



GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Third Session of the Tenth Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT

SENATE

Friday 31st July & Wednesday 5th August, 2020

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Senate Meeting
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Attendance

PRESENT

Senator the Honourable Chester Humphrey	- Mr. President (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 Terry Noel	- Member
Senator the Honourable Tessa Alexander St Cyr	- Member
Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie	- Member
Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis	- Member
Senator the Honourable Dunstan Campbell	- Member

ABSENT

Senator the Honourable Kim George	- Member
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Prayers
Oath of Allegiance

Mr. President: Good morning Honourable Senators. Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much. Members, join with me in a word of prayer.

(Senate Prayer was said)

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

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Mr. President: This House commences its day's business.

Assistant Clerk: Item 3 - Oath of Allegiance or Affirmation of New Senator.
Senator the Honourable Terry Noel.

(Senator Noel proceeds to the Clerk's Table)

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: I Terry Noel, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Second, Her heirs and her successors according to Law, so help me God.

(Senator Noel signs the Oath Book and returns to his seat)

Assistant Clerk: Senator the Honourable Tessa Alexander St. Cyr.

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Oath of Allegiance
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Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: I, Tessa St. Cyr, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her heirs and successors according to according to Law, so help me God.

Assistant Clerk: Item 4 - Confirmation of Minutes.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Simon 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 Friday 17th April, 2020 be taken as read.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes taken as read.

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 Friday 17th April, 2020 be confirmed.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed.

Assistant Clerk: Item 5 - Messages from the Governor General.
Item 6 - Announcements by Mr. President.

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Mr. President: Honourable Members, there are a number of matters which I would take the opportunity at this time to address. Firstly, on your behalf and on my own, I wish to welcome to the House our two newest Senators, Senator the Honourable Terry Noel and Senator the Honourable Tessa Wendy Alexander St. Cyr. **(Applause)** Normally I give way to women first, so notwithstanding the order in which you took your oath, I will defer to Senator St. Cyr.

I take this opportunity to extend to you a most profound and hearty welcome to this Chamber. From just my brief review of your biography, you are quite a talented individual with an array of interests and I can say from your sojourn in doing modern languages, to your Masters which you currently hold in Human Resource Development and Performance Management; to your B. Ed. in Educational Administration, with an upper second class honours; with your Associate Degree in Secondary Teacher Education as a qualified teacher. I don't want to read out an entire biography but I think it's important to familiarise other Senators with your background and achievements.

Your professional service that you've rendered so far to the country as a consultant in Curriculum Development; your work as an Abstract Reviewer, American Public Health Association; as a Facilitator, leadership in group dynamics; as a motivational speaker for young people. And to me that is what strikes me most, because the future does belong to the youth and so it is good to have someone like yourself with your background in the Senate representing the views of our young people who make up 65%, I think, or 67% of our population.

You have done a number of publications and you are currently working quite assiduously on some other work which I trust you would publish soon. Those works including, the Impacts of University Education of Secondary Schools in Grenada, Performance Appraisal Practices in Public Secondary Schools in Grenada, the Influence of School Culture on Students' Educational Achievements. So you have quite a wide repertoire of experience in various disciplines and you are certainly very active in that regard. You have been the Deputy Chair of the St. Andrew Development Council, Chair Education Committee, St. Andrew Development Council

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and you have done several feature speaker stints on various occasions; past First Vice President of the Toastmasters Club Grenada and you have even had your hands in judging debates of young people, helping them to develop intellectually and of course to be articulate and to express themselves. You have been a former member of the Education Committee of the Grenada Educational Development (GRENED) Grenada, Former Protocol Volunteer Officer, past President of the St. Andrew Youth Council, First Vice President of the National Youth Council. So, Honourable Members, this is the background of Senator St. Cyr.

I have absolutely no doubt in my mind that this Chamber and its proceedings and the debates will be enriched by your presence and your participation and I look forward to seeing that academic progress unfold. This is what the country requires; this is what the country needs. This Senate has had... and I want to blow my trumpet here a bit, the singular distinction of being a Chamber of quite lively and stirring debates and you will find that I am very accommodating on these matters. The duty of a Parliamentarian is to represent his interest, whatever that interest is, or her interest, and we do so by debating. I find it very stimulating to listen to intellectual debates, but debates that must be presented in such a manner that both the highly cerebral, as well as, the not too literate, can understand the points and therein lies your challenge. I have no doubt that based on your community experience, you will be able to faithfully execute that duty and to be able to communicate to the people.

As a House of Review and this is essentially what we are in terms of legislation, I also look forward to your contributions in that regard. So once again, on behalf of all Members of this House, I wish to welcome you and look forward to your contributions. And I thank you, Senator.

Senator Terry Noel, another St. Andrew Representative of the people of St. Andrew; born in Mirabeau, one of my favourite places. He is a temporary lecturer at the T.A. Marryshow Community College, a political activist, a writer, a musician and a farmer, an interesting combination. How you are capable of blending all these diverse interests and abilities speaks to the kind of talent that you have. He pursued a BA

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Honours degree at the University of the West Indies in Political Science at Cave Hill, Barbados. And during his studies at the University of the West Indies, he was Vice-President of the historical society and was involved in organising and planning various activities for the society including a lecture on the Role of the Caribbean Leaders in Contemporary Society presented by the St. Lucian intellectual Dr. Tennyson Joseph.

As a political scientist and historian, I can anticipate that we will be enriched by your contributions as you are able to contextualise by virtue of your intellectual discipline, a lot of the debates that is taking place here. Senator Noel, one of the things that has always disturbed me is the learnt behaviour imposed on us during our slave experience to forget our history. And we are notorious in forgetting our history, we seem to pay very little respect to the past and for our forebearers, to whom we should be eternally grateful for where we are today, and for the struggles. I mean, you speak to a Jew and the Holocaust is at his fingertips, you go to Israel and there are monuments. There is not a single monument in this country to our fore parents because we've come from the wound of slaves. We seem to be ashamed of a past for which we were not responsible. There is no monument celebrating our great liberators except Eric Matthew Gairy but he is only one in his stream of liberators.

Julien Fédon, the second great revolutionary movement in this country, there's no image of him painted anywhere, he is not even on a postage stamp. You can find the face of Elvis Presley on a postage stamp, you can't find Julien Fédon. Our indigenous forefathers who suffered the faith similar to those in the Holocaust, we still repeat a History that is so false, that they were Caribs and they were eating people. What utter dishonesty and nonsense, and we regurgitate that without trying to write our own history, and that's the challenge I throw out to you, as a political scientist and as one deeply involved in history.

Terry Noel, as a farmer I think that Senator Campbell, you will find cause for a lot of cross solidarity. So I think that the presence of the farmers in the Senate is strengthened and Senator Campbell... And I know that we can expect a chorus of activities between you two senators and I look forward to those debates.

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Terry has a very wide scope of interest; having completed his University Education, he returned to Grenada and has been involved in political activism through his writings on the Caribbean News Now, Now Grenada online newspaper. Some of his most popular commentaries are "Grenada, The Destruction of a Revolutionary Heritage" and I seem to have pre-empted but I look forward; "the Disparity and the Neglect at the Princess Alice Hospital" and other things that you've written on; "the Grenada Revolutionary Model Contribute to its Demise", a very important piece of debate there. I will like to have a one-on-one debate with you on that at some point, not necessarily in the Chamber, but it would be a good polemic for us to have and he has contributed a lot... he made some contributions to Party Manifestos etc. and now he is here.

He believes that the Grenadian economy will never reach its full potential unless Government seriously addresses the issues of decentralising the Grenadian economy. And I will like to see the political theories which surround those issues. So I look forward because I would suspect that all of these matters would craft your stance in the debate, so I can anticipate Senators. So on behalf of all the Senators, I really wish to welcome you and to make you feel at home. Feel free to speak your mind, of course one of my fundamental functions is to guard the decorum in the Senate.

So we will debate, we will disagree fiercely, we will advance our arguments but we will do so with the decorum fitting of the Upper House. We have always maintained that and when in this House, the people look forward to lively debate and I do not believe that we will disappoint them. Later during the course when other Senators stand to speak, they will have an opportunity to welcome you individually but I want you to feel at home. If there is anything that you want to know, if on any occasion you are looking for any sort of help or any guidance in the rules or anything, feel free to contact the Clerk or myself directly. My telephone numbers have always remained the same, they never changed, from the time I been in the Union, up until now, my numbers remain the same, I'm easily reachable. I know that some training Sessions are being planned and hopefully the induction course, the Clerk will inform you about that shortly.

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Honourable Members, I want to take this opportunity to express, which I did in letters both on your own behalf and mine, the former Senators who demitted office sometime earlier this year. I took the opportunity to write each of them and I wrote, as I said, in my own capacity as President of the Senate but also on your behalf as we had not had the opportunity to formerly bid them farewell because we had no knowledge of what was unfolding. I just wish to read into the records, since I have associated you the Members of the Senate with my farewell letter, it is important that I read it to you. And this is a letter I sent to Senator Kerryne James.

“Dear Senator James (Former),

With reference to the matter of recognition of contribution and demitting Office of the Senate.” Well she did write me, let me just point that out. Senator did write me a letter and I will read this letter after I’ve read this one. **“I acknowledge receipt of your letter of June 9, 2020 and was indeed moved by its contents. I will take the opportunity to read it at the next Session of the Senate if you have no objections. With reference to the above-captioned subject matter, that is, in the matter of recognition of contribution and demitting Office of the Senate, I express on behalf of the Members of the Senate and on my own behalf deepest appreciation, recognition and thanks for the contributions you made to ebate and proceedings in the House of Senate.**

I am confident that there is unanimity in the view that your presence and participation were positive and contributed to the enrichment of the debate and legislation examined and passed by this House. Unfortunately the circumstances under which you demitted office did not allow for the Senate in Session to properly bid you farewell. I therefore trust that the sentiments contained in this correspondence would suffice in expressing our very best wishes and successes in all your future endeavours. It may yet again be an opportunity in the future to see you return to either of the Houses and trust that the experiences you have gathered during your term will prepare you for future public service.”

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And Senator James was the youngest Member of the Senate and I sent her this letter on all our behalf, Members. I table this. The letter she wrote me earlier said **“Dear Senator Humphrey, I hope this letter finds you in good health and that you and your family are keeping safe during these unprecedented times. Over the past few years, I made a conscious decision to play an active role in frontline politics, even when my parents did not approve, in the hope of becoming a catalyst for change, change that serves the needs of the people, moreso youth of Grenada. This afforded me the opportunity of having a voice or a platform to speak directly to the hearts of my cohorts on issues that I am most passionate about and that is important to our nation. A premonition of fear pervaded my senses as I thought to myself, I was not ready, I was not equipped to take up such responsibilities but forward before me of course, seeing that most of the other Members were seasoned politicians and experts in their field of work, I wrestled with my doubts and my faith and for me, I believe I put my best foot forward during my appointment.**

It is against this backdrop I extend heartfelt gratitude to you as President of the Senate for seeing and acknowledging my potential and growth during the two years and for always ensuring to give me guidance and constructive criticism when unnecessary. Overall, this experience has allowed me to gain the arsenal needed for my future academic development and overall growth. Once again, I express my profound gratitude for your unwavering support and I look forward to continued communication. Senator Kerryne Zennyl James.”

The other letters, although personalised a bit, went all in the same vein. So, I don't think it would be necessary to read all of them. But, a letter was also sent to former Senator Glynis Roberts, as well as, former Senator Ron Redhead. Thank you Members of the Senate.

