no less than 70% of their final salary, and again, that was a commitment given. And at this point in time, those who are retiring will get probably 58% of their last salary. I think around this time is the maximum. But, Government has decided to top it up to bring it up to 70%. People like us, when we retire, in a few years' time, I believe, we will be more in line to get the 70%. But, the point is, Government has gone over and beyond to ensure that it protects its workers, so let us look further. So, the available alternative, at this point, as I said, is contract employment.

Further, in light of all the efforts made under the Home Grown Structural Adjustment Programme, to address the size and costs associated with running the Public Service, Government must exercise its prerogative to find the right mix of employment modes to fulfil the required service demands.

What is important for Government is ensuring that the terms and conditions associated with contract employment meet the threshold of decent work, that no worker is knowingly disadvantaged. And, this has been our commitment and we have stood to this, to ensure that our workers get proper remuneration for the job that they have done and they are doing. And, that is the commitment we have given to the workers of this Nation and we will continue to do this, because this is right and this is the right thing to do, Mr. President.

And, as a Government that cares about the workers, we will continue to do the right thing to protect, not just one group of employees, but the entire over four thousand (4,000) members of the Public Service that the Government is taking care of, on a monthly basis, through its payroll, so we will continue. And, the Government has given its commitment, despite the fact we are earning less than 50% of the budgeted revenue,

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Government has given its commitment that no worker will be laid off because of COVID. That's a commitment we have given, and, as you know, when we make a commitment, we stick to it.

It is important, Mr. President, to understand as well, if we are not able to find resolutions and to find the place to keep that expenditure at the way it is at, it could create serious problems, going forward, as to your numbers and so forth. So, the move of this Government at this point, is to ensure that we maintain our numbers, we continue to service our debts and so forth, and to create the environment for this economy to grow, because as the economy grows, there will be disposable income to provide all the other benefits that you want and you asked for, yes, more social programmes that we need and this is one thing that we have done, over the years.

And, I remember one of the International Institutions saying to us, yes, you have the Structural Adjustment Programme, and you have to streamline your spending expenditures and so forth, but no way you should curtail on providing social benefits to your people, and this is what we have been doing and we will never, ever turn our backs on our workers. We will continue to ensure that all our workers are protected in this period, and we all will come through COVID together. We all will come through this pandemic, these difficult times, because we will continue to make the sacrifice one for the other. Mr. President, with these words, I want to continue to give my full support to the Resolution moved by Leader of Government's Business. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Garraway. Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. The Honourable Member never ceases to amaze me with his flurry of words. Anyway, Mr. President, I stand to support Senator Lewis with the Motion that he has put forward. But before doing so, I just wish to speak to some of the things that Senator Garraway would have mentioned, since he did not accept my Point of Clarity.

Mr. President, the Honourable Member was instigating that Senator Lewis was misleading this Honourable House. But, Mr. President, the fact is, some contract

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workers cannot access loans, because they do not have a job letter that says they're permanent, and that is a fact. Some Contract workers can however, acquire loans, but these loans are only up to the period that the contract letter says. So, if I am on a contract for one year, or even Hire Purchase Institutions, they go to the Hire Purchase Institutions and they will be given a facility up to the point of the contract. What does that mean, Mr. President? That means that these workers have to pay more than a regular person would have had to pay, because of those contract letters.

In addition, Mr. President, the Honourable Member said that vacant positions must be available before these persons can get appointments into permanent positions. So I am asking here, Mr. President, if these positions were not vacant, how is it that these workers have been in the very same positions for all these years, yet the position isn't vacant? That doesn't sound logical to me, at all.

In addition to that, Mr. President, regularisation of workers, and I like this, because I grew up with the debate and disputing and refusing to acknowledge some points. Regularisation of workers does not begin and end with remuneration, and that's a fact, regularisation has different facets. **(Applause)**

The Honourable Members on the "Other Side" seem only to be focusing on the remuneration part of regularisation. An employee could be regularised, given a letter of permanent, and as Senator Lewis was explaining, the discussions on salary and all of these things, whether it can be made retroactive and all of these things can take place afterwards. But the fact is, that worker would have a letter or permanent in hand, and I am speaking from experience here, right, in hand that they can go to an institution and present, as a permanent worker.

Mr. President, I wish to go back to some points that Senator Lewis made, the point that in the absence of these letters of permanency, some of these workers have been restricted in their upward mobility, and that's a fact. The fact that these workers have no job letters or letters of permanency means that they do not have any job security.

In fact, Mr. President, some of these workers are considered self-employed. They are under something called "Contract for Service," which really means that they

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are self-employed, yet they are employed by Government. That, in my mind, is a whole conundrum.

Mr. President, I want to go back again, to a point that Senator Lewis made. In the heat of the COVID, Honourable Members, in the heat of the COVID, there was a clarion call to come outside 6:00 o'clock, on that Friday night and beat your pan, beat your pot, honk your horn, do all of these things. But, Mr. President, at the risk of sounding hilarious, we cannot take pots and pans or the workers cannot take pots and pans to an institution, and say here it is. They need a letter in hand. **(Applause)** So, while yes, it is important for us to acknowledge them with our sounds, we need Government to acknowledge the role that they are playing, by giving them a letter of permanency.

Mr. President, sometimes I think I think too much or I think too fast, so sometimes you see me scribbling, because my mind goes a million miles, maybe in a second. The Government Ministers themselves, have acknowledged, right, they have acknowledged that these workers are essential workers, repeatedly so. Without them, we would not have been able to curb or curtail COVID-19, as well as we have done so far.

Mr. President, sometimes I make a little snicker, because of the thoughts that come to my mind. It is ridiculous, it is ridiculous, Mr. President, for the Government to be repeatedly acknowledging that here is a certain section of employees, who would have worked so hard, who would have consistently worked hard, who would have done their all, who would have gone beyond the expectations during the COVID period and even before, and we are still here debating an issue of giving them a letter of permanency, because this is what Senator Lewis is asking for, initially. The Honourable Members on the "Other Side" are ignoring that fact, but this is what Senator Lewis is asking for.

Mr. President, I really would not have wanted to acknowledge here, in this Honourable House, the disrespect that would have been showed to these very workers. They were called names, yet during the COVID period they showed up. They were the ones showing up, every day, all day sometimes. I have friends who are nurses and

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doctors and they're there. They are doing their jobs and we're ignoring, we are coming up with reasons and limiting it just to remuneration to give them a letter of permanency.

Mr. President, I think sometimes the current Administration is bipolar. One minute they're praising the essential workers, the nurses, the very list that Senator Lewis has presented here, and then the next minute they're just treating them, not even as a foster child.

I want to point out, again, Mr. President, that we recently had an installation of a Minister for Health Services and this was touted as an indication of Government's seriousness, as it relates to health. Mr. President, I have a Masters in Human Resource Development and Performance Management. You can put the best Minister there, but if you don't have the workers doing what they're supposed to do, that system isn't going to function. And already we know that some of these essential workers, the workers that Senator Lewis would have put on the list here, the lab technicians, the cooks, the orderlies, the maids, etcetera, we already know that some of them have a low morale. Imagine coming to work, every day, giving it your all, sometimes more than you can give, more than your all, more than is expected, and something as simple as a letter and yes, it is simple and you can challenge me on that, as simple as giving them a letter stating that they are permanent workers. The nitty-gritty, the fine prints can be worked out with the workers, but at least, they have a letter of permanency, they have this job security of sorts, you know.

I work in a certain institution, and yes, I can acknowledge as Senator Garraway said, we have contracts. We function with contracts, but the contract is worded in such a way that I can go to a Financial Institution, that I can go to a Hire Purchase Institution and get, you know, the facilities that I need.

Mr. President, I believe the Motion that Senator Lewis has put forward here, this Healthcare Workers' Motion, has more than a lot of merit, and we keep saying, why now? The Government, those on the "Other Side" seem to want to sift what is for now and what is not for now, and I understand that. It may be politically expedient for them to do that, but the fact remains that these are people, these are people. And we hear them saying all the time that **"we love people and we're interested in people."** Well,

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if you are, now is the time to show it, word, word, word, action time. This is the time to show it, if you're interested in people. If you're really serious about the healthcare workers, give them the letter. There is nothing too difficult in this Motion.

And again, I want to point out, do not consciously ignore what Senator Lewis is presenting. He is presenting a Motion that is asking for the workers to become permanent, not for them to get a raise in salary, not for them to get retroactive pay, simply a letter of permanence. And that is why I would stand here, because I understand what that means and that is why, Mr. President, I stand in full support of the Motion as presented by Senator Lewis. Thank you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator St. Cyr. The Honourable Norland Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, thank you very much. I stand in support of the amendment that is being proposed here this evening, that was put forward by the Leader of Government's Business.

Mr. President, I intended to speak, but I didn't want to go too far outside of the confines of the Motion before us. My intention was to just take the Motion and strip it, based on what was initially proposed as against the amendments that have been proposed, or that have been inserted and what has been presented here, but I will get to that. But I think there are a few little house matters that I think I need to address, raised by my dear Colleague, Senator St. Cyr.

And the Honourable Senator indicated her expertise in Human Resource. But, Mr. President, I have been an employee, I have been a Manager in the Public Service for more than seventeen (17) years, and I think that gives me an opportunity to speak with some degree of authority on how the Public Service works, what happens, what has been happening, what has continued to happen, what has stopped. But I say this, because I think the intricacies of how the Public Service operate is a whole debate within itself, and I don't think a lot of persons understand that, and that is where I think the gap is.

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Mr. President, this Government and previous Governments have had to contend with the construct of the Public Service, its limitations that are structured in such a way even by the Constitution, some of it from a legal standpoint, not having the capacity to evolve as times have changed, not having been able to give succeeding Governments the opportunity to improve on it, because of certain legal restrictions. That in itself has presented a challenge and will continue to present a challenge for each and every one of us, as we move forward. I say this, and this is not just my own understanding and observations and experiences, but those are some of the feedbacks of persons, organisations, institutions, who we have hired to do the studies on the Public Service over the years, and several suggestions and options have been put forward on how we can improve this structure. And so, it is not as simple as one may think, and that is the honest truth, that is the honest truth.

Just to clarify, I think the issue of positions being available, what is vacant and what is available, and whether somebody might be performing a role; there are some clear differences in that. I might be performing a role that mimics a particular position, or some of the functions may be that of a particular position that is under the Permanent Establishment, but that Post might be there, but it may not be available, because why? John, who is the substantive holder of the Post is either assigned to another Ministry, because he may have a capacity to do something else and is filling another role, or Joan, who is seconded to treat with some other issue, or some other in another Ministry, who is performing two or three roles, and that Post is tied up for like, ten/fifteen years, because the substantive holder is performing another role. That is only one of the occurrences that take place in the Public Service.

And you see, it might be seen saying, well, why is the person doing that? But, then there are certain legal ramifications, because why, that person is the holder of that Post. And so, you cannot just sever that person from that Post, because they are performing another role somewhere else. So, I just gave you just a snapshot of some of the challenges that are contained within the operations of the Public Service. That is only just a small dose. And trust me, if anyone here, who has not had to deal with it before, have to deal with it, will realise the challenges and the limitations that Managers

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have within the Public Service in ensuring that the Service functions. So, I just wanted to clear that up.

The issue of tenure and criteria, those are in terms of, there is this question and my dear colleague, Senator basically made the case, basically made the case and basically indicated what are some of the issues why some persons have been getting a negative response, in terms of failure whenever they may have entered an Institution requiring a loan.

Now, the question is, if my dear colleague Senator has a contract, and she can go into a Financial Institution, with a letter, basically saying that you are employed in this place, from this date to present earning a certain amount, performing certain specific roles, and can get positive feedback from that institution, then why is it that somebody else from another institution cannot do the same with a letter?

So, Mr. President, it's clear, what is basically happening, the construct of some of the letters that have been issued, probably, that is my understanding based on, I am just sitting here thinking, that one or whoever him or her may be receiving, may be defeating the purpose in that regard, may be presenting to the lending agency, some restriction. So, it may just well mean, is how that letter is stating that person's tenure or employment is constructed. I could be wrong. I stand, corrected, Mr. President, but because examples are current and present, that persons can perform and do get mortgages for hundreds of thousands of dollars, on a contract, on contractual employment. So, I say this for what it's worth. As I say, probably, this is not my area of expertise, but I am just basically, based on what is presented here, I am just dissecting and unfolding that based on where we are.

So, Mr. President, that is some of the little housekeeping matters, I think, I just wanted to touch on, in terms of the Public Service. It is not as simple as one think it is, because what I can tell you, the Department of Public Administration continues to work with Institutions to find ways to see how we can get the Public Service to be more efficient, to be more modernised. That is the challenge, you know, that is the challenge. And I will say, one may say still, because of that legal, constitutional requirement that is

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attached to the Public Service, one cannot just go and just make those changes, just like that, it cannot happen, and that is a fact, that is the fact.

Mr. President, another perfect example. There is a situation with the position of the Commissioner of Police, hence the reason why that position is always acting. I cannot remember the correct explanation right now, but it's one that if you make the person permanent, the Commissioner permanent, it contravenes a Law, another section of the Constitution. So, how do you change it? It may require, maybe, I don't know, Referendum? I don't know. So, those are some of the restrictions that the Public Service has; that is within its nature. Some of it is probably antiquated in today's construct, in employment construct, things not shifting and so it requires a bigger debate, a wider work to be done to bring everybody on board, all stakeholders, because Government alone cannot do it, and that is the fact. But, I just want to leave that there, because, as I said, this can be a whole Parliamentary Session, if we were to talk about the Public Service.

Now, Mr. President, let us get to the Motion before us, because I am reminded that you are not going to provide supper. Mr. President, we are not in disagreement in the construct of what is presented or the intention of what the Motion that Senator Lewis put forward. We are not. When you look at this, there is nothing speaking against what was put forward, Mr. President. It is clear. It is right here. All we have done was to indicate some facts, in terms of what Government has done, in terms of contribution towards your request, in terms of getting persons permanent, those are basic facts, which you, yourself have commanded us for, and all we are saying is that we have been making employees permanent, and we will continue to make them permanent, as we, as Government are capable to do so. Mr. President, I don't see any difficulty in this, because, basically, if you are saying no to this, you're basically saying no to your Motion, Mr. President; that is how I see it. **(Applause)**

Listen. Mr. President, we understand, we know that there are a number of outstanding personnel matters. We know. It's a long list, and we have been chipping away at it, with support from our Union brothers and sisters. They have been working with us. They have guided us. They have given us good suggestions through our

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working Committees. We have worked together. We have come a long way, Mr. President. We recognise the work that all our healthcare professionals have been doing. Mr. President, I understand. Mr. President, I managed the Hospital for two (2) years. I understand. I know. I have a clear understanding of the intricacies and the challenges that lie within the Health Sector.

Mr. President, we are saying, we agree that we need to do more. We are saying this here, and we are saying that we are going to do that within our capacity as Government, because at the same time, Mr. President, if we are to make decisions that render this Government insolvent, at some point in time, or render the Ministry of Finance insolvent, that we find ourselves in a situation where we can... Mr. President, you know, we are not operating in the days where we are functioning on an overdraft, every month we go to the bank and access an overdraft facility to meet our commitments. We are not doing that anymore, and that is a good thing, and that is a good thing, that is a good thing.

Mr. President, this is a discussion where we have to understand the context where we are. Some of the facilities that we had before, in terms of being able to access financing for other things, like roads, education, even for same healthcare, those are closing, those windows are dwindling. So, it means that we have to be more vigilant, in terms of how we govern, how we manage our finances. So, all that we are saying is that we are going to make persons permanent, as best as we can within the capacity that we have, and that is all that we saying, Mr. President, that is all that we are saying and we're just asking... We know the situation, Senator Lewis, through you, Mr. President. We are aware. They are our employees and we have discussions. We have a number of sessions, as to how we address this, how we chip away at this. Just recently, as yesterday, I have been dealing with some of those matters with persons within even my own Ministry, based on their terms of employment and so on.

Mr. President, I do not want to lay any blame, but this, where we are is as a result of successive Governments not being able to do the necessary changes to our Public Service structure, because of that legal component that is attached to it. I am not bashing anybody. Could you imagine, Senator De Allie here, he has a company

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managing. Could you imagine if you have an employee, who can leave, travel to the United States, doesn't report for work, doesn't call for six (6) months to a year, and he can come back to work, with no repercussions and get paid for that year that he is out and nobody can find him? I've seen it happen, and you can't do anything.

So I don't want to get into those intricacies, Mr. President, because, as I tell you, we can have a long discussion. But, some of the things that are happening, in terms of workers, in terms of where they are and their status, we have more work to do. We have more work to do. We recognise that we have to do more. And, so, we are not saying anything different from what our dear brother, Comrade, as how he likes to refer to himself and his colleagues. **(Inaudible comment/Laughter)** Funny enough, after the Senate and after we close here this evening, I'll show you whose name is on that tie. We will have a good laugh about it, who is the maker of that tie.

(Laughter)

(Inaudible comments by Members)

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: (I don't know. I can't recall). Mr. President, I say this in the context of where we are as Government, that we are well aware of what the challenges are. But when you have the responsibility to lead and the responsibility to make those decisions, not only just for a certain section of the country, but for the entire Nation, it lends itself for a different view.

There is this old adage that says, and I don't think it is old, that: ***“Uneasy is the head that wears the crown,”*** and that is where we are right now, as Government. You see where we are, we are battling, we're trying to create a situation for persons to come home and for visitors to come to experience Grenada and we're trying to do that in the middle of a pandemic, because why, we have to function. We have to try and raise revenue, because we have commitments. We have people to pay. There are a number of things.

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So, Mr. President, we understand, and if anybody understands it's this Government. And, we are saying that this Motion, both of us are saying the same thing here. That is what I really wanted to really dive into this evening, Mr. President. I do hope that with my contribution, that we will bring some semblance of some consensus that we move forward, as one House on this Motion, on this amendment, because of my contribution to show that, look, we are all striving for the same thing. Mr. President, at this point in time, Members this is all I have to say on this Motion. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. I think Senator Cox has outlined very, very eloquently the challenges that we face, some of the very practical challenges that we face, and why it's important, not just to lead with your heart, but we also need to lead with our head.

Mr. President, we are not at odds. I have listened to the arguments on the "Other Side," and on our presentations and with one fundamental difference, (and I'll come on to that), we're saying exactly the same thing, we are not at odds. We're both sympathetic to the challenges that Public Workers face, when they have temporary status. They articulated it, passionately, but so did we. It's that deep understanding of those challenges that has driven this Administration into regularising more Public Workers than any point in time, over seven hundred (700) workers, Mr. President, more than during the Revolution, more than during Colonial times, unprecedented. And that is because this Government does care, and we understand and we recognise and we have taken positive steps. It's not just that we're talking in theory, we've demonstrated that.

And one of the purposes of the amendment that Senator Lewis acknowledges in his words, but not willing to put his vote to, is that we have made extraordinary strides. If you accept that, then why won't you accept the amendment as put forward? It recognises those achievements, but saying the same thing.

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I listened to Senator St. Cyr and there's an interesting comparison between her presentation and that of Senator Lewis. I could forgive Senator St. Cyr's simplification of the problem. She doesn't have the experience or the knowledge, no disrespect, with or without Masters in HR, that Senator Lewis has. Senator Lewis understands exactly what Senator Cox was talking about, exactly. He knows that and much more. He understands the complexities that we face in Government, wearing that crown, having to make those difficult decisions, both legal and financial.

What Senator St. Cyr was suggesting, just write a letter, it's as simple as that. It is not. It isn't. It's as easy to write a letter from the perspective of a contract worker, finding the correct language without changing their employment status, but coming up with the creative words to enable that worker to go to a Lending Agency and seek a loan, is possible and it has been demonstrated, and it's something we discussed many times in Government, because those letters do exist, and there are many successful applicants within there, based on that scenario.

I had somebody approached me just last week, saying that they had exactly that problem. Somebody worked within the Ministry of Youth and we had addressed that particular problem. The letter needed to be redrafted. We have that language. Does it work in every instance? Maybe not. It's dependent on the Lending Agency. Part of the solution is also with the lenders and them understanding the circumstances. So, from that perspective, that piece is possible.

But that doesn't address, Mr. President, the need to regularise and make permanent. Making permanent is a legal act, has legal implications and has financial implications. It's not simple. That piece is not simple. And Senator Lewis understands that, which is why he and his colleagues have worked with us in the regularisation of those seven hundred (700) workers, a challenge.

When we started that process, I was in the Ministry of Education at that time, and I know the challenges that we faced and the hurdles we had to get over, and we did. And it's that spirit of cooperation that is needed as we now enter this extraordinarily difficult phase brought on by the pandemic.

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The Treasury is depleted. Revenues are down by half. It's easy for those on the "Other Side", without the responsibility, without the burden of leadership to throw words and say, just spend there, spend there, spend there. We are the ones on "This Side", who have to make those tough decisions. We would love to do everything. We understand as well as those on the "Other Side," they're not unique in their understanding. But where the difference lies, is, we have to decide; do you pay Peter or do you Paul? Both are in need. How do you do it?

The proposal that's been put before this House, the amendment is that all workers, you've singled out, and this is what I don't understand, that there must be some other agenda, at play, because the original Motion spoke to just healthcare workers. We're saying all workers, we're talking about a comprehensive review, to throw the widest net possible to capture as many workers as possible, but doing it in an organised, intelligent, fiscally responsible, legally, responsible way.

What Senator St. Cyr also doesn't understand, Senator Lewis does, because he's part of passing the Legislation in this House are our Fiscal Responsibility Rules. There are rules in place that govern how many workers we can take, and you're shaking your head. You need to learn, a lot to learn. There are Laws in place that govern what we can and cannot do. There are implications, if we break those Laws. We have had to tread a very, very fine line over the past seven (7) years, trying to square a circle, and Senator Lewis, Senator De Allie, Labour Employer and Employee Representatives and Government of how to thread this needle, and we did it in very difficult times. We are now in equally as difficult, maybe even more difficult times. The storm is still ahead of us. This requires unprecedented cooperation between employer and employee, Private Sector, Public Sector.

Senator Lewis does understand the fiscal implications. He does, and we have to navigate this and we have to navigate this together. The amendment that is before the House takes into consideration all of these complexities, all of these sensitivities. There is nothing, nothing, Mr. President, in the amendment that's before us, that is offensive to Labour or employer or to Government. And what we are trying to do in our attempt, because what was presented to us, we could not accept. The International

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Communities are also looking at us. If we went down that route, if we sent that signal, as raw as presented, as inelegantly as presented, it has implications, internationally, as well.

The millions of dollars that we are receiving in additional support, because of our fiscal responsibility, will be put in jeopardy and that will prohibit us from doing other things that the Members on the "Other Side" will also be demanding that we do. So, what is before us is an amendment that we could have just rejected, we cannot accept what was put before us. We could have just rejected that, we have the numbers to reject it, but we didn't do that. We've worked with it. The first three (3) recitals were bang on. It's then that piece, which speaks to its legal and fiscal responsibility, before that, recognising what we have done that goes far beyond just the health workers and our intent to continue going far beyond the health workers.

So for the viewing and listening public, need to understand the words that are before us, nothing in it is offensive to employer, employee or Government. But the Members on the "Other Side" are signalling they wish to reject it. That does not make sense. Mr. President, that does not make sense.

And this is just one part. The weeks and months ahead of us, maybe years ahead of us are going to be difficult. And if we can't find unity in here, when, as I said, we're not at odds, our sensitivities are precisely the same as to how do we do it? If we can't here, in this House, and I am going to put it out to the Members on the "Other Side," this, I think, is an important point for us. We're at an inflection point, because more difficult things are going to come before us. And I hope the spirit as intended in the amendment, which addresses all that the Member on the "Other Side" proposed and more, in a very structured, responsible way, we can't reach agreement on this. We're going to struggle, as the challenges, the storm that is ahead of us, bears down on us.

So, Mr. President, I believe the amendment that has been proposed, which concurs word for word, on recognising the importance and the sacrifices made by healthcare workers, that acknowledges the efforts and the progress made in regularising seven hundred (700) Public Workers to date, our commitment to continue that process across all of Government, but that we do it in a fiscally responsible manner,

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based on the financial challenges we face right now, I believe are correct, and I believe should be acceptable to every single Member in this House. And on that basis, Mr. President, I propose the amendment for support of all Members in this House. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Honourable Members, the question is, the amendment proposed to the Resolution on Healthcare Workers' Motion moved by Senator André Lewis and seconded by Senator St. Cyr, amendment, which under the provisions of Standing Order 32 (3) where an amendment was offered to the Motion by Senator Stiell and seconded by Senator Judd was the one who seconded that Motion, Judd Cadet, which Motion was debated now. The question is that the amendments to the Motion moved by Senator Simon Stiell and seconded by Senator Judd Cadet be approved.

All those who have that opinion say: "Aye." To the contrary opinion, say: "Nay." I think the "Ayes" have it. The "Ayes" do have it. The original mover of the Motion, you were clear on the procedure, because...

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Just help me along, please.

Mr. President: Well, yeah, because I did canvass the voice vote and I gave an opportunity for a roll call.

(Inaudible comments by Senator Lewis)

Mr. President: Yes. Okay. Well, in fairness...

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: That's why I asked you for guidance, because I wasn't sure at what stage, because I wanted to have this.

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Mr. President: Okay, in fairness to your lack of knowledge of the Rules, although in Law, Senator Lewis, I think you said ignorance of the Law is no excuse. Yeah, I will be magnanimous on the Rules and allow a Division to take place. Yes. So, Senator, Clerk. Although having canvassed from what I've heard, the "Ayes" have it. But to be clear, the Senator who had the substantial Motion did not understand what the rules called for and although I paused substantially to allow such a call, which never came, I am saying, as a result of the lack of knowledge, I will bend over backwards and allow a Division to take place. So, could we call the roll call?