Assistant Clerk: Item 7 - Ministerial Statements.

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

Item 7 - Ministerial Statements (Recommitted).

Mr. President: Senator Stiell, before Senator Cox takes the floor, Leader of Government's Business, I want to do an abridgement. I've been thinking about it and couldn't quite settle on my mind, when I would invite the new Senators to give their Maiden Address. Whether we would do it now before Ministerial Statements, so that, in the opportunity of your Ministerial Statements, you may also wish to acknowledge their presence before we get into the meat of things. Right. I wasn't quite settled where in the Order Paper, I can do it. So, I will make that interjection now. As you know, I always preside by consultation, it's a decision up to me, but I always wish to engage.

So, Senators, if you wish at this time to make your Maiden Statement against the background of the summary that I gave of you, and what you are looking forward to, you now have this opportunity to do so, before we get into the heart of the matters of today's business. So, you now have that opportunity. I left it between either of them to decide who will speak first, but my normal preference is to... Senator Noel, you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Good morning, Mr. President, and good morning to the Senators in this House. Mr. President, as a new Member of this Honourable House, I am indeed humbled and honoured as a progressive thinker to be a part of this Honourable House where I believe that I can make a meaningful contribution to this Senate and by extension, to the development of this country by ensuring that decisions and laws are made towards a more holistic approach in our development. But, let me first of all, thank the Most High God for health and strength during this most difficult time, during this COVID-19 pandemic. Let me also thank the Honourable Tobias Clement for allowing me the opportunity to be involved in this country's politics, for this, I will be forever grateful. From since our inception, Mr. President, this country had a turbulent political history; as George Brizan described it "Island of Conflict." We have

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always been a revolutionary people. And, it was said time and time again, that revolutionary blood runs in our veins. The Kalinago people who lived here before us, have left a legacy. After the French invaded this country, the Kalinago people resisted, and never subdued themselves to the colonial army. They fought till the bitter end, and committed suicide by leaping into the sea at Leapers Hill, St Patrick's, rather than being captured. And while, there were descendants of the Kalinago people in other countries, Islands in the Caribbean, there is no one in Grenada due to their revolutionary stance against colonialism by preferring to commit suicide. This story can be linked to the Jewish Revolt at Masada. According to the Jewish historian, Josephus, the Jewish resisted the Roman legion, but was eventually surrounded, where they were eventually cornered on the hill of Masada. And, instead of being captured or killed by the Roman army, they believed that it was by the will of God, and by necessity, that they should die. They then decided to commit mass suicide before the Roman army arrived. By the time the Roman army arrived, they were all dead. So these are the connections to the stories.

Mr. President, despite it is an interesting moment for me at this juncture, it will be remiss of me, if I did not mention that I would have preferred to make my entry at the Old Parliament Building at York House, with all its symbolism, based on my historical battle, where great men and women once stood to debate the issues affecting this country, and the struggle they would have had in deciding the future for us. I would have preferred to stand and debate around the same table because I believe that being there would allow me to have a spiritual connection with our founding fathers who have paved the way for us today. Mr. President, it is important to know that this country is no ordinary country. This country has produced greatness throughout its political history. By so doing, Mr. President, I would have been able to make a spiritual connection with the great, T.A. Marryshow a statesman who championed the call for regionalism, something still revisited today as the best way forward for Caribbean States. In recent times, Caribbean leaders, such as the late Owen Arthur, and Mia Mottley, have passionately emphasised the need for regionalism. T.A. Marryshow was firm and

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resolute in his struggle against colonialism by taking on the powerful colonial masters in Britain. He believed that unity among Caribbean States was the best way forward for the economic survivability of the region. They approached the Independence process collectively, rather than divided Independent States. He earned the title of the Father West Indian Federation and when the British Government tried to fabricate a scheme to get the colonies to say to the United Nations, that they wanted to remain with Britain, instead of obtaining Independence, he bluntly refused, where it was left to Grantley Adams of Barbados to do it.

In a speech during the Grenada Revolution, Mr. President, by Maurice Bishop, he had this to say about T. A. Marryshow, and I quote, **“Here was a man of complete eloquence, whose power of speech was only matched by his power with the written word as he leveled his pen at them, Colonial administrators and governors who had sat behind the most expensive desks in England, and idled their way through Oxford and Cambridge Universities through right of birth, quaked and trembled. And yet, T. A. Marryshow had no university education, not even a secondary education. He learned to read and write without the benefits of electricity, he had no money to buy books. He had no access to vast libraries. He learnt his brilliance from the streets of St. George's, and the great hills and forests of our beloved Grenada. He studied the hearts and hopes of his people.”**

And, I am saying to this House, Mr. President, that we are a country that have produced greatness beyond greatness and that we are no ordinary people. But, it did not stop there, Mr. President. Thereafter, another great man emerged from my parish. His name was Sir Eric Matthew Gairy. His entry into politics was considered by some to be prophetic. We both attend the same Primary School, the St. Mary's R.C. School in La Fillette, St. Andrew. He fought a long struggle against colonialism, putting his life on the line by organising general strikes and sparked numerous unrest within the country. In the process, many buildings were set ablaze, where the disturbance became known as 'Sky Red' prompting the British authorities to deploy outside military reinforcement to help regain control of the situation. He gave lands to the landless, empowering the

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ordinary man. He was taken into custody, but in the end, he did all of this for better condition and wages for the agricultural estate workers, thus improving the standard of living for the poor, ordinary Grenadians. But yet in the end, in my view, he had lost his way, paving the way for a new dawn in Grenada's rich history. Nevertheless, Mr. President, the greatness of this country continue to prevail.

Subsequently, Mr. President, during the decades of the 70s, another great revolutionary emerged, Maurice Bishop. His Revolution made this country the first country in the English speaking Caribbean to execute a Revolution. It was said that this Revolution spirit runs through the veins of every Grenadian. Eventually, Mr. President, his Revolution came face to face with the United States of America, the most powerful country in the world. Nevertheless, Mr. President, before the collapse of the Revolution, he was able to galvanize enough support and success to transform the economy and the lives of poor ordinary Grenadians. The achievements of the Grenada Revolution in only four (4) years is unmatched. The Revolution introduced free secondary education, free access to university scholarships, the building of an International Airport, agroprocessing and manufacturing, the National Insurance Scheme and the Marketing and National Importing Board were only some of the achievements of his Revolution.

Mr. President, I believe that the time has indeed come for a new generation of progressive politicians to take their rightful place in history where we can seriously transform this beautiful country with its immense potential into making it a better place to live. Over the years, Mr. President, I was always concerned by this Government's centralised approach towards our development. And, I've spoken about it time and time again, where in my view, over 70% of our economic development is located in a small corner of the southern tip of this country. It is important to note that two major projects contributed significantly to the development of the South spurring economic activities to the area. One, the St. George's University, two the Maurice Bishop International Airport. On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, there has been very little infrastructural development to the rural parts of the country to revitalise the rural economy. Mr.

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President, what is wrong with developing the other towns where they can be competing with each other for economic space, it will only mean well for our economy.

The collapse of the Banana Industry and the closure of the Pearls Airport during the Revolution has crippled the rural economy. In contrast, Mr. President, in a tourism-based economy, all the hotels, and I repeat, all the hotels are located in St. George's, the Port, the International Airport, the Cruise Ship Terminal and two Stadiums at the same location when cricket enthusiasts are from the St. Andrew and St. David and Patrick's area mainly.

In comparison, Mr. President, in Barbados where I lived for about 12 years, the hotel belt there span, not one, Mr. President, but about three to four parishes from St. Phillip in the North to St. James in the South. Furthermore, Mr. President, the International Airport was built in the Parish of Christchurch, bringing significant development to other parts of the country where people from different parts of the country can benefit. Likewise, Mr. President, in St. Lucia, a member of the OECS, just like us, they built two stadiums, the Daren Sammy National Cricket Stadium, and the George Odum Track and Field Stadium in different parts of the country, thus spreading their development throughout the entire country. However, in Grenada, Mr. President, we have chosen to do all our development in a modern society in one corner of the country. Therefore, Mr. President, I will continue to advocate for the decentralisation of the Grenadian economy, where our citizens from the rural areas can enjoy the benefits that others are enjoying. This, in my view, Mr. President, should have never been accepted in modern society, in fact, a more prudent progressive move should be taken immediately to decentralise this backward medieval development by transporting economic development to the rural parts of this country, because once remained in its original construct, this country's economy will never be able to reach its maximum benefit where money will continue to circulate in one small area of our society rather than around the entire country. This backward medieval type of development has over the years, exacerbated the divisions between country and town. And, it is for this reason, Mr. President, that this negative country and town mentality continues to coexist

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within our society. One of the fundamental principles of Government is to unite its people rather than create division, when the truth of the matter is, that we are one people with one goal and one destiny and one struggle.

Mr. President, it is clear that the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly exposed the weaknesses of our economic development being pursued by this Administration. Therefore, Mr. President, I cannot and will not support a Government that continue to build an economy only on the fragile pillars of tourism and the Citizen by Investment Programme, especially where tourism has been the most seriously affected industry globally at this time. Note, Mr. President, that I am not suggesting that we abandon the Tourism Industry. There are still economic benefits to be derived from it. But, an important industry, such as the Agricultural Industry should have never been put on the back burner by this Administration.

Mr. President, long before the arrival of the COVID pandemic, I have been one of the most ardent proponents on the Agricultural Industry. I have been on various television and radio media houses, making the simple, obvious point about the need to invest in the Agricultural Industry because, Mr. President, almost every other sector, in my view, is linked and tied in a serious way to the Agriculture Industry. For example, Mr. President, the Agricultural Sector is linked to the Health Sector. According, to Maurice Bishop, **“Eat what you grow and grow what you eat,”** is still part and parcel of our society today, thus providing a healthier population, which will increase production and revenue to the State. Also, Mr. President, the Agricultural Sector is linked to the Business Sector, where business is conducted regularly between farmers and the MNIB, Marketing Board; between the farmers and the hotels. But, more importantly, Mr. President, the Agricultural Sector is linked to the Manufacturing Industry, where there is the potential to transform our natural resources into a finished product through agroprocessing, reducing the huge food import bill, thus avoiding unnecessary spending and creating more revenue for the State which will eventually improve our standard of living, significantly. Moreover, Mr. President, it is important to note that the farmer is an economically independent individual. He or she doesn't have

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to beg the Government for a job, instead, he creates his own job. Furthermore, Mr. President, he provides gainful employment within the State, employing them in the process. Mr. President, he produces a commodity and sell it for a price, which makes him a producer and an entrepreneur. So, in essence, Mr. Speaker, the farmer is more important to the State than the average businessman or woman who is engaged in buying and selling.

Mr. President, that's why yesterday it hurts me during the Lower House debate, when I heard the Minister for Agriculture, referring to the farmers in a condescending tone as **"the poor little farmers."** Mr. President, this Government has not yet realised the full potential of this important industry.