Clerk: Was it for a Division?

Mr. President: That's right. Yeah

Clerk: Honourable Simon Stiell - Aye
 Honourable Judd Cadet - Aye

Mr. President: Just let make one point. Sorry to interrupt, normally Divisions...

(The Clerk converse with the President)

Mr. President: Yeah. Proceed.

Clerk: Honourable Norland Cox - Aye
 Honourable Winston Garraway - Aye
 Honourable Cathisha Williams - Aye
 Honourable Terry Noel - Nay
 Honourable Tessa St. Cyr - Nay
 Honourable Christopher De Allie - Aye
 Honourable André Lewis - Nay
 Honourable Roderick St. Clair - Aye

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Clerk: Mr. President, seven (7) ayes and three (3) nays.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, the Motion of votes in the Division is seven (7) ayes, supporting the amendment and three (3) noes. The Motion has been carried.

Amended Motion approved.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you, Mr. President. I now move to Motion (2) standing in my name, Motion, Compensation Motion.

WHEREAS there are Laws, which mediate the relationship between workers and employers;

WHEREAS workers may seek justice within the context of those Laws;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Grenada has been an employer challenged within the context of those Laws;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Grenada compensate any worker whom a competent Court has instructed to so do.

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Mr. President, I rise to second the Motion.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator André Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President, and I am grateful for this opportunity to address this Motion to give some explanation. I am

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using as a test case and as a pilot for easy understanding of a practical case, an on-going case of Sister Gemma Bain-Thomas. I am going to use her, as an example. But, it encompasses any other worker, who this may apply to. And, as I said, wherever I use the name Gemma Bain-Thomas, it would apply to any other Officer or any other worker, who that applies to. I am using this, as a pilot issue.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis, I wish to draw your attention to SO 36 (1), which reads as follows, and I am taking this measure, because I am familiar with the issue to which you refer. And, it says in SO 36 (1), which I would refer to there, as the *sub judice* rule in respect of the content of any debate, and that content is referred to in SO 36 as “Contents of Speeches” and it reads: **“Reference shall not be made to any matter, which is sub judice in such a way as to prejudice the interest of the parties thereto.”** A fairly wide Rule, and from my understanding and knowledge, the Gemma Bain-Thomas issue is now a matter before the Court. One component matter was decided and the Court made certain rulings, and it is my understanding that there is now an application pending before the Court on a supplemental matter to the principal matter, and I wish you could be guided by that. I don’t know, if you are aware of what I am speaking about. But the issue has gone back to Court in an action against the employer in respect of the payments. So that’s before the Court, so this Rule prescribes us from engaging in respect of that matter and the way in which you want to do it. So, just be advised.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you, Mr. President, and any reference that may prejudice the matter I withdraw it. But, the Motion still is of relevance, because it is extremely important to ensure, as the Motion says that where any worker pursues any matter through the mediation processes including the Court of Law, it is important and incumbent upon the employer, in this case the Government, to so perform.

What are some of the main reasons for that? Compensation, especially in matters where an employee would have given years and years of service to the

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Government, as an employer and especially in the context where if that employee is in the twilight of their years, it is quite understandable that in our younger age, when we are endowed with better health conditions that this is the time when the employer gets the best of us, physically, mentally and otherwise. And, where that compensation, as I indicated, comes especially in the twilight of one's years, not advancing that compensation can have serious implications for that worker. That worker may be faced with having mortgages to be paid. That worker may be faced with having to take care of themselves and their immediate family. That worker may be faced with just wanting to live that quality of life. That worker may be faced with high and mounting medical bills, and therefore, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that the relevant compensation, in whatever form, is being given.

Many of us and I am sure all of us here have that experience because the fact that we are sitting here in the Senate, the fact that we did not come here on our own, the fact that our constituents showed confidence in us to have us here is a reflection that we have been involved and continue to be involved in the life of our community. And, our workers make up a large percentage of the community and I daresay that in terms of an employer, the Government is the largest employer. And therefore, we must do everything that is possible, everything that is legal and legitimate to ensure that the needs of our people are addressed and here, I am saying it is not a matter of asking for, but where a competent Court advances its recommendations or its ruling.

As we face the many different challenges, to live a decent quality of life, it is an established fact that without the necessary financial, or access to finances, life would be extremely difficult, especially in a context where if a worker had to leave their employment before their normal date of retirement, or if it did not, or may not take place through their own voluntary action.

There are too many instances, if I could use these as examples, where we are aware that Courts have ruled, outside of even employment and people are expected to be compensated, but for some reason, the compensation is not being given and in the main instances there is a lack of enforcement, and therefore, we, as employers be it Government or Private Sector, whatever it is, it is not a good practice, if and when it is

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done, to have any worker who give yeoman service to an employer and not being able to receive their compensation.

Colleagues, as we stand and sit in this very said room, as we stand and sit, through you, Mr. President, in the Senate, as Legislators and as the Nation listens to us, we must do everything that is necessary, that is incumbent on us, to ensure that justice is being done. And, it cannot be a good feeling, it cannot be a good experience, it cannot be something that someone can boast about, if a Court rules in my favour and then yet still I have to go back to the Court to seek to enforce whatever the Court may rule, as a worker.

And for us in the Labour Movement, the aspect of the Court, and I say so with all the respect for our Institutions, we find it in the Labour Movement more and more challenging, to, even on matters that one can say is as clear as day, we find it more challenging to get what one would want to see as justice. And that is why we find that these days many employers, even through the process of Mediation, through you, Mr. President, through the Ministry of Labour and Mediation, we find more and more employers are consistently saying no, so that matters can end up in the Court, knowing fully well, that workers and the Labour Movement do not have a deep pocket as most employers have. And therefore, some employers sit back and they wait and they wait and they do not perform and they do not give the justice, as the Court may say, because there are different levels of the Court, hoping that we are going to get burnt out, hoping that we will become frustrated, and we have had that experience.

And therefore, this Motion is designed through you, Mr. President, to call on our largest employers, but that applies to all employers, but here I am dealing with our largest employer, that whenever there are these Rulings and we do not appeal; in other words we recognise and accept that there are legal processes to be followed. I may say, as a Trade Unionist, I may say as a worker that employer (A), or the Government, or Employer (C) ought to immediately compensate once the Court rules. But if Employer (A), (B) or (C), or the Government decides to continue the legal process, one will have to respect that. But in cases where a Ruling has been made in my favour or

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the worker's favour, and in cases where that employer did not, or does not pursue the matter further, through the legal route, we are calling for that compensation to be made.

It can be frustrating. It is frustrating and especially where that worker was kept in the employment, but not dismissed for cause, was not found to be stealing. Because if an employee is dismissed for cause or purported cause by the employer, that employee also have a right to pursue the matter, legally.

Sergeant-at-Arms: The Deputy President in the Chair.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Through you, Mr. Deputy President, that the legal institutions are there for all to be used by all. We may disagree. We may say, why are you tying up the matter in the Court, because that happens a lot; it happens a lot. Sometimes you go to the Court and the matter takes forever to be called.

It took us, from 2005 or 2006 to 2019, or thereabout to address a matter with the former La Source issue. Eventually we got through with the case. There was settlement on the outside, and the matter took forever to be called, but we understand. We are frustrated with it, but what could we do rather than complain, if the Government, as an employer, or Company (B) as an employer decides to pursue a matter through the Legal System? So, even if a worker loses at the first instance or the first level, and the employer appeals the matter, then that's the employers right, because if the employee loses and they can afford it, I am sure that they will appeal it. But oftentimes, as ordinary workers, (and I want to keep repeating this) because the earlier discussion that we had is centred on these matters. All the matters that I am raising now centres on these issues. As ordinary working class people, we cannot match the resources that employers have, so be it the Government, or be it any other employer. But, one may argue, correctly, that what I have advanced here pales into comparison, when, for instance, that employer, be it Government, or which other employer accepts, by their action, the ruling of a Court, because if you do not accept the ruling of the Court, you would appeal and by your very action of accepting or not appealing the ruling of the Court, unless you get to the Final Court. There are some matters, I think, the Final

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Court may be the Privy Council and there are some matters, it may be the High Court, or the Court of Appeal, wherever it applies. Once, and even if and when it reaches that Final Court, meaning that there is finality to the matter, the parties must perform. We have a responsibility as Government to send that signal to our population, so that when we ask the population to follow the COVID Protocols, we do not expect them to break it, because we lead by example.

But if we, as Government do not lead by example then we lose the moral authority. We may have the legal authority, just as how the Labour Code is clear, in terms of what is a contract worker and when it should end. We have that legal authority, but the moral authority to get acceptance and to get people to follow us requires moral suasion a number of times, if not all of the times, because you can have Laws, the Court can rule. But as has been demonstrated many times, even in the face of the Court rulings, many times it is not carried out, and this Motion is designed to give that commitment.

I have heard it outside there. I have heard it from our members. I have heard those concerns. We have had people who have had challenges in the past, yes, through you, Mr. Deputy President. And, our members have asked for that commitment from the Government to be brought as a Motion, in this Senate, which will be an expression of the commitment of the Government to honour and implement the rulings of the Court once that worker goes through the Mediation process, which involves the Court and that is what at the moment, I wish to advance, calling for the support of this Senate, calling for the support of this Senate, to declare that we agree that whenever a worker takes the Government to Court, as an employee, versus an employer and the Court rules in that worker's favour, the Government must comply.

If the Court rules against the worker, we may strongly believe that something may not have been understood, quite clearly, by the Court, or probably we did not make a good case enough to advance what we know, and it happens, because sometimes the quality of your representation can determine whether you win or lose. Sometimes it's just not the strength of your case. You can have a very good case, but what has been presented, the Adjudicator, through you, Mr. Deputy President, may advance that

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what he or she had to consider may result in a particular direction, and we have seen it. I mean, even in our advocacy as Trade Unionists, through you, Mr. Deputy President, I may meet with you as the employer in your workplace and we have had those meetings and I may feel that I have a very good case and even despite your understanding, as you have demonstrated, many times, you might say: "Well, André you did not make a strong enough case." And then on reflection you know you go back and you reflect and you say I missed this, or I didn't explain that enough and you live with it.

And, I am doing this build up, because the Motion speaks about the building block. It speaks about going through the process and using the Court where it is available, and because the Court is seen as the bastion of the defence of our rights, for civil society, where we are not ruled by might, or we ought not to rule by might, because there are those who rule by might, I mean, Courts rule. There are places where Courts rule and the mighty say, look, I am not paying attention to it. It has happened in the WTO, the superpowers, small Islands, our small Islands have taken matters to the WTO, have had verdicts in their favour and the mighty countries haven't paid attention, be it in gambling, be it in subsidies, in terms of agriculture, and it happens. But is this how we as Government want to be seen? No, because, at the end of the day, we all belong to this little rock.

This is not a case where the worker, whoever that worker is, as a Government employee, or a former Government employee must be someone that the Government, or Members of the Government know. And, even if all Members do not know them, but there are Members who will know them. And as I said this is not a case, once again, of begging, because we don't like to beg. We do not like to beg. We beg, if we have to, but we beg to help someone. And when you go to the Court and the Court rules in your favour, it is not a case of begging. Someone in the Court may be sympathetic to you, but if the case that you bring does not reach the bar for it to be ruled in your favour, it will not be done, or it ought not to be done.

I mean, one wonders and as we spoke today about the international politics, as it relates to the US, it is not per chance that there has been this mad rush to ensure that someone with a particular background sits on the Supreme Court. Because even within

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the system, there are influences, and more so, bearing in mind that workers and the Labour Movement have found ourselves, many times on the receiving end from some of these institutions that have their historical context in the protection of business, in the protection of private property, because that is the history that we are speaking about today, the history that we spoke about today, which is a very informative discussion, that which caused some of us to behave the way we behaved today, and some of us, not just in the Senate here, but been conditioned overtime.

And the way certain institutions see some of our culture, the same thing applies to the working class, and you know why, because we do not control the means of production. I am repeating it again, and because we do not have the wealth, in terms of cash and other property, many times. This is a consideration. And therefore, it means a lot to us, when a worker will have a Court rule in his or her favour and the process has ended, because the employer did not appeal or has reached the end of his appeal. It means a lot to us to be compensated. And especially where this compensation comes after I am no longer employed, after I am no longer gainfully employed, after I have started to experience aches and pains in many instances, after I have given all my working life, or most of my working life to that employer, or to the Government, as an employer. It cannot be right.

There are certain basic tenets of right and wrong. There are things that one can debate. There are things that one can reason. There are things that one can spin, and it happens, because there are opinions on a number of different matters, but it cannot be denied. It cannot be denied that, especially in cases where a cursory look, or a phone call, or finding out from a neighbour, or just the knowledge of what the income of that individual were or understanding as an employer the deductions that came from a worker's salary and that worker is no longer in your employment, through no fault of yours and the Judge, or the Court have ruled for compensation, it is only right that that be done. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy President. **(Applause)**

Sergeant-at-Arms: The President in the Chair.