Moreover, Mr. President, the Maurice Bishop International Airport, is arguably the biggest project ever undertaken by any Government in this country's history and was built to complement not just the Tourist Industry, but, more importantly, Mr. President, the Agricultural Industry. The former revolutionary leader understood too well the importance and relevance of this vital industry and the benefits it can bring to the State. According to Maurice Bishop, in his last speech in Brooklyn, New York, 1983, and, please permit me to quote him at some length. I quote, **"This International Airport is an ancient dream of the people of Grenada. This international project as we see it, is the gateway to our future. As we see it, it is what alone can give us the potential for economic take off. As we see it, can help us develop the Tourist Industry more, can help us develop our Agro-Industry more, can help us to export our fresh fruits and vegetables better."** It is important to note, Mr. President, that the comrade leader in his speech referred to agriculture not once, but twice and referred to tourism, only once as he emphasised the need for the airport. But, Mr. President, I would like to see this country move beyond the traditional ways of doing business, where presently, for the most part, selling raw materials or raw products to the industrialised countries and getting minimal profits for our produce. Therefore, Mr. President, I am advocating for a Government that understands the huge potential and benefits that can be derived from agroprocessing and manufacturing.

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Likewise, Mr. President, I am advocating, I am advocating a Government that understands the huge potential in the Poultry Industry. This country's import bill, well over \$60 million, and that was back then, it might be much more than that now, in poultry on an annual basis. Therefore, I will support the idea to approach the World Trade Organization, to impose tariffs on imported poultry and invest heavily in our local Poultry Industry. Imagine, Mr. President, what well over \$60 million can do for our local economy, and the Poultry Industry here. In addition, Mr. President, the fact that we are a third world country means therefore, that the chicken that we import and consume is not the best quality, which will eventually lead to an unhealthy nation, which will put an extra burden on our health system, where health and wellness is key to having a healthy nation. According, to the American Historian and Philosopher, Will Durant, **"The health of nations is more important than the wealth of nations."**

In closing, Mr. President, I am advocating for a Government that values our history. I believe that this country has a very rich, colourful history and it should be preserved and promoted in every way. Mr. President, our history began with the Kalinago people and their struggles against colonialism by committing mass suicide to Julien Fédon Rebellion, a rebellion that came closest to replicating the Haitian Revolution in military strategists, that controlled the Island for fourteen (14) months straight, and has been given little recognition for it. Not even a monument was erected in his name, whereas in Barbados, the Bussa's Rebellion, that lasted for just about two to three days has been declared, Bussa has been declared a national hero and a monument erected in his honour. Moreover, Mr. President, out of the Haitian Revolution, emerged Henri Kristoff, who was a Grenadian born slave, who fought in the war with Toussaint L'Ouverture and later became King of Haiti. Mr. President, I'm advocating for a war museum that can be linked to Tourism, since we were the only country in the English Speaking Caribbean, to execute a Revolution. Mr. President, according to Marcus Garvey, the philosopher, **"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots."** Thank you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

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Maiden Speech (Senator St. Cyr)

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Noel. Thank you. You would rest a copy with the Clerk because they want to put things into a booklet. We have other Maiden contributions, so, we want to booklet all of them together with the appropriate photographs and so on for posterity. Yes. Something you could look back at and your grandchildren can read. Yes. And that the young people, when they go to the libraries... well, we are developing a library here, the Curtis Strachan Library in memory of the longest serving Clerk, and I believe he may have been the longest serving Clerk in the Commonwealth outside of the UK, I think. So, the Library here is dedicated and carries his name. So, we want to be able to do these things so that researchers in the future, you know, can come and see what it is we were discussing, how the different perspectives of different people and different Senators. So, yes. So, Senator St Cyr, the floor is now yours.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa Alexander St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. I am a bit more conservative with words. Mr. President, I stand before this House humbled to have been selected to serve as a Senator. Mr. President, if anyone would have suggested to me a couple months ago, that I would have been in this or any similar position, I would have promptly said no. Clearly, God had other plans because here I am, today.

It was Lao Tzu who coined the popular statement, **“A journey of a 1000 miles begin with a single step.”** Indeed, this is true for all of us. And today, Mr. President, I wish to share an abbreviated version of some of the steps in my journey thus far.

I was born and raised in a low income, single parent family, my mother was the head of the household. My mother was a seamstress and then a trafficker at those times, trafficking between Grenada and Trinidad and then a Sheller. I don't know how many persons may remember the functioning of GCNA with those machines that cracked the nutmeg and she would spend countless hours, those that were not properly cracked, sitting with a tray and shelling those nutmegs and sometimes when there were

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shipments as they were called, my sisters and I would have to go and help her. As our economic circumstances changed, my mother adapted.

My father, a civil servant, worked at the Grenada Cocoa Association, Agriculture is sort of in my blood, and then at the Ministry of Health. I am the last of five siblings... maternal siblings. I grew up in the environs of Canal Road, Telescope Bay and if anybody knows what are those communities, they would understand what I'm going to say next. I was a wayward tomboyish child, and my mother was quick with the belt. Mr. President, I am sure you can imagine what ensued as a result, a tomboyish wayward girl and a mother who was quick with a belt. Eventually wisdom prevailed and my mother and I had a truce of some sorts. However the essence and value of my childhood escapades with my friend Michelle created a long-lasting and deep love for all things Grenadian and I love to use our local vernacular, Mr. President, permit me today to assert that **"I is a Grenadian through and through."**

I attended the St. Andrew Anglican Primary School, then Grenville Secondary School, then went on to what was then Grenada National College where I studied Modern Languages so I basically have the ability to speak three languages and a little patois from time to time. I attended Teachers' College and then returned to teach eventually becoming a Head of Department and a member of the School Senior Management Team. As you would have already highlighted, Mr. President, I went on to complete a Bachelor's degree in Educational Administration while caring for my niece and nephew and my own daughter and doing everything else and I often got the question well how are you doing all of these things and I continue to get that question and my answer remains the same, the grace of God. I went on to complete a Master's Degree in Human Resource Development and Performance Management and now completing a doctorate in Higher Education with the University of Liverpool.

Mr. President, ego would want me to take credit for all of these achievements, but the truth is at every level there were persons who believed in me and contributed to my development. Mr. President, my journey has taught me my life is not just mine to enjoy but to give way and purpose to a higher cause. Marianne Williamson says it best

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and I quote **“as we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people the permission to do the same”** and by extension, Mr. President, we pay it forward, we become our brother's keeper and we help each other self-actualise, we serve each other. Mr. President, in this regard I wish to highlight that I have and continue to have a very active service record. I would have served as a Member of the Grenada Red Cross, some of these things I tend not to put on my CV because you know, you end up with a CV of so many pages, but today I just choose to just share a few of them. And later became a teacher responsible for Red Cross at Grenville Secondary School. I was a Member and President of the St. Andrew Parish Youth Council, I served as a Member of the National Youth Council and Vice-President, I served as a Youth Ambassador, I served as a Member of the Minister's Youth Advisory Council and the list goes on. Judge for debates, speaker at motivational sessions, facilitator of staff development sessions, facilitator of the Youth Parliament from time to time, community group member, and, Mr. President, when there was a scarcity for French Tour Guides, I also served as one.

Mr. President, I really cannot remember an occasion when I was asked to serve in any capacity where I would have refused except where there were clashes with my schedule or instances where I did not believe I was going to do an effective job. I take my involvement very seriously and if I cannot give quality contributions, I do not engage. Mr. President, I am cognisant that service can and does have far-reaching impacts and as such ought not to be taken casually. Mr. President, I have said before and I will continue to affirm, that my appointment to the Senate is really a position of service to Grenada and Grenadians. And I come into this role with a high degree of seriousness and commitment. However, Mr. President, I wish and anticipate that my being here will also serve as an encouragement to others to take up the challenge and responsibility of doing same. Mr. President, I tend to be quite and observant person and as such I tend to delay my response to issues until an opportune moment presents itself. A moment that would be most impactful.

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Mr. President, I suspect today is as good a day as any. While I applaud some of the initiatives taken, Mr. President, I have observed issues at both the micro and macro levels of our education system. Mr. President, my experience, training and knowledge of its impact has created a deep appreciation for all things related to education. As such I consider it my duty to mention those issues this morning: issues of discipline, discipline of students; teachers moved from one school to another apparently as a means of discipline; administrative issues, specific schools getting continuously students with behavioral or academic issues, students spending five years at a Secondary School and leaving school with no subjects to write; vocational programs still being regarded as second class to academic ones; an overloaded curriculum; efforts to innovate in an archaic system; lack of resilient structures in the system; the need to decentralise Tertiary Education, to list a few. However, Mr. President, I must say I was pleased to hear the Minister for Education speak of Values Education. I believe though Values Education start at the top with those in positions of leadership, authority and influence modeling the very values we would want to instill in our children. Mr. President, the attitude of **“do as I say, not as I do”** just would not cut it anymore.

I believe, Mr. President, the Prime Minister of Barbados captured the essence of what we need quite effectively in the concept of moral leadership. Mr. President, one of the popular assertions these days is that COVID-19 has resulted in the new normal. I pray that this new normal is epitomised by a return of some of our old but critical values; closely related families and communities, respect and love for each other, concern and care for the elderly and those in vulnerable positions. Furthermore, Mr. President, I think inclusion is one of the most fundamental values needed to move our country forward. Mr. President, no one group of individuals have all the ideas to creatively and successfully address current and imminent challenges. The scarcity of resources, urgency of responses and other challenges that may emerge, demand genuine cross and multi-sectoral collaborations as well as a departure from partisan politics in all issues as appears to be the current trend. Mr. President, this also predicates the issue of equal and veritable opportunities, where there are transparent criteria for recruitment

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or access two different initiatives. Moreover, Mr. President, in order to move our country forward, it is important that evidence-based approaches be employed. In relation to this, Mr. President, while I understand the explanations provided by the Ministers in response to some of the questions of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Mr. President, these explanations indicated the need for ease of access to data as well as fluidity of connections between data reservoirs of public records. I therefore look forward, Mr. President, to the Data Centre mentioned by the Honourable Minister for Infrastructure.

Mr. President, there is also a pressing need for rural development as Senator Noel just highlighted. I fundamentally believe, Mr. President, that persons of different socioeconomic backgrounds should coexist in the same communities, as such our communities would receive from both ends and of course we would have persons being motivated, being fuelled by those whom they view as being more affluent or more educated or whatever the case may be.

Mr. President, as perhaps my service record alludes, I am a strong youth advocate. In fact, Mr. President, many things do not get me ruffled, however issues affecting the youth most definitely do. I am not one who subscribes to the popular adage that the youth is the future of tomorrow, for you see, Mr. President in my humble opinion this creates the impression that the youth has a long way and wait before they can actually contribute to the own existence. For years, Mr. President, we have been guilty of disregarding the abilities of the young people in actively contributing to the issues that shape and impact their lives. For too long we have held the youth at bay instead of meaningfully engaging them and mentoring them to take up leadership positions in our communities and our country. Mr. President, I would be lying if I say I am not heartened to see the young people who are stepping forward in whatever capacity to let their voices be heard on different issues that are currently existing in our country. Mr. President, for too long we have, by our very dispositions, conditioned young people to question their abilities. Mr. President, the young people should never be in a situation where they ask themselves **“who are they to be”**, but instead **“who**

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are they not to be". I therefore anticipate the active involvement of our Youth in every sector of our country.

Mr. President, another area of interest for me is Public Health and I'm sure as many of you know, I work at the Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at SGU so by profession I am in academic Public Health. However, given our current situation, I am sure I will have the opportunity to speak to this at a later date. I also have a keen interest in employee rights, especially in the COVID season. Mr. President, just this past week and a half, I have had two conversations with two employees whose rights were apparently being infringed on.