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Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. The start of the explanation provided by Senator Lewis kind of threw me a little bit off track. Clearly, there is a specific motive behind this Motion. And, as outlined by the President, this matter is in the Courts. So, I am going to speak in very general terms, then, Mr. President.

On reading the Motion, as presented in our packs and your explanation has provided a little more context. But I was actually very confused by it, very, very confused. The construct didn't even know what the subject matter was, but your opening statements gave some context to it. But, I just want to be clear on what you're basically saying, is workers have certain rights, that when a worker believes that those rights are breached by his or her employer, in this case, the Government, then the worker has the right to take the Government to Court to seek justice and then in the event that the Court rules in favour, then the Government must abide by the Courts ruling. That's it in a nutshell, I believe, Mr. President, and this is then where intent comes in.

Mr. President, the Member bringing this Motion to his House implies that the Government is not doing something that it is supposed to do, and I am just going to, and this is where I will rise above the specific case and simply speak to Government's policy and the principles that Government follows, which is the Government does understand its relationship to workers. It understands its obligations to the Courts and to Court rulings and, Mr. President, it does meet those obligations, does and is.

So, with regards to those claims that are valid or there are Court judgments against the Government, not only with Public Workers, then Government continues to meet those obligations. But with those obligations, Mr. President, there are often financial implications to that and significant implications.

And, when we look at the number of claimants that exist, judgments against Government, they are quite significant and they are dated. Many of the claims against Government, judgments against Government, predate the Revolution. I think the

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number of claimants that currently exist is somewhere in the region of sixty million dollars (\$60 m), and it's said that they predate the Revolution, successive Governments' Administrations and the list is as long as my arm.

But, Government has always stated that it is obliged to and committed to servicing that. But how are we supposed to treat it, and what the Member on the "Other Side" is implying is that there must be a way of cherry-picking, and what determines the priorities of one claimant over another. Some are deceased, Mr. President, they've been waiting for so long. So, how does one prioritise?

I am certainly uncomfortable with picking out specific cases within that. So again rising above that and sticking to the general principle, we are committed to meeting those obligations. So, there is nothing within the general construct of the Motion that is being put before us that they are all very basic statements. However, I am aware of the intent behind it and the implication that Government is not doing what it ought to do.

The other consideration, especially at this time is the financial constraints that Government is working towards. So that determines, to a great part, how many of those claimants are addressed in any given period. So again we cannot just cherry-pick individual cases.

So, Mr. President, based on the fact that Government is aware of its obligations, is adhering to them, based on the financial constraints that we must work to, the Member may be suggesting that we pay off in one go, the sixty million dollars (\$60 m), we also regularise healthcare workers, singly, and then at the next Sitting will come with another claim that we must do and we must do and we must do, and it just doesn't work like that.

So, Mr. President, I cannot support what is being put before us, because, as I said everything within that construct, we are already doing. However, there is a deeper motive to it. And, it's for those reasons, Mr. President, that I cannot support the Motion that is placed before us. I thank you.

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr.

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Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: St. Clair.

Mr. President: St. Clair. Sorry. St. Clair and St. Cyr. All from St. Andrew. I need to have a clear view sincerely.

(Laughter)

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Good night and thank you, Mr. President. I stand here reflecting on this Motion, as presented by Senator Lewis, the Senator for Labour. Prior to his statement about what may appear to be a motive, I didn't understand the context of that. I saw it as presented and I still don't put that in my mind, because if I do, then I think I would still misinterpret what is written here.

As our friend at the head of the Government's Business, I understand your direction based on the intent, so according to the direction of the President saying that we should sort of remove that from our mind, because that must not cloud the situation because this motive is at the Court, then it must be clear from my mind. So, I am speaking from a clear context that there is a Court, and I am thinking, as a normal person. There is a Court and any matter goes to the Court, we expect a judgment, fine. And, it can go to the High Court and to the Privy Council, but at some point it has to come to an end. There must be a winner or a loser at some point. That's why people go to Court, because they expect a result, otherwise nobody goes to Court.

Now, I believe that, and I respectfully agree, the Government honours some situations. I don't think it cherry-picks, of course, outside of the motive, which I don't think is important, based on the reading here. Government do have challenges and I understand that, so you may come to the point, as to when we can pay, how much you can pay. But, I think that now Government motive to agree that, let us sit down and how we can, not a Promissory Note, but a commitment to pay. So, it may mean paying ten dollars (\$10.00).

If I know I lose the case, and I am the Government and I have to pay, you may just pay ten dollars (\$10.00) to register that I acknowledge that I will have to pay. But

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not paying at all, you wonder if they remember, you wonder would they really pay. You know, like in rent, I am not a Lawyer, but I hear in rent, if you occupy some lands, for a while, even if it's one cent, you make the person pay a token, so there is some claimer from the Landlord. And so I believe, in the context of the Court, that gesture would make me feel comfortable.

Now, if the Government or whoever goes back and forth, so I take you to the High Court and we keep trying each other, then the matter isn't really ended. So, we need to speak about matters that are really finished, that there is no more way to go. But, you know sometimes there is always, if I don't pay you, even if it's a token of ten dollars (\$10.00), we have to understand what the Law does, and as Senator Lewis for Labour said earlier on, sometimes, at that time, you had the wrong person handling the case, or on certain matters, you didn't understand certain loopholes at the time, and so sometimes you make another submission at a later date, because you see a window, or some precedence come up that you wasn't aware of.

So, from a technical standpoint, I could understand the Government, if you are on the losing end. So, if I don't pay yet I don't make a commitment. But if I make the payment, I can't even go and look for another loophole that I would have missed earlier on. So, it's my view, I know it's late, that if the Court to me, agrees and everything is finished, there should be some token, not a Promissory Note, a token of five dollars (\$5.00), ten dollars (\$10.00), one hundred dollars (\$100), so it is registered.

So, a lot of those cases from behind, as our good Senator Stiell said, maybe if you really go into the books today, so much has changed in our Laws, even today we are changing things in the Sitting here. Some of those cases that may even be on the books, if you go and check, you may not even have to pay a dime, because you might be able to go back and see some, unless there is some statutory limitation surrounding that, so I think that is the safeguard.

And the worry about it as an employee, you may work even with a permanent letter and still be worried, what happens to you after, your children, your estate in itself. And a lot of persons may have died, if you check the records to the point of how their will is set up that even if the Government may have on its books that it owes sixty million

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dollars (\$60 m), really and truly, in accounting terms, maybe you could write it off, because there is nobody to claim it, after so many years.

So, it is in those contexts, I do stand, not only to support Senator Lewis, but persons who might be in the similar situation. And my appeal to the Government is even if it's ten dollars (\$10.00), let the person refuse, but to show good intent. I think that's what the Law does, it say intention, and this is my case.

So, I will support it on that ground. If a Court goes, everything is over, I don't think that it could overrule the Court, because that's why it is set up, otherwise why do we need it? Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator St. Clair. Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, thank you very much for affording me the opportunity to just respond to this Motion, and to say, Mr. President, what is basically presented here, through this Motion, and I think there is a clear acceptance and awareness by everyone that this, based on Senator Stiell's presentation, the issue of settlement is a chronic one. And it lends itself to be chronic, because of successive Governments' inability to meet each and every one of those claims in a timely manner, and as such it presents itself in an incremental way, so whichever successive Government that come, they are going to meet unsettled claims, as other claims may come to finality during a particular term of that particular Government, whether or not they play any role in a causative factor in the outcome or result of that claim. So, it's a chronic issue.

But, Mr. President, I think the Motion lends itself to some degree of inaccuracy, as to what transpires, and I am speaking for all Governments. I may not have all the facts, but I speak with a certain degree of confidence that each and every Government would have exercised some degree of meeting commitments, as prescribed by the Court. To what degree, that is what we can question. The timely manner, I think is what is before us. Has it been done in a timely manner? That is something that we

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may seek to question. But I think it's inaccurate in its construct to say or to insinuate that Governments, not necessarily this Government, is not doing that.

So, Mr. President, this is the difficulty that I have with this Motion, based on how it is constructed. Based on my knowledge, what I know, as recent as 2019, a number of claims have been settled by the Ministry of Finance, one of which resonated from my Ministry, which I oversee. And I left that Ministry and I know that there are others that are unresolved, and so I understand; so that is the reason why I speak in that regard.

But, Mr. President, in fairness to the whole process of due diligence or consideration for what is due to claimants and also what is due to Government, I could give a simple example. There are a number of ordinary persons, who have lands and sometimes for twenty/thirty years they paid no land taxes. But you don't hear Government taking punitive action against them or confiscating their land, nothing of the sort. So, those are the gaps. Those are the inadequacies. Those are some of the things that happen, and that has happened throughout successive Governments. And if we check in here, I am sure my dear Senator Colleague that represents the Farmers' Association can attest to that. So, there are a number of challenges with this particular issue of settling those matters. But to indicate or to insinuate that Government, in some expressive way, is not to be seen or not to be doing it is inaccurate. And as such, Mr. President, hence the reason why I cannot support this Motion is on these grounds. But, if the Motion had indicated, let's say that there is a call for Government to address such in a timely manner, that I can see, that is evidence, based on what Senator Stiell is indicating, that since before 1983, if you still have matters like this now, some of them are still live matters, then the issue of addressing them, in a timely manner, I think, is what is before us, and not whether or not it has been done. Thank you very much, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Okay. Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President, and through you, Mr. President, permit me to say, just because Senator Simon Stiell gave

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me this opening and in this discussion about the compensation of workers, he referred to the issue of regularisation. Yes. He used this, as an example. Permit me, therefore, just to read from the Labour Code, the aspect of Types of Contract, and how to better help, through you, Mr. President, the “Other Side” to understand what one was advancing. And I am doing this primarily, because in this debate, in Senator Stiell’s response, he brought back in the discussion about the point I made relative to regularisation. So, I just thought I should clarify this, with your permission.

Mr. President: Well, I can’t understand the relevance arising from this.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Well, the relevance is that Senator Stiell, my understanding, what he said is that I have come with this compensation and next time, I will come back, I have come to regularise workers, etcetera. And I am saying that, my discussion in reference to what Senator Simon Stiell has indicated, is not just about the regularisation of workers, but is the aspect of abiding by the Law. So I just wanted to read that section, so that would clarify this. In other words, I am not here, just coming, just to bring things because of an idea. And I will not read the whole thing, but just read that section here, two (2) sections, that’s Contracts of Employment, Sections 29 (1), 29 (2)...

Mr. President: But Senator Lewis, let us go back to the Relevance Rule, which is SO No. 37 (1). Your reference to 29, 29 of where, the Employment Act?

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes.

Mr. President: Right. The reference to the Employment Act; what is the relevance of the Employment Act under the Rules of Reference, to this Motion, which deals with compensation?

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Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: No, only from the point that Senator Simon Stiell, in addressing the Motion that I brought under compensation, brought back the discussion on regularisation.

Mr. President: No, no. He mentioned regularisation *en passant*, and what he was saying, from my understanding...

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Well, my response would be *en passant*. I will leave it.

Mr. President: What he was saying essentially, from my understanding, is that demands are being made, all of which have financial implications and if you settle this one, then this one comes up. In other words, there are limitations to what anybody can do, whether it's the Government of the United States, whether it's the Government of the UK, whether it's the Grenada Government, that's my understanding of what he was saying.

But he did not introduce that as a component part of his argument. It's something he made *en passant*. The Motion before us talks about complying with a Court Order and that Government should do so. That's the Motion before us.

Now, I am not seeing the connection between; I know you have withdrawn it, but I mean, I want to use the opportunity to explain, because under section 29 of the Employment Act, Part V, is a Contract of Employment, which defines and maybe it's good that you've raised this, because our Trade Union colleagues, have been using quite a lot of confused terminology. Right! And let me just clear this up. Once an individual enters an employment relationship, in other words, Senator Noel calls me and offers me a job and I take that job, a Contract of Employment arises. So to define me as a contract worker, it's impossible to find a worker that doesn't have a contract. So, it's a misnomer. I think I understand what people are trying to say. But in Grenadian Law, there are only three (3) types of contracts. But every worker, once you're providing labour to somebody in return for pay, a Contract of Employment arises. In

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fact, you can't have a worker that's not a contract worker. So to say that we're talking about contract workers as distinct from non-contract workers, in a sense, really, it's not coming to me now, but it really just doesn't make sense.

And, the three (3) types of contracts are contracts for an unspecified period of time, which means that you're permanent; a contract for a specified period of time, and that has its own implications, because when the time is determined, the contract is determined together with the time. So, if I employ you for three (3) weeks, when three (3) weeks come, contract finished; and then a contract for a specific task. So if I hired you as a painter or I hire you as a Security Officer in a Dance, right, that's for a specific task. Right.

So, it is time that we clarify this thing, especially among my Labour colleagues, who keep implying that you are worker, other than under a Contract of Employment and then they define you as a contract worker. Once you offer your labour in exchange for pay, a contract arises. So, it's impossible to have a worker, who doesn't have a Contract of Employment, who is not a contract worker. I just wanted to clarify that.