Mr. President, in closing, I wish to acknowledge that my journey has, up to this juncture been reflective of some of the roads in our country, punctuated with big pot holes and high speed bumps. And had it not been for some persons I would not have gotten thus far. Mr. President, Koffee, the Jamaican Reggae Artiste in one of her songs said **"gratitude is a must"** and so, Mr. President, with your permission I would like to openly acknowledge some of these persons; my family for their support, my mother and my siblings here in Grenada and the diaspora; my forever friends, they know who they are; my Primary School teachers who always believed in me especially Mrs. Evette Sinach; my Secondary School teachers especially Ms. Linda Johnston, Mr Stephen Wall and Mrs. Vashtie Stanislaus Williams; my college lecturers especially Ms. May Patterson and Dr. Jeffrey Britain, Dr Omar Chidar ElChie and Dr. Satish Bedacey who kept nudging me to do my Doctoral studies; the members of the safe room, Mr. President, sometimes I wonder what I would do without this group of young persons in the safe room and, Mr. Clement, for having afforded me this opportunity to serve and the rest of the opposition team for their support.

Mr. President, as I delve into this role, I go forward appreciating Psalms 37:23 which reads **"the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and he delighted in his way"**. Mr. President, I look forward to serving with the Honourable Members in this House and to healthy robust debate. Thank you for your time, Mr. President.

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Mr. President: Thank you most profusely, Senator St. Cyr. Can we go back to the Order Paper? We are at the point of Ministerial Statements and I think Senator Cox was the... Senator my eyes caught you as the person wishing to make your Senatorial Statement. By the Standing Order, the timeframe on that is 10 minutes but given the fact that we only have three (3) Ministers on "This Side" of the Isle and... **(inaudible comments)** ...what I did on the last occasion and I will do again, because you cover so many portfolios. In other words, the entire block of time for the Government Side should be 1 hour. So I will assign that hour by giving each of the Ministers who is delivering Ministerial Statements 20 minutes instead of the 10. So Senator Cox bear that in mind and for the new Senators and for a reminder to the more seasoned Senators, you can inquire for clarity or for purposes of expansion once a Minister rest his Ministerial Statement, you can rise and indicate that you want to ask a question on the statement. If the question is too complicated, I may advise, because it is not an opportunity for ambush, it's an opportunity for seeking information and you can rise after a Minister has rested his statements to seek clarity on any matter that he may have raised during his statements that you wish clarity on. If it is a bit a complexed question, then I will direct that you put it in writing and send it to the Clerk and it will come up on the question time at the next Sitting of the Senate, yes. So Senator Cox, the floor is yours.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to give some short report on the Ministry of Youth Development, Sports, Culture and the Arts and also on Tourism and Civil Aviation and Agriculture and Lands. Mr. President, before I proceed I know you have welcomed our new colleagues on our behalf but I wish to take the opportunity just to say a special welcome to you guys and Honourable Senators, I think that we are going to have a wonderful time here given your address and some of the things that you are passionate about. I think that the country is in good hands, Mr. President.

Mr. President, before I proceed, I want to ask of you to request of this Entire House to stand in a moment of silence **(inaudible comments by Mr. President)**

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certainly, sure, I will forward the names to you (**inaudible comments by Mr. President**).

Mr. President: So we will take that item there.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I first want to start off with the Department of Youth. Mr. President, we continue to work steadfastly. As we know, these are not normal times and it has required the Ministry to review its operations, to revise its Budget to see how we can continue to move forward with the programmes and plans for youth development in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Mr. President, we continue to move forward with our primary programme, the Imani Programme and we are looking to initiate a new batch of Imani trainees come September of this year, Mr. President. It is one of the most flagship important programmes and maybe the most talked about programme within the Ministry of course. And one of the reasons for that is because of the size and the impact that it has on the development of young people in Grenada. Mr. President, we continue to work also on the Youth Parliament, Youth Debate and that is a critical aspect of the development of our young persons. We believe that exposing them to those debates and Parliamentary Process at an early age is critical towards the sustenance of our Government and the Parliamentary process, Mr. President, so that programme is ongoing.

The M-Power programme, one of the programmes that is very dear to me because it focuses on our young men in our constituency... in the various constituency throughout the country. Some of those young men who are at risk, who may have been left behind, this programme provides an opportunity for them to find a way to find themselves and it has worked very well from the first cohort and so we continue with that programme, Mr. President. I believe that this programme will continue to bring significant results and we should see a change. If you look at the statistics in terms of our young men at Her Majesty's Prisons in comparison to women, it is cause for great

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concern, Mr. President, hence one of the reasons for why we are embarking on this programme.

Mr. President, the training, we continue to do the training and one of the most significant training that we are engaging in right now is the STCW Training, it's a Safety at Sea Training for young men and women.

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

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. The Safety at Sea Training, it's a training that is very important for persons who are desirous of having a career in the Maritime Industry Mr. President. It's an international certification, it is a certificate that is required for anyone wishing to seek a job in the Maritime Industry, whether on a cruise ship, whether on a yacht, whether on a cargo ship, oil tanker, whatever the case maybe. This certification is required and so, Mr. President, we believe that by taking this initiative to giving our young persons an opportunity to access that training, it lends itself for them to have direct access to jobs within the sector. It also provides, increasing the capacity of our fishermen because this training involves fire fighting, CPR, safety at sea. So it's a very important developmental training for fishermen as well, so when they go out to ply their trade, they do normally go out a few miles well, they in turn will know how to keep themselves safe. As you know when you're out at sea anything can go wrong and so this is a very important training. This training is in high demand, Mr. Deputy President, the Islands of Petite Martinique and Carriacou. The most subscribers for this programme came from those Islands for obvious reasons, Mr. Deputy President, because the sea is where we ply most of our trade in those two Islands.

Mr. President, it was mentioned here this morning by my fellow colleague Senator, Senator St. Cyr. I am happy to hear that she was a past Youth Ambassador as well and that programme, we just commenced that programme again. We believe that it has significant value and maybe she may give us an opportunity to speak to that

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programme going forward and how it has helped shaped her and molded her to be at this place, this Honourable House this morning, Mr. Deputy President. So, these are some of the key programmes that we are working on at the Ministry of Youth, the Department of Youth.

Mr. President, I want to move on, Deputy President, to Sports. Mr. Deputy President, during the COVID, we tried to find some way to continue to engage our stakeholders, and, of course, this is something where it has been new for us. And so, one of the things that we realised, one of the first thing that we did was to identify some of our coaches who have underlying conditions, who have challenges, who are most vulnerable to COVID, and have them, of course, removed from engaging in public. We tried to safeguard all of our staff as quickly as possible when we recognised what was taking place, Mr. Deputy President. However, we used that opportunity to engage in a number of different developmental training for persons, while they were at home to keep them engaged in the area of their expertise, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. Deputy President, we are currently working also on a National Sports Policy. It has been a document that has been long in waiting. A lot of calls came for that policy approach as to how the development of sports should be tailored in Grenada and we are working on that document. Currently, the draft policy document is with stakeholders and we are engaging them for feedback. We're hoping that we can have a final document on or before the end of 2020. We should have had it before, but for obvious reasons, the timeline got pushed back. And so, we are very excited about this. We believe that this is timely and we now have to look at it and reshape it. Now that we have COVID, that also will form part of their policy. How are we going to ply sports? How we're going to develop sports, going forward in the presence of COVID?

Mr. Deputy President, our student athletes, we have a number of student athletes overseas, and in particular, those in the United States and we have been in contact with them. And, they have been having some serious challenges, Mr. Deputy President. Fortunately, we were in a position to offer some assistance to them, Mr. Deputy President, because one of the things that happened with COVID, persons had to move

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off campuses, their scholarship were slashed, they were not able to find a place that they could afford, have to go and live by a friend or family. So, Mr. Deputy President, it has been a tough time for those student athletes. One of the things that was really clear and I was very impressed with the athletes is how they were able to adapt. Some of them found temporary jobs, and they were able to do things. Some of them were training inside, using different means for training. Mr. Deputy President, I was truly impressed when they gave a report. We had a zoom call with everybody. I was really, really impressed with what they are doing through those difficult periods. And, I really want to commend them. I want to register that here in this Honourable House, Mr. Deputy President. So, they are doing fine. They had some challenges. As you know, there was a policy decision to revoke student visas for students who have to do online classes. Fortunately, that has been rescinded, but still, there have been some challenges because some of the schools are going to go online and they are advising some of the students. Some of the student athletes are scheduled to come back home to Grenada, but they will continue their classes online. The challenge is the athletic side of their development. We are still working to see how we can continue that development, so that they can represent us in the sporting discipline, Mr. Deputy President. So, that is something that we are working with, but we are happy that they are in a much more comfortable place currently.

Mr. Deputy President, currently we are working on upgrading some of the policy approach and we are working on upgrades to our major playing areas and sporting facilities in the various communities. I am happy that I heard the concerns raised about not enough attention being given to other communities, and I think that is quite sincere and genuine and that is something that we must continue to pay attention that every community is important. And even now so, in the midst of COVID, persons have a greater need wanting to go out to exercise. And so, those playing areas are very critical towards the development of our young persons and athletes. Mr. Deputy President, when I visited La Sagesse, I mean, you go and you see over 200 athletes out there trying to do little programme, little exercise, little training. That was very, very

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interesting and welcoming, Mr. Deputy President. Even our current world champion, javelin Anderson Peters was there training, working hard, trying to stay fit because he's working towards getting into Olympics, Summer Olympics next year, Mr. President. So, they are working hard and so we have a responsibility to ensure that we keep those facilities up to standard, so that they can do their best for themselves, their family, and of course, Grenada, Mr. Deputy President.

So, we will be doing some work upgrades to the plumbing facility, major upgrades to the La Sagesse playing field. Progress Park, we are currently now building and constructing cricket nets; as you know, St. Andrew is a cricketing community and they do have outstanding cricketers, some of the top cricketers came from St. Andrew and so that is a critical facility that was lacking there. So, the cricket nets is currently under construction, it's going to be a concrete strip and a turf strip. So, we're hoping that as soon as that is concluded, the Cricket Council in St. Andrew, they are going to benefit significantly from that facility. We have had some significant discussions with them. We are also providing a facility for them in terms of a Secretariat, so that they can operate the business of the Cricket Council throughout the year, so that also would be placed at the Progress Park facility, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. Deputy President, Willis Playing Field; there has been a chronic situation with that playing field in terms of being waterlogged because of the nature of the type of soil that is there, so we're doing some significant and major work is done there right now. The entire surface, six inches top layer of the field is going to be removed, and we're going to be installing some french drains to improve the drainage for that Willis playing field; it's one of the stronger communities in Grenada. They are very united and together and they know exactly what they want. And, they were very instructive in pushing for us to get this done for them, so that is being done currently, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. Deputy President, the Limes Playing Field, that's an area that had a major problem as well with flooding and also some unevenness, the field was not able to be utilised properly over the past two years or so. And so, we are happy to announce that

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we have done some major work there levelling out, and we have some more work to do. And, the committee members, they are very much involved in what is taking place and giving some directions, and also some historical context of what used to happen or where the water is coming from. So, those local information is very important for when the technical people come, so they will know how to make that intervention to curb that problem that currently exists. So, Mr. Deputy President, we are happy that we are moving forward with that.

The Fond Playing Field in St. Patrick's, we're working together with GFA to get that up to standard. So, the bleachers are already in, so we are currently doing an analysis, we have engineers going in to look at the whole top layer to have it leveled out. So, some significant work is going to take place at that playing field going forward. Mr. President, those are some of the major, Deputy President, major things that are taking place in the area of sports, currently.

Mr. Deputy President, in Culture and the Arts, this is one of the most significantly impacted sectors. I get calls every day, sometimes it's difficult when you hear the cries of persons who ply... their only form of livelihood is within the sector. And because of its nature, where persons make a livelihood through gathering and now that is something that we do not advocate, for obvious reasons because of COVID, we cannot gather as we used to pre-COVID. That has really significantly hindered those person's livelihood and even from the Tourism Sector.

So, Mr. President, we are working with a private person to see whatever livelihoods that can be generated in a meaningful way, so that, persons can survive. But, it has been a tough one, Mr. Deputy President, for persons within the Cultural Sector.

Mr. President, currently, one of the signature programmes that we have been working in the Ministry of Culture is the establishment of music labs. And, to note that the first of two music lab, the first one has been commissioned at the Mc Donald College in St. Patrick's and I was there, excellent music lab. It was commissioned by a

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young student who I think he dropped his first single. So, it was very, very interesting to see that music lab, the community members came out and it was welcomed.

We are close to completing a second one at SASS in St. Andrew. That is also going to be a much bigger music lab and we believe that it is going to have significant impact on that community, on the St. Andrew and also neighbouring communities to benefit, in terms of the development of culture, persons going there to ply their skill, their talent in the area of Music and Arts, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. Deputy President, I just want to move to Tourism. Mr. Deputy President, Tourism, as we all know, has taken a serious blow as regards to the prospectus what we were looking at in terms of going forward for 2020. Grenada, over the past three to four years, have been growing exponentially in the area of Tourism, and with COVID, that has significantly smothered everything. Mr. President, we believe that with continued dialogue with our stakeholders, and trying to understand how everybody can co-exist and can move forward and to find a way to operate with COVID or post COVID, Mr. Deputy President, we believe that, that is critical. So, a number of discussions, a number of meetings have been taking place with stakeholders, looking to see how we can reshape, looking to see, providing opportunities through the stimulus packages for funding, for strengthening their capacity, the whole Tourism Sector capacity. And, one of the first initiatives that the Ministry undertook was training, having persons get the requisite training, knowing how to carry themselves in COVID and how to interact with persons who are due to come in, as we open up our borders, officially, on the 1st of August, Mr. Deputy President. I think this is critical, to get persons in the right mindset to know how to deal and how to operate in COVID, as it's something that we cannot run away from but we have to face it head on. So, those training would have taken place in all the various sectors ranging from taxi operators, to small vendors, to hotels, everybody have gone through this significant training and we want to commend the Ministry of Health for...

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

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Mr. President: Thank you, Senator De Allie.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. ...for delivering this important training.

Mr. President, the Tourism Sector also has tentacles not only throughout Grenada, but outside of Grenada. And, because of COVID, a number of our Grenadian citizens who are employees within the Cruise Ship Sector, Cruise Industry was stranded overseas, and we were happy to bring them home, Mr. President. It was a very tough, tough operation, difficult operation, tough decisions, but we were steadfast and the decision was made and over 300 cruise ship workers, Grenadian workers, our citizens, our brothers and sisters, were brought home safely to our shores. I think that was one of the most moving moments for me, to see persons, bringing, getting them back home, and how persons felt being able to come back home, how to get away from being on ship trapped for months. And, in some cases other persons were getting affected, other persons were dying. So, I think, Mr. President, I think the Ministry of Tourism needs to be commended. **(Applause)**

Mr. President, Agriculture and Lands. Mr. President, there has been a number of deliberations, a number of discussions. I can recall a whole decade as regards to agriculture, and the way forward for agriculture in Grenada. And, I am available to have a discussion in terms of a development approach on how we move agriculture forward because that is an area of competence for me. I have a wealth of knowledge in the Agricultural Sector, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I think one of the things that is instructive, and one of the things that we have to do, is that we must get an appreciation for everything that is responsible for how we move forward with Agriculture. And, the Ministry of Agriculture has been working tirelessly, looking at everything in a holistic manner, to see how we can move the sector. And, one of the biggest challenges, Mr. President, that has faced the structure is the reception to changes, the reception to improvement. That is one of the

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things that is really affecting the transitioning and for us to improve. But, we'll have more discussions with that going forward, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I really on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, we want to commend our farmers for their responsiveness during the COVID, during the curfew time. They really came out. **(Applause)** They really came out and ensured that we had produce for the nation. I think this is something that is, sometimes it's under estimated, and maybe not looked at. But, we as a Government and Ministry, we continue to recognise their efforts, and that is something that we are very cognisant of.

Mr. President, we want to also inform this Honourable House that recently we had a Plant Distribution Ceremony taking place at Mirabeau. It's an area that I spend quite a bit of time too, as well. Mr. President, over 40,000 plants have already been propagated and made available for distribution. The target is to bring it up to 60,000 between now and the end of the year, Mr. President. Mr. President, these plants, I must make mention are significantly subsidised. So, sometimes persons are not aware of the contribution that the Government is making to ensure that agriculture moves forward. And, I think it's important to underscore that what these plants are actually sold for, is not what they really cost. They cost way more than what they are sold for. And, I think it's important to mention that, hence the reason why we're using that to remove the true costs of those plans to ensure that each and every person who is desirous, involved in agriculture, expanding or starting, have the ability to access those plants, Mr. President. So, I think this is very significant. We want to commend the Ministry and the Government of Grenada for doing this.

Mr. President, there is a pilot project ongoing right now and that has to do with bananas. And, there's a long history with bananas and we know how it has evolved, what has transpired, the whole issue of globalisation and how it has affected Grenada in its construct, the region. And, there is a discussion on maybe to find a pathway for us to move forward. But, one of the immediate challenges that we have with this sector has to do with looking at the disease, pest and disease and looking at planting material that can withstand that. So, if you do not have proper plants that can sustain and to produce

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in a sustainable manner, then you cannot really engage any market in a serious way. So, we have to start where it is most important for us. And so, we are focusing now on a pilot program that will see 10,000, tissue culture bananas are being distributed among fourteen (14) farmers who are participating in this pilot initiative, Mr. President, which I think is a very excellent initiative. And, my understanding **(applause)** and for obvious reasons, Mr. President, we are using tissue culture material to ensure that those plants are able to withstand the current pest and disease that prevails our shores, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I think this, the praedial larceny, Mr. President, is an area that has plagued the Industry and Senator Campbell can speak to that. There have been a number of initiatives that the Ministry of Agriculture would have embarked on to aid farmers.

Mr. President: I think Senator St. Cyr gave you the solution to the problem.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: I hear you, Mr. President, I hear you. But, I think it is instructive for us to mention what we are doing. And, we can always complement with other suggestions going forward, Mr. President.

Mr. President, some of the farmers, we've moved towards technology. So, some of the farmers they now have on the farms, cameras, which they can monitor, so that has aided, that has assisted. Not everybody currently can afford that facility, Mr. President. But, Mr. President, I think sometime going forward.

Mr. President: I don't want to stop you in flight. But, why are you warning the praedial larcenist that there are cameras? It's like giving the bank robber the key to the vault.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: I think, Mr. President, it's part of the law, that you're supposed to say that you have a camera up here. It should not be hidden,

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otherwise you're not able to, the legal people can hear me out on this. I think so.
(Inaudible comments by the President) Yes, yes, Mr. President.

So, I speak to this in the sense that we have... right now, I think at the "Other Place", Mr. President, that read the first time the Bill, Praedial Larceny, Bill, which I want to point out what is very instructive of this Bill, is that this Bill is tailored to target and to secure one of our most prized crops right now, which is soursop which we are exporting to United States, Mr. President. So, I think the Ministry must be commended for looking at soursop in a very serious manner. And, I think this is significant going forward. I think sometime at our next Sitting, we may have an opportunity to deliberate on this Bill or going forward after it is passed in the "Other Place," Mr. President.

Mr. President, I wanted to speak also on the merger, the current merger that is being worked on between GCNA and GCA, the Grenada Cocoa Association, Mr. President. Mr. President, I think we could safely say more than two decades, there have been discussions and deliberations over this topic. There have been persons for it, there have been persons against it, Mr. President. But, Mr. President, I think with a reoccurring chronic situation, over and over, every two years or every three years, these organisations reach out for significant financial support from Government, either to prop it up or to take it out of a deep hole.

Mr. President, we believe that if we are serious about these organisations, we believe that we have to find a better way for them to thrive and to thrive successfully. It is... **(Time bell rings)** ...just about to wrap up. Thank you. If I could get one more minute, Mr. President? Thank you very much.

Mr. President, these organisations do have some antiquated audiences and it's important, we believe that the Ministry of Agriculture and the Government, of course, look to see how we can improve these by bringing them together because there are a number of things that they do together. The farmers are the same, it's the same farmer, the same farmers have the cocoa, the same farmer have the nutmeg, some of the operations, the modalities, how they operate, is the same and we believe that by

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merging those two organisations, it can grow to a stronger single organisation serving both cocoa and nutmeg farmers.

Mr. President, I just want to speak quickly on an important project that is coming on stream, it's the Land Degradation and Land Neutrality Project. It's a project that seeks to develop about 8 hectares, 8 hectares, that is roughly about 20,000 acres of land, Mr. President for the planting of nutmeg and cocoa going forward, Mr. President. Also 1000 of that hectares through that project will be addressed to address soil conservation in Carriacou. There are some land degradation issues out in Carriacou, Mr. President, so this project will see a number of acres of land coming under cultivation for nutmeg and cocoa and that is a response to the challenges that we have had from the devastation for both Ivan and Emily.

Mr. President, with this, I say thank you very much for allowing me to give this report at this point in time. I rest. Thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Cox. Any questions from the other Senators? Okay, there don't seem to be any. I think Senator Cox, you were comprehensive.

Senator, oh, sorry. Oh, sorry, Senator Lewis, my eyes have not yet. Senator Lewis. Yeah, I say my eyes have not yet gotten accustomed to going that far up in the...

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I understand, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Sorry. So I missed. You have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much. And, thanks to Minister Cox for this update. I'm just seeking some clarity as to where we are with the stimulus package in relation to the workers in the Tourism Sector in the following context. We are aware that concerns have been expressed as to the intended benefits

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for the workers and a number of them, the vast majority, did not receive anything, certainly for April/May, and I'm not sure for June. And, the Government had put out an official release as to the challenges that were experienced and some of these challenges, in the words of the Government, to paraphrase, had to do with the unethical, and if, I don't want to use the word corrupt too strongly, practices of some of the employers and taking into account that the Government has indicated, and if I am wrong on this, please correct me, that no action will be taken against anyone who were guilty or was guilty of not performing accordingly. I would like to know where are we now? And, based on your response, I have an observation to make that is coming later.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Senator Lewis. Senator Lewis as regards to the report and even from the Government, what I do know and most recently, the Minister for Finance did indicate that some persons would have indicated that they made some errors in their filing. And, as such, it didn't warrant, those errors were rectified, and it didn't warrant any action per se. As regards to the application of the payments that were delayed, I was informed that they should, if not be paid before the end of the month, but that should be resolved anytime now. So, if there are any changes, we will be happy for whatever observation, whatever feedback that you may come across, because this is a very important initiative for the country. This is one of the initiatives that we believe that transcends all boundaries, political and otherwise. This is something that we welcome, every sector to give genuine, and positive feedback as to what they observe and direction on how they can best give support in ensuring that this stimulus package creates the impact that it is desired for. That is what we are most concerned about at this time. So, we welcome that feedback, Senator Lewis, through you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President.