So, as I said, I am going back to the Relevance Rule. I cannot see the connection between that, and therefore, I want you to be guided by the Rule. I know you said you withdraw it, but I just thought I would explain that.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Okay. Thank you very much. Yeah, that's okay. I'll be guided by you and I understand it. So, through you, Mr. President, I want to start first by clarifying what appears to be a misunderstanding. And I will not do as my friends on the "Other Side" and indicate that it is deliberately done. I think there's a genuine misunderstanding of what I have advanced. I am not speaking about construct, because there can be different takes on construct.

The central that I am speaking about, I am not speaking about claimants. Mr. President, through you, I am speaking about... the Motion is about compensation for workers that has taken a case against the Government as an employee and not a claimant where the PRG or Gairy may have owed somebody, took somebody's land,

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and there's compensation outstanding as a claimant. That's not it, absolutely not the case that I am speaking about, and therefore, that leads me to the other aspect.

Senator Simon Stiell, through you, Mr. President, said, not necessarily word-for-word. Senator Stiell says that I am cherry-picking, by asking for the settlement compensation for the worker. And I said, yes, I am cherry-picking, and there's absolutely nothing wrong about cherry-picking, and the reason why I am cherry-picking is that I am making a separation from other claimants, who may have something, because somebody property got damaged by a Government vehicle, or something so, or Government for a public good, in the interest of the public may have taken someone property and there may be argument that the Constitution says, we should be compensated how, I am not going there. That's not what I am speaking about. I am cherry-picking. I am cherry picking to make that distinction between when there is a claim, a successful claim that a Court has upheld for a worker, there's a different relationship. That relationship from which the compensation has arisen is because of my employment engagement. And therefore, it ought to be treated with urgency, because it's through my employment, whatever the reasons are, whatever the reasons are. So yes, I am cherry picking. And that is why the Motion and that's why I genuinely believe that it may have been a misunderstanding.

But the word is here. It says here: ***"BE IT RESOLVED,"*** regardless of what one may say of the construct, ***"BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Grenada compensates any worker."*** If a worker's land is taken by the Government for whatever reason, and there is compensation outstanding, I mean, one may stretch an argument, but I would not come here and stand and say that the worker is being owed. In the context, that's a different matter, and it is quite understandable.

As a matter of fact, let me place on record, Senator, through you, Mr. President, I sat on the Monitoring Committee and I am aware that the Government has made tremendous strides in compensating, making attempts to compensate outstanding claims for citizens. I am aware of that. But, I am speaking here, in specific cases of workers, that's a different matter. I am not accusing the Government of not meeting some of its outstanding issues. I am speaking here of the worker and I am saying,

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where a worker has any outstanding matter through their employment, it says here, this worker should be compensated. So, yes, I am cherry-picking.

So, I just want to clarify this issue. And I heard the different aspects of motive. Let each one of us in our own conscience, answer that question. For those who speak about my motive, I want to through you, Mr. President, to ask each one of us who speaks about my motive, if that is the case, is it a worthwhile motive? I am answering those who said, they understand my motive. Let us say your understanding is correct. Is it a worthwhile motive? That's what I am addressing.

And I indicated that this is possible to happen, and where such happens, where a Court rules in the favour of a worker, do not treat me, or that worker, as one of the standard claimants that were to take the Government's word, that going back to the PRG days, or before the PRG days, where the word is 'confiscated,' we can 'confiscate' property, or whatever it is. One, I am not addressing this matter. If I was addressing this matter, I would have brought into the aspect Dorset Charles, but I have not done that...

Mr. President: But, Senator, just on a Point of Clarity, your Motion makes no mention of that, you know.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Of?

Mr. President: What you're just saying there. Your Motion says that the Government must compensate any worker, who, by virtue of the decisions of the Court, ought to be compensated.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Okay. Okay. But, the opening...

Mr. President: That's what it is saying, a worker. And, it is saying that that compensation, if it arises from an employment relationship...

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Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes.

Mr. President: So, I think your clarification is correct.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes.

Mr. President: In other words, if the Government have some people cutting a tree and it falls on somebody's house, you're not talking about that. You're talking about an employment relationship where a Court has ordered the Government to pay compensation. Yes. But I am saying this is what your Resolution is actually saying. But, you seemed to be implying that at the same time you're calling for that, I think the problem that Senator Stiell has, is that you are saying, with no evidence in your recital, that workers are not compensated as a result of that, and that's the problem, I think he has. Just my clarification of what I think his problem is.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes. So, just by ending, I commit this Motion and I ask for the support of my fellow colleagues in this matter.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: The Motion was moved and seconded by Senator St. Cyr. There have been no amendments offered to the Motion. So, the question is that the Motion as moved by the Senator André Lewis and seconded, be approved.

Question put.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Is it now I can ask, or do I have to wait until the Chair announces a Division.

Mr. President: Well, I am waiting.

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Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Mr. President, I am asking for a Division. Mr. President, bear with me please, because I'm trying to understand the procedure, because I wanted to know, and I am still asking, do I have...

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Just ask. Yes. No, I am trying to follow the procedure, so bear with me, because my earlier understanding of when one can ask for a Division is after the President or the Chair puts a Motion and the President, or the Chair says that either the "ayes" or the "noes" have it, one has to wait to then ask. So, that's my misunderstanding. So, now I am asking for that Division to be taken, so that's my mistake.

Mr. President: Well, Okay. It ought to be done once I canvass the votes, because I'm about to announce, who, on the basis of who spoke the loudest, as appeared to the Chair to carry the votes. And this is why I am waiting, because I've canvassed the votes. Those in support of the Motion that says and voted "yea," and those opposed to the Motion said "Nay."

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Just one second. Mr. President, just bear with me. What section is this again? How much, 46?

Mr. President: Are you seeking a Division, Senator Lewis?

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes, I am.

Mr. President: Well, then say so.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Under 45 (2). Yes, I am seeking a Division, but I am also trying to, so as to avoid having to make errors in the future.

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Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Well, you can read that at home.

(Laughter)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Okay. No problem. I am cool with this.
So, I am asking for a Division.

Mr. President: Division, Clerk. Mr. Clerk, I am waiting on a Division. He requested a Division.

Clerk: He wants it.

Mr. President: Yes.

Clerk: Okay.

Mr. President: He's not clear on the rules even though we explained it earlier on.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I understand it now.

Clerk: We'll go to a Division.

Honourable Simon Stiell	-	Nay
Honourable Judd Cadet	-	Nay
Honourable Norland Cox	-	Nay
Honourable Winston Garraway	-	Nay
Honourable Cathisha Williams	-	Nay
Honourable Roderick St. Clair	-	Aye
Honourable André Lewis	-	Aye
Honourable Christopher De Allie	-	Aye

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Honourable Tessa St. Cyr	- Aye
Honourable Terry Noel	- Aye

Clerk: Mr. President, it is a tie of five (5) ayes and five (5) noes.

Mr. President: Honourable Senators, the report from the Division is there are five (5) “yeas” and five (5) “nays.” So the House on its own cannot decide this matter. It now falls to the Chair to exercise a casting vote, and the Chair could either decide to abstain or to vote one or the other two ways.

Now, the disadvantage with the Chair is that the Chair was not part of the debate, so that the views of the Chair on this matter are unknown, as well as the inclinations of the Chair, which would have been expressed had the Chair been part of the debate is also unknown. I looked at the Resolution and from a matter of principle and practice, I am not aware that Government does not pay and refuses to pay on the basis of the order of a Court. There may be instances where payment may be delayed. There may be instances where payment may not be prompt, and then there are provisions available to a party for a Court to give further direction, on such a matter.

The Resolution speaks to, in terms of the Motion, in its Resolution part, because I don't think anybody disagreed, there's been any disagreement on any side, on the reciters. I mean, there're clear, very straightforward, succinct and uncontroversial. There can be no doubt that there are Laws which govern the employment relationship. We have several of them, some to be found in what is commonly referred to as the Labour Code, which in fact, quantifies the Employment Act and the Labour Relations Act and then the other Acts. The NIS Act is an Act in question, which has to do with the employment relationship.

The mechanism for seeking justice is the Court and that's clear, so the recital presents no contest or controversy. And it is a fact that workers have gone to Court against the Government, not just this Government, but all Governments in the past. And I would indeed predict that in the future, people will go to Court, workers will go to Court,

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unemployment matters, as well as, other matters, in respect of whether or not they feel that the Executive has violated their rights, and I don't think that's in dispute.

Now, we come to the Resolve part and the Resolve part simply says: “**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Government of Grenada compensates any worker whom a competent Court has instructed so to do.” My reading of that Resolve is consistent, as far as I know, with the philosophy of the Government. What may arise is how soon a worker may get pay; how soon that the Government may be able to execute the decisions of the Court.

I am not aware that, as a policy matter, that as a principled matter, the Government is not following the orders of a Court. I am not aware of that at all. And therefore, to be quite frank, colleagues, and I bear in mind that no amendment was offered to the Motion. Had the Motion, for example, say that “**such workers must be paid immediately,**” well, that will open up itself for questions for all kinds of issues of ability to pay, because there is one thing to demand payment, it's another thing for ability to pay. So I could demand payment immediately, but it may not be practical. I think that's the point that Senator St. Clair was making in his contributions from what I can distil from him.

Senator, a note, you're seeking a brief adjournment? Who did I get this note from?

(Senator St. Cyr indicates)

Mr. President: You are seeking a brief adjournment? And, may you advance the reasons for me to consider it?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: But, it's a Motion.

Mr. President: No, one second. But, she wants an adjournment. She sent me a note seeking an adjournment, a brief adjournment?

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Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Just to use the bathroom facility.

Mr. President: Hello?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: But, you don't have to adjourn for that.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: I must. I must.

(Comments by other Members)

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: I am presenting next, and I am not sure how long the President...

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: We will wait for you.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Okay, you'll wait.

Mr. President: What is this? I am lost.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: I need to go to the washroom.

(Laughter)

(Comments by other Members)

Mr. President: Oh, I am about to cast the vote. I mean, you have already voted.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: But, I am presenting next and I do not know how long you are going to stay, so I didn't want to go, when I am next to present.

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Mr. President: Okay. Well, I am about to make a decision on my vote. So, if you are absent I'll take the adjournment at that point.

(Inaudible comments by the Members)

Mr. President: Yes, Honourable Senators. I see nothing in the Motion, which is inconsistent with the Government's committed policy and or practice. As I said to you before, I note that no amendment was offered to make the Motion more palatable, and had there been in the Motion that payment must be made now, or promptly, right away, then I can see that presenting some challenges, because the payment is a factor of the availability of funds. Right! But, as the Motion stands at the moment, without amendment and debated, I see no inconsistency between the Resolve part of this Motion, the practice and philosophy of the Government, and therefore, Honourable Members, I cast my vote in support of the Motion, as I see no harm in the Motion, as it currently exists. Clerk. So, on that basis, Honourable Members, the Motion is carried.

(President knocks gravel)

Motion approved.

Mr. President: We take a brief adjournment to accommodate...

Clerk: There is another Motion, that's the Motion by Senator St. Cyr.

Mr. President: Yes, I am saying, but she stepped out a moment. So, I will take a brief adjournment to accommodate her. This house stands adjourned, I would say for maybe seven (7), or ten (10) minutes, ten (10) minutes.

Senate adjourns for ten (10) minutes.

Senate resumes.

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

Mr. President: Pray be seated. This Session of the House now resumes and at the resumption, Senator St. Cyr, you had the floor, in respect of your Motion.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I stand to put forward the Motion standing in my name:

WHEREAS section 29 (1) of the Grenada Constitution makes accommodation for representation through Constituency elections for Members of Parliament;

WHEREAS Members of Parliament may not be part of the Executive Branch of Government;

WHEREAS in the performance of his or her duties, as a Parliamentary Representative, each Member of the House of Representatives is entitled to an office within his or her Constituency, and to organise the activities of that office, as he or she sees fit in accordance with approved Parliamentary policy;

WHEREAS the Office of the Houses of Parliament is responsible for providing guidance on the procedures and policies of the operations of the Constituency offices in keeping with democratic standards;

AND WHEREAS the Clerk of the Houses of Parliament, as the Accounting Officer for Parliament is responsible for ensuring financial accountability for funds expended for the operation of all Constituency offices in accordance with democratic standards;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate recommends the immediate restoration of the financial administration and oversight of the Constituency offices to the Houses of Parliament.

Mr. President: Senator Noel.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Mr. President, I stand to second the Motion.

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Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, in 2012 the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which I'll refer to later as IPU, held a workshop in Trinidad under the title: ***“Developing good practice in political representation and constituency work in the Caribbean Region.”*** This workshop used the Global Parliamentary Report published by the IPU and UNDP, as the springboard.

Mr. President, one of the challenges identified, was the presence of polarised Party Politics, an issue that still pervades our local context. Mr. President, among the recommendations to address this, was ensuring Constituency offices remained devoid of party affiliations.