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(Inaudible comments by the President)

Mr. President: Senator Lewis, you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much. I would normally give way to women, and in particular, my dear sister and friend from St. Andrew, but this is just a follow up. So, please permit me and bear with me on this occasion. Senator Cox, I hear your response, but if my memory serves me right, the release from the Government categorically indicated that there were some deliberate attempts by some employers to mislead on the information provided. And, I do not know if there is a deliberate attempt to inflate figures and here I am not... let me make it absolutely clear. I am not referring to making service charge as part of a claim for salary, because I could understand that. I stood in this very probably spot and was one of the advocate for service charge based on my understanding of the construct of the basic salary package of the worker, so this is not what I'm addressing.

I'm addressing my understanding of the results of the investigations, from the Ministry of Finance which may have indicated that some employers deliberately inflated the figures, some employers deliberately made claims so that management staff can benefit from these payments where it was absolutely clear that they ought not to have done so. And my concern will be, if this is the case, if the Government is still maintaining... unless the Government is saying that your original investigation, Mr. President, turned out... the report was an error, yes, and all that we are prepared to say is that we are leaving matters where they are. What are the message are we sending to a young people? What are the message we're sending to our society?

When our young people on the blocks, when our young people through parts of the Social Dynamics that we have goes... there's a Bill I think to discuss Praedial Larceney. In other words when we, ordinary people do it, it is stealing, it is thieving but when it happens at that level and our population is listening and our people that we need to follow, Mr. President, as setting examples, our leaders are quick to respond by

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indicating that let us turn a new page. These are not good messages and signals that we are sending, our people are listening, our youth is involved, and I'm heartened by their engagement in the different social activities and activism that is taking place. And we need to lead by example.

Mr. President, through you, I and the Trade Union Movement hold the Government partly responsible for that which have taken place by the activities of the employers certainly within the Tourism Sector. And I would go on to explain. We were invited and we accepted to be part of the COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Package Evaluations Committee whose objective was not to decide what amount of money will be spent. And that we understood and accepted to be the function probably of Cabinet and others. We had different views on that but we accepted it. When we sat in that first engagement, our understanding was... it was the Tourism Sector, the GTA was involved, the Trade Union Movement was involved and there was a representative from the National Democratic Congress involved in that very first discussion. Our understanding and that made sense was that, we will evaluate the information that is coming from the applicants, that will be the workplace and we were in a better position to do this because with a representative from the Tourism Association, with a representative from the NDC and certainly with a representative from the Labour Movement, we were in a position to be able to detect if the information provided was as such that raised eyebrows. We were never engaged and on making enquiry, we were told that the Cabinet rescinded its decision because an error was made and we ought not to have been involved in this, because this is a Cabinet decision. We were not saying, Mr. President, and probably we should have, we were not saying that we should be determining if it's 20 million dollars or 10 million dollars. But evaluating the request, we were in a position to be able to point out that this application information from employer B, did not meet the information that we have. And therefore by excluding us deliberately gave the avenue and the unchecked avenue for these sorts of activities to have taken place in our view and we have reviewed this matter.

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What has that resulted in? It has resulted in workers going without stimulus support for months. What has that resulted in? It has resulted in families being unable to feed themselves even with a reduced amount because it ought to have been 40% of their basic income. And these are the sort of things, as we speak about social dialogue and as we speak about the need to work together and we speak about accountability and as we speak about the use of our taxpayers money and our scarce resources. If there isn't genuine engagement, these are the things that will continue to happen and therefore we hold the Government responsible. And probably, this may explain why there was this quick announcement that we are not pursuing any of the employers that engaged deliberately according to the Report from the Government, deliberately providing false information. Could you imagine an employee in a workplace, Mr. President, providing false information, especially financial information to its employer. I am sure my good comrade Senator De Allie based on his principle and his managerial professionalism will not just say, let us forget this. The question is my dear brother Senator Cox, I know your engagement and your interest and commitment to youth, I've always said this; the question is what messages are we sending?

And therefore when someone is found taking a coconut which they ought not to do because it is stealing, and then they are arrested and they are being charged. What are the penalties, what are the penalties for the employers who deliberately mislead the state so that they can pocket that money? Because that was the Report from the Government. We want to complement the employers who worked day in and day out, night in and night out, to provide the correct information so that the employees can get the benefit from the stimulus package. And at the same time, to call upon the NIS to do all that the law requires them to do, to go after the employers whom this process have shown have been robbing and stealing from the employees. Because they make the 4% or 5% deduction and they have not sent it to the NIS. That also tells me that they did not make their contribution of the 5 or 6% that they are mandated under Law and there is a penalty under the NIS. And colleagues, through you, Mr. President, we need

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to lead by example and the higher... the more responsibility you have, the greater the responsibility and when we provide service; to whom much is given, much is expected.

And we want to register our deepest concern and disappointment in the response of the Government to this and I am going to make a point under another topic which is creating concerns outside there, where for instance we can misuse the state resources and we just leave everything floating in the air. It is not good, we are not sending a good message to the people, I wanted to place this on record. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Before you get up, let me just clarify and I think, because probably there is a lack of clarity. As I said to you before, I preside with a great amount of liberty, yes. But a question is not an opportunity for a debate, so just for the freshman Senators and others. A question is not an occasion for a debate. A question is put and an answer is given. If to the mind of the Senator there are issues, which are still unclear, or there are policy issues, which arise that creates an opportunity for greater examination, then that Senator by way of a Motion, tabled on the next occasion will have all the liberty to debate.

But here is my problem now, because there was a debate on a question, I will now have to extend to the "Other Side" an opportunity to be able to answer some of the clarities. But again, I want to emphasise and there is a particular Standing Order on questions, which say so, that a question is not an opportunity for a debate. You put a question, you get an answer, you're not satisfied with the answer or you believe that you can come with a substantial Motion and when you bring a Motion, you can debate for the whole day on that Motion and raise all the points. I just thought I should clarify that, but I don't want to disadvantage anyone. As I said, the essence of Parliament is debate. Parliamentarians talk and I don't want to shut anybody down, you know so I just thought I would make that observation, bring it to the attention of individuals. So Senator Cox.

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Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President...

Mr. President: One second, as a result I will appeal to Senator De Allie who, while there was not an accusation at your door personally, but certainly your constituents, its my hope that you wouldn't prolong the debate by rising... you could if you wish but having the... I think that I have sufficiently clarified the issue. Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you, very much, Mr. President, for your wise guidance as usual. As regards through you, Mr. President, Senator Lewis' request, I am not fully aware of what was his terms of engagement through the social partners and what was promised or not promised, so I can't really speak to that at this point in time, Mr. President. But I thought it interesting and I think it's important just to make note of just a couple things. I don't know, Mr. President, through you, how one could be blamed for somebody making a mistake voluntary or involuntary. I don't know if someone could just stay somewhere and say well, if I do that, that person would not make a mistake or that person wouldn't steal or that person would lie, so I don't know. I'm still lost with that one, Mr. President.

But I think it is instructive, Mr. President, that a Government that has taken the lead, that has continued to be caring, continue to be considerate and come forward and to do a stimulus package in a time when many other countries couldn't do it, when many other countries couldn't even pay salaries (**applause**) to do that and for someone who is representing workers to not even recognise Government's commitment and Government care towards workers, (**applause**) but instead to blame Government for doing a stimulus that we have had hiccups along the way and we welcome persons to help but I don't and I said, I redirect, Mr. President, I close by redirecting the question, what message are we sending when we do that? That is the question that I close with. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

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Mr. President: Again Senator... in all fairness, I think the concern was, as raised by Senator Lewis, was that there was a certain level of dishonesty in the programme and had the organisations of Unions been involved, to a certain degree in an administrative way, then there may have been a diminished opportunity for this dishonesty to arise. So I don't think it is so much blaming the Government for the stimulus package. But in the administration, there should have been a role, I think that's the point. I just don't want the thing to go back and forth, so I thought I would clarify that.

But again, let me just draw Senators attention to Standing Order 18. Standing Order 18, it's on page 12, 18(d) of the Standing Orders and I shall read **"a Senator shall address the Senate upon any question,"** that is **"a Senator shall address the Senate upon any question,"** so you can ask any question really, right. And **"a question shall not be made the pretext for a debate."** I just want to reinforce that point. So that's the Standing Order of the House, but as I said, I understand in the flow of things, people can you know... so I am flexible in that way. So I didn't want to intervene to shut the debate down because there was indeed a debate but I appreciate. I myself have come through the mill and I know so, anyway we can move on. I think Senator St. Cyr, yes you...

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President, I have two questions for Senator Cox. Let me applaud the Government for having restarted the Youth Ambassadors Programme as you said in your report. I do have a question on the criteria and the process that was used for the selection of the Youth Ambassadors, that's one question. And I also have another question in your report for sports, I keep hearing the same names when it comes to playing fields being upgraded and you fixed and so on and as a resident of Pearls, the playing field is right outside my gate actually, and it's a playing field that is used quite a lot and has never gotten any upgrades. Are there any plans to upgrade the Pearls playing field?

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Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much. Through you, Mr. President, I'll probably start with the last one first. The Pearls Playing Field, yes, Mr. President, the Ministry of Sports, I myself personally, we would have walked that area, perused that area. Currently we have in our possession estimates for a sitting pavilion and washroom facility for Pearls. I normally don't make mention of things, once it make a certain way in implementation then you would hear more about it but we have already received estimates and drawings. We're just trying to finalise how we're going to raise the funding to do that. So thank you very much for a raising that for me.

As regards to the Youth Ambassadors, in terms of...

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Mr. President: ...invite the Senator, if you already have drawings that are approved, even if they are not approved but given that track that she has raised it, it may be a good idea to invite her to a one-on-one and say well look these are the initial plans that we have, this is what we intend to do, this is the scope of work. And maybe give her an opportunity to make a comment or two, in which way you may be very well enriched so there is that opportunity. And for you Senators too, you don't have to wait until you get to the Senate, you can write a letter, you can pen a letter to the relevant Minister and say look, these are my concerns, abcdefg and what are you doing about it?

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President, that is easy as 123. I just want to add with the criteria, I do not have those criterias infront of me but I can make them available to you upon request, that's not a problem, so thank you very much for inquiring.

Mr. President, I just wanted to add one thing while we're on this in terms of infrastructure in the rural areas. As you know Pearls, Simon area is the home of the Cultural Center and we have commenced the reconstruction of the Simon Cultural Center. We have done a survey of the site, we have done a geotechnical study of the

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site, we demolished the old structures that are there and we fenced the property. We also have a concept design currently, which we took to the community and invite community members to see the concept design and currently the drawings are being worked on for the Simon Cultural Center. So that is also something that is coming as well, just to add that.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Senator Noel.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Mr. President, thank you. Just to point of clarification regarding the GCNA/GCA merger. On Wednesday during the Lower House Sitting, the Minister of Agriculture made a point which kind of suggested that they came to some kind of conclusion or some steps have been made in terms of the merger issue. And there are two things with the merger and the liberalisation of the both Boards. I just need some clarification regarding how far or where are these in terms of the merger or the liberalisation.

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much Senator for that important inquiry. Mr. President, I indicated that this is a very important initiative and important process for Grenada and first and foremost we are thinking about the farmers in this process. They are the ones to benefit from this merger. So what is happening currently, consultation with the farmers are being held, that is what is happening. I think they have two or three more consultations to conclude and they are going to collate all the feedback from the farmers, the stakeholders on what they see or what they believe

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and how it was presented to them and their understanding on that particular merger. They are going to draft a process, how that merger is going to take place, who is going to do what, how the assets are going to be dealt with, all that will be done because they do have a consultant on board who is assisting with that process.

As the Minister for Agriculture did indicate that significant work, significant studies, research, recommendations would have been done over the past two decades on that merger. I think there is a wealth of knowledge for informed decision to be made on that and so, soon as those consultations have been concluded, the Ministry would announce what is the next step and how they'll move forward with that. But be rest assured, the stakeholders and the public is significantly involved in this process and it's a process that we are going to do to ensure that the whole nation understands what is being done, how it is being done and how the farmers are going to benefit from this at the end of the day. Thank you very much.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to give Ministerial Statements for the Ministries I am responsible for in this Honourable Chambers. But before I do, I would just like to join my voice with my fellow Senator Cox in congratulating our two new Senators on their Maiden Speech here this morning and it is a good move and a great moment for young people I believe in the country when we give opportunities to young persons to represent youth on a whole in a nation. And I do believe you have before you a great platform to help change lives and as we do on "This Side" here stand up for what is right, we encourage you to do this, to join with us in ensuring that you stand up for what is right and to make every move that will benefit, not just the young people but the entire population of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. So, welcome.

Mr. President, indeed we are living in challenging times and the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented and it's unprecedented times. It also presents to us an

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opportunity for a moment, I will say a legacy moment for all of us. But history would judge us for our response to COVID-19. You see, we have an opportunity in this Honourable House to ensure that Laws are made to protect our people. We have a responsibility to articulate information that will help guide our people to become responsible citizens, and to respond in positive ways when information is presented. If we refuse to provide these sort of guidance and advice, we will be watching or creating the environment for our young people to live in their own bubble. And I'm not saying it's wrong to live in your own bubble but at the same time, to make decisions, that may not necessarily advance their future and give them the opportunity to serve humanity. So those of us here, we have that opportunity to establish this, and I trust we will not fail in any way.

COVID-19 and what this little virus has done to this world and we all are reeling from it. To date, about 7 million reported cases and just about 700,000 deaths. And it is mounting. This morning I heard Hong Kong begin complaining that for the last three (3) days, they have recorded over 100,000 new cases. Texas is now reeling as the next epicenter in the United States for new cases. Florida, Miami which is closest to us is under the pressure of this virus. Thankfully, Mr. President, when we detected in March that we had cases on our shores, we moved with alacrity to ensure that we cut the possibility of community spread and we did what we thought was necessary with a state of limited emergency to control and to ensure that the population understand. Because we are a free spirited people, Grenadians are, I don't know about Island of Conflict, no that's not in our labeling, we are a free spirited, happy, well I can't say 'gay' anymore but a happy and jovial people, that's who we are, that's how we grow up, everything we take and make a light moment of it. So getting our people to understand and to take away what we call civil liberties and free spiritedness was not an easy one. But from March, just about the 22nd- 23rd of March there when we instituted those state of emergency, people may not have necessarily accepted it, but complied because COVID stared everyone in their face and we saw what was happening in the first world nations and deaths and upon deaths and so forth. So people complied and remained indoors.

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There are those who violated the curfew and so forth, yes we had a few things because we are not known to be caged in, but was it wrong to do this? Of course not. Because we understood very early, if we don't, the consequences will be dire. And, our health facilities will not in any shape or form will be able to respond because we're seeing in the first world nation they can't respond. It was just too much, so we had to. Today staring us in the face, and we've been guided by the Pan American Health Organization. I've sat in a meeting, not too long ago, Minister for Health and others, and Ministers for Health from the region and when they, the gentleman reported and said, **"Listen, you cannot keep your borders closed indefinitely, you have to open it up at some point in time, but with opening there will be inherent risks."** What is important is how we should manage the risks and reduce infection.

So, on the 15th of July, we opened the borders to our regional counterparts and come the 1st of August, tomorrow we would open to international flights. I guess as much quite a lot of us are... our people in the population are concerned because of this inherent risk. But, we are reminded by PAHO, **"you need to put systems in place to mitigate against community spread."** So, Mr. President, protocols for entering the State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. What we've done, we've been able, using a system that is being used by the European Union, as well, and others, of a ranking system to rank countries based on exposure or based on confirmed cases. So, a country that has between zero and 19 confirmed cases will be ranked a Green State, that's the best you could have. Countries between 20 and 60 confirmed cases and let me just clarify, confirmed case in a 100,000 population in a two-week period. So, if you have zero to 19 confirmed cases in a 100,000 population, within a two-week period, you will be considered to be green. Between 20 and 60 confirmed cases and new cases, new cases within a two-week period of the same formula, 100,000 population, you'll be considered to be a Yello State. And over 60 confirmed cases in two-week period, of a 100,000 population, you will be considered to be a Red State, the worst you could have.

The danger, Mr. President, that we're confronting at this point in time is that our closest source market, which is the United States of America, where a large pocket of

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our nationals reside or probably gets stuck because they were on vacation or probably training as the case may be and want to come home, and of course, home is home. There is no place sweeter than home, so they want to return. But with returning, we have to be mindful of those inherent risks which I spoke about before.

So, Mr. President, what is before us at this point in time is to ensure that the risk is minimised. So, the protocol must be adhered to. And, as a result, if we are to successfully navigate this period as we're seeing happening elsewhere, more stringent measures have to be employed to protect this nation.

Mr. President, part of our Risk Reduction Strategy to mitigate the COVID-19 and given what PAHO would have said to us, we cannot make any mistakes and PAHO is constantly saying about the second wave and the second wave could be worse than the first. Yes. In the Caribbean, we just had over 1000 deaths within a few months. We have none in Grenada, thank God to that. But, if you're saying the second wave would be worse, we have to be concerned. And, what are the measures when you talk about stringent measures must be employed, what are we talking about? Only this morning, the news report came out yesterday from St. Vincent and the Grenadines our northern neighbor, they opened the borders to international flights and two AA flights, one on the 11th of July and the other on the 18th. And, of those two flights, they saw an increase of 19 new cases. What they had to do? Right away, extend on the mandatory curfew or quarantine I should say, the mandatory quarantine. So, persons coming in and nationals coming back home will have to be mandatory quarantined for five days at their own expense to ensure that the necessary tests and so forth is done to give them the sort of green light that they can go to their place of residence. Mr. President, so, what we're seeing here, part of your movement is restricted, but, are they doing this because they don't like their citizens? Of course, not. This is done to ensure that the entire population is protected. And, this has nothing to do with trying to be a dictator or to be draconian in measures. No. This is none of that. This is about protecting your State.

We have to, and as I've said in my opening, we have an opportunity to ensure that our legacy moment stands up and people know that we made good decisions to

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protecting this nation. For those who haven't done it, you need to go back and look at this Spanish Epidemic in 1918 and see what would have transpired. See what would have transpired during those times and what had to be done to protect people. Thankfully today, medicine has improved and we are better off, medically. But, yet we have not been able to find a vaccine. But, the world is waiting on a vaccine to help us. So our new normal would be walking around with a face mask, sanitisation constantly, six feet physical distancing, the thing that Grenada love to do before, hugging and kissing and so forth, you can't do this anymore except within your close family. Shaking hands, a part of our socialisation is no more. That's the new normal. So, those things have been taken away from us. Is it because somebody hates us? Of course, not. So, one has to put this into perspective now, Mr. President. Where do we want to go from here? And, we have some examples, as to where we should not go.

A few weeks ago in Miami, the curfew was lifted. And, we saw the beaches, thousands crowded the beaches because it's like, I could understand it, you've been caged for such a long time, and you get a little freedom, so let's just go and have a good time. Nobody denying your right to a good time, you know. You can have a good time, but still you have to maintain what is required in this new normal. So, covering your faces and wearing your mask and the such, but that wasn't practiced in Miami. And, before too long, Miami became the epicenter, took over from New York and lots of young people died. Lots and lots of young people contracted it because it was in their estimation, okay, to just go and live life as what we consider "Normal," but this is not normal times. And with not having normal times, we cannot behave as if we're in normal times. So, there must be measures. Some of it might be tough, but at the end of the day, it is for our good. So, we need to ensure that we do this. So, the COVID-19 Control Bill, Mr. President, is no way intended to take away "Civil liberty." It's no way intended to pressure people into a state where all their freedoms were taken away. It's no way, and it's no way intended to give the law enforcement that sort of authority and power to just bulldoze a property. No.

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Everything is in context, and we have a right to tell the people the truth. What is this about? Nothing is new. All that is within that Bill is rehashed from other pieces of legislation. What is important for us to recognise, that this is to protect us. So, I want to encourage our people, we have to guard against what we have seen, guard against those conspiracy theories. I've read so many on social media. I'm wondering, we have so many psychics around because everybody feels that they know exactly what is happening. So, yes, the New World Order and, yes, just name it. Nothing has been proven and founded on facts. But, I am not dismissing your theory, I'm just saying ensure it is done within the context of our time.

Also, Mr. President, we have to recognise that the intention of the Government with this Bill was noble, it was no way intended to take away civil liberty. The other thing that we need to recognise, Government's responsiveness to the outcry. The Government recognise that they made a mistake in that there should have been more consultation, and we withdraw to have those consultation. So, you have your concerns, you have an opportunity now to present them. **(Time bell rings)** But, the other thing that is... I presume that's the end or I have five minutes?

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes. Okay. So, I'll just speed up. So, the other thing that we need to look at is this Government has been characterised as a caring Government. And, we have demonstrated this throughout our history. Just the mere fact of establishing the stimulus package is an example of care. We didn't have to do this. But, this Government recognised that a lot of our people will go under, if they're not given support, businesses will go under as well. And, this Government made a conscious decision to support, that's the example of a caring Government. So, this is out of character to say that this Government is trying to be draconian and dictate, want to be a dictator. This is out of character. This is not us. So don't try to label this Government as that because it's totally out of character, and we can go back in history

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and see all the years of freedom, not at any point in time, this Government has ever locked up any journalist for doing his job. And we could come and see dictator because we could go into history and see who did it.

Mr. President, I will rest my case on this and just want to run quickly to say that under disaster management, our task is great. And, we are, we are in a period of COVID with all restrictions and protocol and then we have an above normal Hurricane Season. And, today I've just been looking at my colleagues in the Bahamas is on hurricane watch. Turks and Caicos is on a storm watch, it's a crazy season. Gonzalo was the seventh named storm for the season. On average the seventh named storm is in September, but we're in July and we had the seventh. So, we are in for a busy time. So, what we have been able to do, we've just been able to complete our shelter management inspection to ensure that one, we have adequate shelters to house our people should the need arise that we have to activate them. But, secondly, to ensure that we follow the COVID protocols. So, the six feet distancing, the isolation room and so forth. All those things have to be considered. And, we've been able to achieve this. The list will be published very shortly, but we have right now over 116 approved shelters, 82 primary, and between 34 and 40 secondary shelters. I'll go into this probably another time as to breaking down what primary and secondary is. I will just want to speak for a short while on some of the things that we do in the Ministry of Health.