Mr. President, the mere fact that the previous Honourable Minister for Works, through who's Ministry the Constituency offices are now administered, had to request his Cabinet colleagues to desist from using these offices for Political offices, is an indirect indictment on them, not going in accordance with good practice.

Mr. President, we hear all the time, transparency and accountability and good governance. Mr. President, I wish to point...

Mr. President: Senator, if I may just intervene a little bit. You have made an assertion touching and concerning a Member of the “Other Place”, in that you are asserting, without providing evidence, that certain things took place, and I just wish to alert you to the fact that, that flies in the face of the natural justice and other principles.

The Member in the “Other Place” is not here to disprove or disavow what you are saying. You have not provided us with any evidence to support what you are saying, and therefore, I would wish to advise the Clerk, that reference to the Member in the “Other Place” in so far as the claims that you are making, and that Member is not here to defend himself, ought to be struck from the record, and no further reference be made

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unless you are able to provide us with the evidence to support the claim that you are making.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Duly noted, Mr. President.

Mr. President: So, Clerk, all reference to the “Other Place” and whatever happens there etcetera, be struck from the record. Continue, Honourable Member.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Mr. President, the 6th principle of the Commonwealth Latimer House principles focuses on ethical governance. It addresses issues of conflict of interest, whether they are real or whether they are perceived with a view of enhancing transparency, accountability and public confidence.

Mr. President, the fact that the Government moved the Constituency offices from being administered by the Parliament, to fall under the Ministry of Works, is an infringement of this very principle. Mr. President, how can the activities of the Constituency offices be considered transparent and illicit the level of citizens’ confidence that they should, when they are no longer administered by the Entity that should be managing them.

Moreover, Mr. President, the Parl-Americas, the Institution that promotes Parliamentary diplomacy in the Inter-American system, and of which Grenada is a member, supports the ideal that Constituency offices should be directed by the Parliament. This is what the document says, Mr. President, and I quote: **“Parliaments can implement measures to ensure these offices”** and the offices that are referred to here, are Constituency offices, **“function in a non-partisan manner, as an extension of the Parliament and not the Political Party, so they function as a space that is welcoming to all citizens.”**

Mr. President, Parl-Americas advances principles such as transparency, accountability, ethics and scrupulousness. We would expect, by virtue of being a Member, that the Government of Grenada would both promote and exhibit these very

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principles. Yet, Mr. President, here we are, tonight, twenty to nine, debating the very issue that goes against them.

Mr. President, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), in 2018, published a list of recommendations or recommended benchmarks, for democratic Legislatures. If the Honourable Members, have not made themselves aware of the document, I have a copy that I can send to them.

Benchmark 5.1.1, states, and I quote: ***“The Legislature rather than the Executive Branch, should control the Parliamentary Service and determine the terms of employment. There should be adequate safeguards to ensure non-interference from the Executive.”***

Mr. President: Could you send the Clerk, the respective...

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Benchmarks.

Mr. President: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: I will.

Mr. President: Could you email it to the Clerk?

(Clerk conversed with the President)

Mr. President: Oh, I am being told by the Clerk, that your source may be him, because he sent it out to everybody.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Oh no, I did my own research.

Mr. President: You did your own research? Okay. We have it.

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Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: So, Mr. President, clearly, the current construct, as it relates to the management and running of the Constituency offices, is neither congruent with the IPU's expectations, nor the Latimer House principles, nor Parl-Americas, nor the CPA's benchmarks.

Mr. President, what we are requesting through this Motion, (and when I say "we", the Opposition), are requesting through this Motion, is not foreign to other Democracies; take for example Trinidad and Tobago. According to the commonwealthgovernance.org, the Parliament is responsible, (that is in Trinidad), is responsible for the Constituency offices. Mr. President, in more granular terms, the Parliament is responsible for providing guidance on Procedures and Policies on the operations of the Constituency offices.

Moreover, in Trinidad and Tobago, the Clerk of the House is the Accounting Officer, and as such is responsible for ensuring accountability of all the funds expended. Clearly, Mr. President, they're going according to the accepted Procedures and Policies. Additionally, there is a Constituency Operations Manual, by which the Constituency offices function, procedure. Mr. President, the Parliament oversees the Constituency offices, not any other entity.

Mr. President, in my Maiden Speech, I alluded to the fact that I was a wayward child, and I highlighted that I got a lot of licks, not just some, but a lot. I notice, Mr. President, in this regard, the Government seems to be behaving the very same way. Is it that the Government is wayward? I would leave this question to marinate for now, but I proffer that the Constituency office is not a Party office and it ought not to be used as one.

Mr. President, bearing in mind that you would have just advised me not to refer to the Minister for Works, I would not do so. However, Mr. President, if Parliament has full oversight of the Constituency offices, no occurrences that contravene and I am putting this statement, because I have confidence in the Parliament, no Constituency offices would have to be dealing with this issue.

The Constituency offices, I reiterate, Mr. President, the Constituency offices, are not Party offices, and ought not to be used as such. The Constituency offices should be

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used by the MPs in a way that reflects approved Parliamentary policies. To do otherwise, Mr. President, is to breach the very concepts of transparency and accountability, and we have heard it so many times, Mr. President, inside this very House, that the Honourable Members on the “Other Side” tout the Government in showing transparency and accountability. But here we are again, Mr. President, we’re discussing, we’re debating an issue that does not show the Government in that light.

Mr. President, the constituents should be comfortable and feel accommodated at the Constituency offices, as these offices ought to be used for the work of the constituents, through their MPs.

(Senator Stiell rose)

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I stand...

Mr. President: Yes, Senator Stiell.

Sen. Hon. Simon Stiell: Well, once again it’s imputing improper motives...

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr, we can’t have two (2) people standing at once.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: So, Standing Order 36 (3), imputing improper motives, again, this is about the third statement the Member on the “Other Side” has referred to using the Constituency offices as Party offices. That is not a statement of fact, and as she continues that, I get a sense it’s going to be the centre of her argument. That is not a statement of fact and is not the case, Mr. President, and it’s imputing improper motives. And when we come to respond, we’ll go into detail as to the management of those offices and what the reality is. But please, I would like that statement withdrawn.

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Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Stiell. Senator St. Cyr, I think you stumbled over on this one. I attempted to give you early guidance, but you stumbled over on this one and under Standing Order 36 (5), you would have to withdraw the reference statement made.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, my intention was not to impute. My intention here is to show the ideal; that is why I made reference to what all different entities were saying. So if I may again, Mr. President, go back to the statement that I just said.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: I'll say again, Mr. President, she's imputing improper motives, the statement must be withdrawn. It's not to build on the statement. It is a statement that is inaccurate and not a statement of fact.

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you Mr. President. I will withdraw the statement.

Mr. President: Okay. Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Mr. President, it would appear that, and I am saying it would appear, based on the principles and based on our understanding of what is happening at the Parliamentary offices and the fact that the Parliamentary offices are not administered by the Parliament, the Constituency offices, are not administered by the Parliament, is indeed, an infringement of the ideals put forward by Parl-Americas, by the IPU and by the other entities that we so commonly refer in our functioning. Mr. President...

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Mr. President: Could I just ask you one simple question, if I may? Sorry. I don't want to break your trend of thought. In the Parliaments to which you're referring to, including Trinidad, is there not a Parliamentary authority?

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: There is a Constituency Commission or Board.

Mr. President: Right. Good.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: And, that...

Mr. President: We don't have this.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: No.

Mr. President: And, the office of the Clerk is an office, while it is one of the independent Branches in the Legislative Branch, it is actually within the Civil Service, because Parliament doesn't have a specific budget for all the different issues. So, it's within the Civil Service and so too, is the Ministry of Works. I just thought I would just make that interjection.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Noted, Mr. President.

Mr. President: I am not joining the debate. I am just, for clarity, because I know these matters would come up.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Noted, Mr. President. Mr. President, the fact that the Constituency offices are not administered by the Parliament, as these entities advocate as ideal, sometimes, not only serves to address a potential problem, but creates new ones.

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Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: In your opinion.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Well, I am speaking from my take. I am sure the Honourable Member would have his time to respond.

Mr. President: Members, address me please.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Mr. President, Performance Management is a dynamic and engaging process of on-going feedback and coaching, and is epitomised by empowering conversations and actions. Integral to this process is Performance Measurement, and I was very happy to receive the Strategic Goals and Plans that were sent out to the Honourable Members of this House.

The question that arises, Mr. President, really relates to the means used by Government to transfer the oversight of the Constituency offices to Government. Mr. President, we are not ignoring the fact that taking over the Management of the Constituency Offices is politically expedient for Government, that's how we see it.

However, Mr. President, we are resolute that we must revert to the practice of actual and authentic principles of good governance. Mr. President, the running of the Constituency offices ought to be returned to the Parliament.

In closing, Mr. President, permit me to highlight one of the recommended next steps suggested by the CPA, in its Draft Self-Assessment Report that all Members of this House received, and I quote: ***“Reinstating Parliament’s responsibility and oversight of funds for the Constituency offices for Members of Parliament and the development of a specific Code of Conduct for Parliamentarians is necessary”***, and that's the part that speaks to Ethical Governance. In short, Mr. President, the CPA supports our Motion.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

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Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I am actually going to simplify this discussion. It's very clear where the Member on the "Other Side" is coming from with her Motion and the opening statement as my objections is that there is no political interference in the running of the Constituency offices. And they are not there to serve as Party offices, so I am going to make that very clear from the outset, and I will come back to that. Mr. President, in the Motion that is presented, there are a number of technical inaccuracies within the Motion, as presented, but I am not even going to go there.

The Member has the right to bring any Motion, once it's in adherence with the Standing Orders, to be debated in this House. But, Mr. President, the matters that she is raising are not constitutional, the running of the Constituency offices, they're not legal, simply administrative, Mr. President. These are administrative matters that were debated, discussed, at length, in that "Other Place" and those discussions continue. I will say again, they are administrative issues and I do not believe that this is the place for us to be making recommendations, with regard to how those Constituency offices are administered.

The genesis of this started in Parliament that had the responsibility of managing these offices, for years. There were complaints, significant problems, issues and challenges, with regard to Parliament's ability in capacity to manage these offices properly. Those offices are there to serve the constituents, people within the communities that they serve, and they are there to serve the most vulnerable. It is actually the most vulnerable within those communities that derive the greatest benefit from those offices. Year after year, Administration after Administration, under the management of the Parliament, they had problems, serious problems, which affected the ability of those offices to serve the communities that they are set up to serve. And whether that's the provision providing support for housing, whether it is schools, whether it is about providing opportunities for those within the communities, providing support, hindered, hampered, because of the poor management afforded by Parliament.

Successive Clerks, who are the Accounting Officers have responsibility, as Senator St. Cyr, quite rightly identifies, have complained. Clerk after Clerk after Clerk

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cannot manage the offices, MPs complaining, Clerks complaining, staff at the Parliament complaining and most importantly constituents complaining, those who were supposed to be benefiting from the service, a whole litany of issues, electricity cut off, water cut off, telephone cut off, landlords evicting MPs, basic supplies not being provided, a mess, a complete mess, and all parties involved, because this isn't about CPA or whichever other Authorities and Institutions mentioned, it's a practical administrative challenge. All parties involved, the Clerk, the Presidents, the Speaker, MPs, all in agreement that the construct that existed for years wasn't working, attempt after attempt to try to manage it.

It was then decided, Mr. President, that a new construct was required and in consultation with all of those Members, Parliament, the MPs, what construct would address those chronic issues that were experienced, and would be the model as to how to move forward.

Is it our place here, Mr. President, for us to get into that? I would say not. There was consensus as to how best to manage it and a new Management System was put in place, which addressed those administrative challenges that for years we were unable to do. The issue over Party offices, you know the response that under this new construct, there are Party supporters who complain that the Opposition Members are receiving better service than they are. There is no political bias. There is no discrimination within those offices. They are there to serve persons from those communities, without fear or favour.

So, Mr. President, those discussions continue, because of what was acceptable to all Members of that "Other Place", when they decided to come up with a construct that best suited the operations. Now all of a sudden, you have one who's saying no, they now object, was part of the decision-making process back then.

So, Mr. President, what currently exists, I am talking about Performance Management is performing, is performing far better than it ever did. I'm sure if you speak to the Clerk, I am sure there will be great relief that the pressures that his predecessors and that problems no longer exist. So, what is an administrative issue, where practical solutions have been derived to address them, is now becoming political.

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Now the politics is being brought into this, Mr. President, now the politics is being presented. And I would say once again, once the financial measures are put in place, the finances of those offices are audited, independently audited, there is a Service Provider that has taken that administrative headache away from the Parliament, and the constituents being served from those Constituency offices are able to benefit from the services that are now being provided, at a far more efficient rate.

So, Mr. President, if this issue is raised in that “Other Place”, debated at length, parties continue to talk, there is agreement that if there is a need for review, if there is a need for some alternative to be put in place, then that will be considered. What right do we have here to involve ourselves in that discussion at this time?

So, Mr. President, when Members of that “Other Place” are satisfied, maybe one exception, with the functioning and the operations of the measures that have been put in place, there is integrity, there is accountability, there is transparency in the processes that have been put in place, and the services that are being provided are being provided at a greater rate of efficiency to the benefit of all.

So, Mr. President, based on the history of this, based on the current discussions that are taking place, I see no purpose for us to have this debate here at this time. It's for those reasons, Mr. President, that I cannot support the Motion that is being put before us. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Stiell. Senator the Honourable Terry Noel.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Thank you, Mr. President. Let me start by saying that I rise to support the Motion, and especially when it would appear as though our democratic institutions are under threat, or trampled upon, and what is wrong is wrong. The mere fact that the Constituency offices are supposed to be under Parliament, that's where they ought to be and not under some other Ministry.

And as I continue, Mr. President, this is not the only time, in this country's history, that practices like that happen, where our democratic rights and principles are trampled upon, to a certain extent. As I recall, Mr. President, in the 70s, a similar thing was

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happening. The then Government at the time was doing similar things, trampling on the democratic rights and principles of the country at the time.

In fact, in my Maiden Speech, I went as far as to mention, talking about the Revolution, which ushered in the Revolution in 1979, and in my Maiden Speech I made mention of Mr. George Brizan, a Historian, a lot of the times that is never mentioned about him. In fact that, a lot of times people talk about him that he was an economist and so on, but let us not forget that he was a historian, as well. He was one of the scholars that talked about the Island of Conflict, talking about our Revolutionary past and so on, and the fact that there was revolutionary blood that runs through our veins, as Grenadians.

Mr. President, you remembered, I also spoke about the Kalinago People. I spoke about Julien Fèdon, who controlled the country for fourteen (14) months straight, who came closest to replicating the Revolution. I mentioned Henry Christophe, Uriah Butler, Malcolm X, Eric Gairy. Well, in Eric Gairy's case, in his time, in the 70s, he fought for the workers' rights, through the struggles, and we have to split his tenure in two (2), because the second part of his tenure, it appears, as though he undo all that he did, hence the reason why, which ushered in the Revolution in 1979, due to the trampling of the democratic rights and principles of the country.

But, I make the point, Mr. President, to remind us about the implications and the ramifications, when these practices occur. So, I am making the point that we don't slide down the slippery slope, again, because history could repeat itself, and notice I am not trying to insinuate or encourage any Revolution or anything of the sort, but it is part and parcel of our history, and we need to remember it.

Let me just quote from a Pan-Africanist and prolific historian named Dr. Henrik Clarke, and I quote. He said: ***"History is a clock that people use to tell their political and cultural time of day. It is a compass they use to find themselves on the map of human geography. It tells them where they are, but more importantly where they must be."*** Therefore, I am appealing to the Government to find itself on the right side of history.

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Mr. President, as a student of Politics, I was told early up, that there are three (3) Branches of Government, the Executive, the Legislative and the Judiciary. And these three (3) Arms of Government work independently of each other, Mr. President. And furthermore, they are what we talk about which is the Separation of Powers, and they're supposed to operate independently of each other, despite that it appears to be a conflict of interest between the Executive and the Legislative to a certain extent. But by-and-large, they're supposed to operate independently and separately to each other. And this is for a reason, in order for there to be efficiency in Government, for Government to function properly and to prevent abuse of power and corruption and so on.

But it goes further, Mr. President, Sir, because it is all part and parcel of what we call in politics, checks and balances, and the checks and balances are necessary for Government. It is just normal procedure. There is no politics, or no Government without checks and balances. It is like a watchdog, to scrutinise. It is even part and parcel of what we are doing here.

Mr. President, I could go further, because there are different safety nets and so on, which prevent corruption, prevent abuse of power and so on, and I could make mention of what we call the Accountant General, the Integrity Commission, the Accountant-General and so on.

But, let me get back to the substantive point, Mr. President, because it is standard procedure that the Parliament be operated independently and so on. Right now, as we speak, it appears as though the Constituency offices are run outside of Parliament, when it should be under the Parliament, and it appears, as though it was taken from Parliament, at some point in time and put in a different Ministry. This, Mr. President, if it is true, is undermining and is a serious violation of our democratic rights and principles, and it should be stopped. But, it doesn't stop there, Mr. President...

(Senator Stiell rose)

Mr. President: Senator Stiell, Point-of-Order?

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Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Just on a Point-of-Clarification.

Mr. President: On a Point of Clarification. Are you giving way on this Point-of-Clarification, Senator?

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: I didn't hear that?

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: On a Point of Clarification. If you can clarify where is the threat to democracy in relation to the administrative arrangements for the Constituency offices?

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: I am saying, if it appears to be that the Constituency offices are not on under Parliament, and it's in another Ministry, then I am saying that then therefore, there appears to be the trampling of our democratic rights and principles, and a violation of what is called the democratic institutions.

Mr. President: Help me here, Senator. I myself am trying to see the connection between the two. The Clerk of Parliament is a Public Officer. Although he is the Clerk of Parliament, in our System, he is not answerable to Parliament; he is answerable to the Public Service Commission. Yes, for executing his duties, he is answerable to the Presiding Officers, in respect of his duties. But, fundamentally he is appointed, through the Public Service Commission, and that Parliament doesn't appoint the Clerk.

Similarly, the Permanent Secretaries in the relevant and different Ministries. So, the fact that there is an administrative arrangement; well, I am trying to see the connectivity between the exercise of an administrative function and the, not your words, but mine, the suppression or trampling of democracy, because that formulation brings you pretty close to the imputing improper motive rule. I am saying it brings you very close to that. So, you have to be careful and that's why the Senator wants the clarification.

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How does an administrative decision, in which a Public Officer, through a Ministry, is exercising these administrative oversight functions? How does that amount to a trampling of the democracy? Remember, there's no rule, which says, how this must be done. It's an administrator matter in the "Other Place," among Members of the "Other Place," who made a decision of how they will execute their functions in the "Other Place."

Now, there are no Senatorial Parliamentary Office, not in our System. In the American System, probably, but in our System we don't have any Senatorial Offices. There are Parliamentary offices, exclusively, for Members of the House of Representatives. I know of no Senatorial Office in our jurisdiction. So, we are essentially talking about an issue, which is germane, relevant to, exclusively, the "Other Place." So, you've got to help with the connection, then you come to the Relevancy Rule.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Thank you, Mr. President. I am saying, Mr. President, if it appears, as though the Constituency offices are used for Party business, then it ought to stop, because that's not good procedure.

Mr. President: Again, I may ask the question, but if it appears to whom? How do I stop the perception of the Sergeant-at-Arms? In other words, you are asking me to adjust a behaviour over something under which I have no control. So, this is why we are saying, it can't be perception. If there is an evidential issue that you want to present in your argument, by all means, present it and that can become persuasive. But to ask to act on the basis of what somebody else; you see the difficulty we have Senator? Proceed. Anyway, the floor is yours.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Alright. Let me just wind up. I will wind up, Mr. President.

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Mr. President: No, you don't have to, once you could clarify all of these issues, the floor is yours.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: So, Mr. President, I will wind down with a quote from Barack Obama. He said: ***“Look around, strong politics are ascending suddenly whereby elections and some pretense of democracy are maintained. The form of it, but those in power seems to undermine every institution or norm that gives democracy meaning and the politics of fear and resentment and retrenchment began to appear and that kind of politics is now on the move.”*** I am saying to us, Mr. President, let us not slide down the slippery slope of disaster. And, as I close, let us not just have a democracy in name, but let us also have a democracy in substance.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Noel. Senator Norland Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, thank you very much. Mr. President, I'll probably start where Senator Noel stopped and also to include some of the contents of the presentation of the mover of the Motion. Mr. President, the membership of the Commonwealth of Parliamentary Association (CPA) is fifty-four (54) countries and the charge that is laid here before this House is not only a charge for this country, but also for many other Members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), whose offices, if they do have, is not governed or managed or run by the Parliament, that is basically what it is stated. So, I just say that for what it's worth for the Members to understand how far their charge is going, in terms of the issue of democracy and trampling of democracy.

Senator Stiell is correct, in his utterances. This is an administrative matter. It's a simple administrative matter. It is clear, based on the historical context that attempts were made from a standard or a policy standpoint to allow, to afford the Parliament to administrate those services, and as such the Parliament, within its construct, in terms of personnel found it difficult to do so, efficiently. That is the genesis of this matter, and as such, we understand how those engagements and those feedbacks come, all the

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complaints are going to come to the Executive Branch to resolve this matter. And as such, Government in its deliberation, tried to find a way to ensure that the services meet persons at the local level, the people at the local level, make sure the services meet them through those offices. That is the purpose of the office and if there is a situation where that that is not happening, then maybe the Motion probably should say so. But based on our reports, our feedback, there is a significant increase in terms of those services meeting constituents now, as against when it was managed by and administered by the Parliament. Those are the facts. So, I don't understand what is this insinuation there and politics of fear. I am lost. I don't know.

But I say this to say, Mr. President, in terms of, from a practical standpoint, as a Parliamentary Rep, if I am a Parliamentary Rep, practically, and my constituents are having challenges accessing services, I want to see who Parliamentary Rep., in their right mind, would go and tell their constituents, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Benchmarks say it should be in the Parliament. People don't care about that. The issue is that, they want their services. The Benchmarks are very good guidelines and I am familiar with the Benchmarks, Mr. President, and our Parliament, I believe, has surpassed the majority of the recommendations in the Benchmarks. I could be wrong, but I could double check. But in looking at some of them, we are there because of the construct, because different Parliamentary Members, Parliaments are constructed differently, so some of the Benchmarks may apply while some may not apply. Some of it cannot be implemented, because of how we are constructed. Some Houses meet together, some Houses are separate, so there are different construct. But, in essence, we are striving towards that. We have done so, if you look at, in terms of our membership, under gender issue in the Parliament, a significant amount of women are represented in our Parliament. You look at other Parliaments.

So, I think the Benchmarks, while they have good guidelines, in some cases they do not reflect the situation on the ground. They cannot be applied to the situation on the ground, what is there. And so, the Benchmarks are set for an ideal situation. That's what the Benchmarks are there for, to present an ideal situation where it can be used.

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So, we are not knocking the Benchmarks. We are not knocking it. We work with it. We also gave feedback and we're making adjustments. We are making changes.

But, in this case, because this is an administrative matter, you have to find a resolution, because persons are depending on it. And so, Parliamentary Representatives, they have a responsibility to their constituents and it's because of those responsibilities that they are challenged. They have to find a way, so that Constituents can receive their services.

And so, Government, in its discussion and deliberation has presented an option and it's working, that is what is before us. If there are discussions, if there is a particular office or offices that have challenges, there is a medium for reporting, there are ways that those can be addressed. I don't see some of the utterances leaning towards; I don't know, I am, for want of a better word, I am confuddled. But, the whole idea is, the offices are basically for the services of constituents. And, if we're getting feedback that constituents are in some way, the services are not meeting them, as they should, then that is a matter for us to address. But, I don't know of any other stuff about democracy. I am lost. I am lost here, Mr. President.

So, I just say this for what it's worth. I don't know, in reference to Senator Stiell, I don't know if this is the place for this at this point in time. I am not saying that is not a meaningful discussion, but I think there's a clear opportunity for the mover of the Motion to understand the construct. As Mr. President rightly said, the Clerk is a Public Servant and of course, the offices do have to go through the checks and balances of being audited and everything. So, there are checks and balances, Mr. President. We have an Integrity in Public Life Bill and we have to report. All Members here have to report. I am not sure if our new Senators have received their call yet to file with the Integrity Commission. If you have not, you will be called very soon. So, there are checks and balances to ensure that we in public life are monitored by. So, I am a little bit loss. But as I said, it is a work in progress. I don't believe, as Senator Stiell said it's something that we should ventilate on at this time, as an administrator matter. I rest my case, Mr. President.

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Mr. President: Senator St. Clair.

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: Thank you, Mr. President. I stand to make some comments, permit me, regarding this matter and in light of statements made by Senator Cox and Senator Stiell. But more so, I am driven in making my comments based on one word that was said, the word “perception.” And so, as someone in the community, there is this notion about this; in fact, I don’t even think people say Parliamentary Office, some of them might say, Party Office instead, and I think it’s an opportunity for us and the Parliament itself, the Houses to do some education in terms of what are the expectations, what are the services, so that, I think, we need to do that outreach, so that more people can access the services.

I understand the challenges and I could see the problem of finding that solution in the meantime and I applaud it, because people cannot be starved from services. The question is and I think Senator Cox and Senator Stiell made it very clear that it’s a work in progress, and so I think that should dialogue, if we see there are different ways that this thing can improve, and through education we might be able to remove the perception to start with, because, administratively, it might be another Commission and now like how we have the Transport Commission and all those different things, to set up another Board, as you say.

I am not saying we do not have to get there, but maybe in our long-term planning, we put those things in place to avoid the perception, because a lot of persons may not want to go there to get service. Because one, they don’t know what services is being offered, they don’t know if is some political thing, some party thing or maybe they feel well you know I may be a what P, or what P, and so they are afraid to go; because you said it, you said that some people say that the Opposition getting more. And the fact of the matter in most of these cases, a lot of people just say things and they’re not even sure what they say in terms of who is what and who is what.

But what I do know, Mr. President, where I stand here now is that I know farmers, who might be watching now or in the future would say, but, we called him and we told

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them that and Parliamentary talk come up and he even talk, so I must speak with your permission, Mr. President.

The Farm Labour Support Programme, I get a lot of calls and I am happy to know that is more services. I understand, because I didn't go for labour support myself, but farmers called and they say, I have to go and get labour support, I have to go in the Parliamentary office, (they know it was the Parliamentary office) to fill up some form and to get labour support. And they say, well, we have a Ministry of Agriculture, we have Extension Offices, and for the first time that has happened, what has changed? I don't know. I don't know if some were in the Parliamentary Office and some were in the Extension Office, but I've been hearing from farmers and they call, and reputable farmers that they have to go to the Constituency office to get it.

Now, I would advise my constituent farmers, if you can get forms in the Party... you see that's the problem.

(Laughter)

Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair: You see, here we go, in the Constituency office and if you could get also in the Extension Office, it's good, because you'll get more options. Even if the forms go in the Post Office in the communities, so you have more access. But you see the issue is the perception. So, some people, because they feel they're not in that Party group, they wouldn't go for the service and so we lose opportunities. And, we feel some people who get, shouldn't get, because it's the Party.

So I think, Mr. President, as I sit, my take on this matter is that I would like us to do some more work, in terms of education and outreach to our citizens, so that they can become more aware of this mental situation, and of course, we look at opportunities to create a more embracing of the services that the Constituency offices promote. Of course, with oversight and maybe I am not too sure if what Senator St. Cyr is asking for, it's a sort of report like what we have on our desk here today, saying that we have reports from the different offices, showing, not necessarily the financial, but what services are offered, how many people they served, what services they got, you know.

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Maybe that can be one step of reporting. So, this is just my comments on this matter, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you. Senator the Honourable Judd Cadet.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I'll just give a short contribution towards the Motion that is presented by my dear friend and colleague Senator Tessa St. Cyr.

Mr. President, I have sat there and I listened to the Motion presented, and I asked myself the question, what is really the issue, and from what I've gathered from the presentation that has been made before us, Mr. President, the issues that confronted us or confronted the Parliamentarians were the issues of addressing their constituents.

Mr. President, when someone is elected, they're elected to serve their constituents. They might have housing problems, education, you have to serve the students in the Constituency, the young people in the Constituency and the farmers. And, Mr. President, you want to ensure that these services reach the Constituency in the most efficient manner. And yes, I understand that there are Benchmarks and there may be some framework that exists. And yes, Mr. President, we should endeavour to try to reach these Benchmarks. But sometimes when these Benchmarks or Frameworks are created, Mr. President, some of them are not created understanding the challenges that some countries face, locally. And I think this part was missed from the Motion, because I think the Motions, specifically deals with the Benchmarks and that we're not meeting the Benchmarks. But the Motion has not taken into consideration that Parliamentary offices are there to serve their constituents, their constituencies. And I am hearing the conversation. I am here trying to get into the Motion, as well that these offices are being used for political gain.

Mr. President, as mentioned by the Leader of Government's Business, and he said that even our supporters are claiming that we and supporters for other organisation

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are getting more services. But, Mr. President, it clearly shows that politics is not involved at the Parliamentary offices.

I am hearing the conversation; I am hearing the talk as well about trampling our democratic institutions. Mr. President, I just cannot understand how this reached in the conversation. Mr. President, if we're talking about trampling democratic institutions, I am trying to understand, I mean like, what is it? I mean, you look at what we're addressing. We are addressing the issues of our constituents and I think any politician or any person sitting here today or listening will understand the challenges that were there before, will understand the challenges that were there before. I know I am new to it, just like many of you. But, if you have done the research, you would understand that a lot of these challenges that were faced before were affecting the constituents and we have to do all that we can to ensure that we ensure that the services can reach them. So yes, we are talking about Benchmarks, but what about the services? So meet the Benchmarks and doesn't meet the services?

So, I believe, Mr. President, that like the others, I am not sure whether or not the conversation... I mean, yes, we could have the conversation about it, but I am not sure it was really worth the while having it, at this point in time.

I want to also deal with the point that was made by the Senator representing the farmers about perception, Mr. President, which is true, that you know the perception of these offices sometimes they consider it to be Party offices. Every time you hear this sort of conversation. But, Mr. President, this perception was not created, when they were removed from Parliament. This was perception that was there from inception, so it was not just created. It was there for a very long time. I mean, since I myself was a young boy in Grand Bras, every time I hear the word is 'Party office'.

So yes, I agree with you that the perception is there, and we need to do a lot more, Mr. President, again and I am agreeing with you with education, and we have a role to play, and that's where all of us here come in. We need to ensure that we educate our constituents, in letting them know that, hey, this is a Parliamentary Office, and it is for you. It is to access the services and don't be afraid to go to this office. And there's a reason why there is a perception, as well, because you have a Representative,

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who ran on a Party ticket. So, obviously if you ran on a Party ticket, let's say in NNP, you won, obviously they're going to see it as you know is NNP office. So, it's very clear, as to why there is a perception, and, therefore, we have a responsibility to ensure that we change the narrative, or we change the perception as it relate to that.

But, Mr. President, I want to say that there is only one goal in this, in closing, one goal and that will simply be meeting the needs of our Constituency and the constituents, and that is simply this. As Minister Cox would have mentioned, we met all of the other Benchmarks. I have not heard one thing mentioned about that. But, this one and we are claiming to be trampling the democratic institutions; our democratic institutions are under threat, to quote the words.

And, we said that the Government should be on the right side in history. But, what is the right side? The right side is the side of the people, that is the right side, the side of our Constituency, the side of our constituents, that is the right side, ensuring they could access these services, that is the right side.

I mean, I heard about the Revolution, but, Mr. President, if we don't give them these services, then we will have the Revolution that you speak about. So, it's important that we understand the historical context of what happen, and why we are here and to ensure that we educate our people about the role of the Parliamentary offices and how they can access these services. And, in that way, Mr. President, I give my remarks to the Motion.

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I have listened to the different contributions and I thank the Honourable Members for their contributions to the Motion.

The question comes up again, why now? Why should we be debating this issue now and that the conversations are continuing in that "Other Place." But, Mr. President, with your leave, I would like to challenge that, because I make it my business to listen to every Sitting, and I am not hearing that conversation in the "Other Place."

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So, I would like if, maybe the Honourable Members could, you know, after we adjourn could maybe highlight where this conversation is happening, because I listen to every conversation, every debate that is happening in the “Other Place.”

It's interesting too, Mr. President, that mention was made that this is simply an administrative issue and that the administrative function was reviewed, was discussed and is being discussed and the solution was chosen. But, Mr. President, I would impatiently welcome, as the Members mentioned, an Audit from the Constituency offices because if the Honourable Members are highlighting that the Constituency offices are functioning effectively, there must be some sort of Benchmarks, some sort of measurements used to establish that fact.

Mr. President, I have another issue. So, the Honourable Leader of Government's Business highlighted that the Clerks have complained, constituents have complained and MPs have complained, and this was the reason for moving the Constituency offices, from under the administration of the Parliament to a Ministry. My challenge with this, is, as I mentioned in my presentation, is shifting the issue, not necessarily addressing the issue. If there is an issue, or, if, for some reason, it was alleged that the Clerks were being overburdened, or couldn't effectively... and I see that as an indictment on the Parliament, saying that the Parliament could not effectively administrate the Constituency offices. I see that as an indictment on the Parliament.

If the Clerks were having challenges, instead of moving the Constituency office to another entity, another Ministry, some other place, why not work to help address the issue, instead of simply moving it to somewhere else. I have an opinion on that, but I would not share it at this point.

And, I heard the conversation that Senator Cadet is saying he is hearing. And I know, Mr. President, that we all heard the perception that Senator St. Clair would have mentioned, and I am saying, the administration, I am still holding, that the administration of the Constituency offices should be under Parliament and not in some other place. And for this reason, Mr. President, I would have brought this Motion before the House.

Question put and agreed to.

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Motion defeated.

Clerk: Item 17 - Adjournment.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Norland Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, just a quick one. I thought it was important that I mention this before I leave here this evening. I just want to extend congratulations to our young cricketer Emmanuel Stewart, who was awarded Sportsman of the Year by the University of the West Indies. **(Applause)** I think it's important that we do recognise the efforts of our youths and he is doing well. He is at Cave Hill Campus. He is a Grenadian cricketer from Carriacou, **(laughter/applause)** Mr. President. So I just want to place that on the records. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I just beg to move the Adjournment.

Mr. President: First, before we take the Adjournment, just by way of information, because the matter did come up this morning on the question on the matters related to COVID and that question was asked. Just to report, by way of information, that in respect to the cases 31 and 32, that would be the couple who entered Grenada recently and were allowed to home quarantine and to await the results of their PCR tests and who breached the quarantine in violation of the signed agreements, which were constructed or which they entered into, I just wish to report that as a result of those breaches, thirty-four (34) persons are now in quarantine for the time being. Several of whom, and this will be related to some questions asked by Senator Lewis, or on the statement made by him, several of those now on mandatory quarantine

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and who have been tested and awaiting results are workers from the Restaurant in another area where the people who breached the quarantine visited. And, of course, that is just the initial number so far.

Again, just to indicate, that the actions of a few (and I can speak by virtue of the fact of being a member of the current COVID Health Committee) has significant implications, not only in respect of the community spread that is possible, but also the tremendous amount of resources, which, in order to protect the society has to be engaged. We are talking about contact tracers, we are talking about extensive use of telephones, we're talking about extensive travel time, because the contact tracers have to go to track down people. It's quite an enormous operation and people don't seem to understand this, at all.

I happened to be listening to one of these Internet Programmes in which a Grenadian returning National, who left the United States with an intended brief trip designed to visit his father in the hospital, was complaining that he came here and only had one (1) week, or some such thing or seven (7) days or whatever it is he had, a short period of time, and he was highly annoyed that he had to remain in quarantine. The problem that the people don't understand is that when you follow the science, it's the science that tells you what you have to do. And yes, I can understand the empathetic concern of a dad in the hospital, and I can understand the emotional connectivity of one person. But the Government has to think about a hundred and ten thousand (110,000) people and the Government has to think about that in the context of the medical resources that's available on Island. So yes you may wish to go and see your parent or go to a funeral but it does not take much to overwhelm our Medical System here in Grenada and result in significant deaths.

You see, when we look at some behaviours in some countries in the North, they have a population of three hundred plus million people in a geographic space, which is a Continent in itself. So, they could afford to run up two hundred thousand (200,000) deaths. But you know that represents the population of Grenada twice over. So, if this were to happen to us, we would have to import people for them to die to reach that number.

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So, the consequential effect of misbehaviour, the failure to respect the Rules and Regulations regarding this communicable illness is something that we have to take very seriously. And I am not blowing my own trumpet, but these Islands of ours, in this part of the hemisphere, inheritors of the legacy of the children of slaves, headed a BBC Programme, which recognised that we did exceedingly well and I think we ought to be proud of this. **(Applause)** And the direction to go which is a worrying tendency and I want to express it. The direction to go is not to get less stringent, because when we look around us, we see what is happening.

There are second waves coming in all our major markets and places that we do business with. And therefore, we would need to tighten up if we are going to survive this, and I believe we will, because this is not the first time that the world has had a pandemic. I believe we will survive and yes, it is different in nature to those before. In fact, they are now talking about; I read a recent report where, I believe it is Austria, is it? They were culling over a million minks, because it is said that they harbour the virus and that they were capable of giving rise to mutations, so there is a serious concern now about this virus mutating. And therefore, the vaccine that they develop may not give you very long immunity, so there are all kinds of implications. So for us as a small country with limited resources, particularly medical resources, we have got to be exceedingly careful and I would just end on this note.

Honourable Members, I wish to thank you for your engagement today. It has been a very long session. I can assure you that it was not the conscious calculations of the Clerk not to provide the necessary sustenance. It was no intent of mine in breaking the Law that we proceeded beyond four (4) hours without the necessary break. It just happened that we had not anticipated, in the wildest of anticipations that we would be in the Chamber at 10:00 o'clock. But anyway this is the people's business, and I think we can feel proud and justified that we are doing the people's business and the business of our constituents.

So to the Police Officers, who have accompanied us and they are on their feet, while we are sitting, and you are workers, just workers in uniform. It must not be an easy experience for you and we apologise. We thank you for your dedication and your

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service and I want to take the opportunity to wish everyone a very good night. To your families and most of us would be up and bright tomorrow with another day's work.

Honourable Members, I wish to thank you very much, safe journey home and to your loved ones. Honourable Members, this House now stands adjourned **sine die**.

Senate adjourned sine die @ 10:15 p.m.

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