As you know, the move right now is to SMART our hospitals. Princess Alice would have been SMART already, meaning that it will be able to withstand during a time of a hurricane and so. But, we're also moving right now to SMART our hospital, Princess Royal. So, preparing it to ensure that it will be able to withstand during times of hurricanes and so forth. But, importantly, on Island right now is a new X-ray Unit for Princess Royal. Carriacou, I'm sorry, Princess Alice has own already. So, the decentralisation of health throughout the country is on. And, this has always been the focus of this Government, to decentralise the provision of healthcare, our prime healthcare, build it up throughout the length and breadth of the country. So, you do not

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necessarily have to come to the General Hospital, but those services can be provided right in your community. And, I'm happy that we are at that stage.

Mr. President, move to Grenada Solid Waste which I am responsible for as the Minister. And, over the years, yes we, over the months from the... was the 7th or the 9th of March, the 9th of March, a fire started out on the Plant. And, I want to say here, fire started out, and we started immediately to try to treat this fire, to contain it, which engulfed within 24 hours, the 7.11 acre dump site and constantly between then and now, we have been working with our partners, the water, the Royal Grenada Police Force Fire Department to ensure that we contain the fire. NAWASA has been working with us as well. And to date, Mr. President, we have spent over 22, 204,000 sorry, 204,000 EC dollars to try to contain the fire and to ensure that we don't have a reoccurrence. But, hear where we're going to get that. Grenada has been able to secure funding from the CDB to do an upgrade or to build a new cell in the Perseverance Landfill. The objective is, when we are completed with that new cell, that old dump site that we have, will be condemned. So, the process is ongoing right now to ensure that we have this in place. COVID, of course, would have slowed us down, but the consultants who came from Italy doubled up on efforts, we increased more persons and right now we're back on track in terms of preparation of this new landfill.

I made a site visit and I was extremely happy to see, the Leaching Pond that has been developed. And, the Leaching Pond is really and truly to ensure that methane gas, which is a fuel itself, do not get trapped into the cell, but the water as it leach out into that Leaching Pond, and by sedimentation, and of course, natural elements, will dissipate this gas. We also know that methane gas is a greenhouse gas, and has been environmentally sound and Grenada is going to be the first Climate Smart City. We have to ensure that everything we do within this period supports that coining of being the environmental city or capital of the region. So, to trap the methane gas, and to get it to move away, and to protect the environment is extremely useful and powerful for us at this point in time, and, Mr. President, we will continue to do this.

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I want to again apologise to the residents in the vicinity of the landfill for your patience and tolerance with us, as we continue to fight to extinguish this fire. There are little pockets about 7% of smoldering still and the reason for us not being able to totally get it extinguished is because the fire is more than 10 meters down and the area is unstable to have the compactors to move to cover the area. Because the primary ingredient or material that is used to contain this is mold and the compactor will not be able to move on this unstable surface, it's dangerous. But we have been able to employ a new set of hoses and pump water from Clarke's Court Bay and been dumping into the dump site. And, Mr. President, I'm happy that we are almost to a point where we're going to see a complete extinction, to extinguish the entire fire on the landfill. When this is done, and as I said, with the new project that we're doing right now, it will ensure that when we finish, the current dump site, as I said would be abandoned, boulders and the necessities will be used to compact it and to ensure that the place will be protected. But, it's important to note also, Mr. President, that methane gas and the likes happening in our period, and interfering with landfill is not new **(Time bell rings)** it's not new. I just want to close with a few seconds, Mr. President, thanks. It's not new, but what we are doing right now in Grenada is the best method of controlling your landfill.

Mr. President, I want to reach out to our nationals and to say, yes, there are systems out there, weather systems that can impact the nation over this weekend and into next week. Please continue to follow the advisories as provided by NaDMA, the official source for disaster related information in Grenada and to make the right choice, make the correct decisions. And, always remember, this is the new normal, wear your masks, follow the protocols of physical distancing, and to ensure that we continue to remain safe and keep Grenada safe. Thank you. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Garraway. Senator Cathisha Williams, you have the floor. **(Inaudible comments)** Oh, sorry, there were questions. Sorry.

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Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Senator Garraway, thank you very much for this report. And, I will just start by asking, I know intention can be interpreted in any way, but because you spoke about intention in relation to the Bill, I have one question because you introduced it. Just to ask, is it right, because there was a declaration by the Prime Minister outside of the Bill, and therefore, I'm asking the question. Is it right to have Grenadians live under a permanent state of emergency until a vaccine has been found? That's one question.

I now go to the reopening of borders, under which you had discussed. And, given the importance as you have indicated of the challenges that we may face and I want to place on record again, our commendation of the Government's handling, the Government and people of Grenada handling of the challenges brought on by COVID, especially in its early period, we have placed that on record, and I want to place it on record again, we are all in this together. I want to make that point. It's important to know this. Yes, there are shortcomings. The question is how many test kits do we currently have, both rapid and PCR and designed for if there are challenges there? How many persons are trained to do contact tracing? How many persons are trained to do testing, that's the use of the kits? How many quarantine stations do we have and who are in charge of them for in terms of adherence and enforcement that is relative to the reopening? And, has the protocols been strictly enforced on everyone entering the State? That is specifically under the reopening.

And, if I'm permitted could I now ask some questions directly under NaDMA. In relation to NaDMA, we want to place on record, our commendation, certainly to ASP Sylvan, Superintendent, sorry, Sylvan McIntyre and his team for a job done once part of the COVID challenges were placed under NaDMA which we thought should have been done earlier, given their training, we want to place on record. Now that we are heading into... we are into the hurricane season, the question for Senator Garraway, how many shelters exist just in case we have a hurricane or an earthquake or volcano? I mean, I know we are in a hurricane, but I'm asking this generally. Based on the assessments that are normally done every year, following the hurricane season, have the

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recommendations been implemented in relation to the concerns or so that may have been raised by the different committees? I know assessments have been done? What is the budget allocated to Disaster Management?

And, last Saturday, the 25th, while we were expecting the possibility of a 45 to 60 miles per hour winds, given the fact that we need our people to be vigilant, was it a correct statement to be made, that it is business as usual? And, that thing may have been ascribed to, and that's my interpretation, I may admit probably, I could have called you, that's my understanding of the, Mr. President, one of the comments that may have been made during one of the press engagement. Because if we make mention of business as usual, could that imply to people that we are back to normal?

Are shelters in place in every district? Are all committees and some subcommittees fully staffed? What resources do district coordinators receive to work within their districts and lastly on this given importance of where we are especially having to coexist with the challenges of COVID, who is the deputy disaster manager, and these are the questions that I have for the Minister with that responsibility.

Mr. President: Senator Lewis, I personally lost count on the number of questions. Senator Garraway... but I am certain you would appreciate that from his Ministerial Statement, the number of questions, which have been posed, he may not necessarily have a lot of the data, so some of those questions may have to be put in writing and be sent to the Clerk to allow and afford a fair opportunity for an appropriate response to be given. I am making just a broad statement because there are quite a number of questions. In fact, I have personally lost count on the number. So Senator Garraway, I would give you an opportunity to respond if you may. But if you are not in a position to satisfactorily respond, you will indicate and Senator Lewis can then put those questions in... Senator Williams. One second Senator Williams have a Point of Order.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Thank you, Mr. President, my mike was on for some time now, but because I think of the current layout out of Parliament, you had

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some difficulty noticing me. Mr. President, I wish to rise on a Point of Order but I see that you have already outlined some of the issues that I wish to highlight but if I may proceed.

Mr. President: Yes, you shall.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: In relation to Senator Lewis' questions, I wish to draw the House's attention to Standing Order 17, specifically 17(1) which speaks to "Notice of Questions" and subsection 1 says that, **"a question shall not shall not be asked without Notice unless it is of an urgent character or relates to the Business of the day and the Senator has obtained the leave of the Senate to ask it."** Further, subsection (3) **"a Senator who desires an oral answer to a question shall mark his notice with an asterisk and such a question shall be put down on the next Sitting of the Senate after the expiration of six clear days from the giving of the notice."** Also lastly, Mr. President, I wish to direct the House's attention to Standing Order 19(5) which speaks to the "Manner of asking and answering questions, no more than three questions requiring an oral answer shall appear on the Order Paper in the name of the same Senator for the same day and any question in excess of this number shall not be called by the President but shall be answered as provided in subsection (6) of the Standing Order." And we can read what subsection (6) says, Mr. President, so all this is to say that I believe that the Member's method of asking questions and the content of his questions, as well as, the procedure for proffering these questions are inappropriate and out of order. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Williams. But as I said, I am quite aware but thank you for assisting the Chair. I'm quite aware of that. Now as I said before under Ministerial Statements if there's a Point of Clarification that one wishes on a matter but certainly if you formulate half a dozen questions, some which require a response of fact and remember I indicated in my prologue to the privilege that I referred to. As I said the

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purpose is not an ambush, the purpose is to... the Minister may have made a statement and some of the other Senators have asked for clarification which is quite easy. But if you file, I don't know how many questions, as I said I lost track and many of them require factual reservoir to answer them, because truthfulness is a standing expectation in the House and a Minister would want to be, not just only truthful but also factual. Because you know and he may require time so this is why I said to him, it's up to him to decide which of those questions you are in a position to answer comfortably. It's up to him, I can't decide for him and if there are any that he feels he can't, well then the Senator knows he has to commit them to paper and then at the appropriate question time. So thanks for your intervention on a Point of Order but Senator Garraway you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, in my opening statement I spoke to the importance in this period, our legacy moment to ensure that we are one, truthful, we are honest and we are very factual. And I will love to answer the questions of my colleague Senator but to ask me over 15 questions and to give factual data, I don't have them. So I will ask him to commit them in writing and we could provide that at some other time. I don't have to rehash what my fellow Senator Williams would have said but we have a flow, we have a platform and let's it as we are accustomed to do, to build and to develop and I would want to be a part of that so I would want to answer all your questions when they are provided and presented to me. Thank you, Mr. Chair... Mr. President.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes I commit, I appreciate that. Sure.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Mr. President: ...to be able to answer all these questions coming out of a Ministerial Statement.

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Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I totally accepted that although I may, if I may... there may be one or two given the urgency at where we are, but I take Senator Garraway's response, and I will work with this.

Mr. President: So we can move on. Senator Williams, the floor is yours.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to proffer a statement on the...

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. This is by no means an urgent question but because you would have spoken on SMART hospitals and I know there is currently a move for electronic medical records, I was wondering if you were, you will be able to give this this House an update as to where it stands now?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Is it resmart hospital or electronic medical?

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Well from my understanding Senator Garraway, electronic medical records will become part of the SMART hospital initiative.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. Chair, I will be happy to provide that information but I do not have the information here at this point in time so it will be given later. Probably at the next appropriate Sitting we will have it.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Mr. President: ...may so wish... you have 20 minutes, probably a little bit more depending on how your presentation goes.

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Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Thank you, Mr. President, that's 20 minutes, Mr. President, that's 20 minutes?

Mr. President: Yes, and you may get a little bit more depending on how...

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: I doubt I will require that much time but I'll try my best.

Mr. President: It's up to you.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Thank you, Mr. President, I rise to proffer a statement on the developments within the Ministries of Legal Affairs, Social Development, Housing and Community Development and Foreign Affairs. And, Mr. President, for the benefit for the record of Parliament records, I'm only the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However I have been instructed to represent the goings on in the Ministry of Legal Affairs and the Ministry of Social Development.

But, Mr. President, firstly, through you I will like to extend a warm and hearty welcome to Senator the Honourable Noel and Senator the Honourable St. Cyr to this distinguished Chamber. I can assure you Honourable Members that on 'This Side' of the House we are a warm and friendly and accommodating bunch and judging from your maiden statements, I anticipate and look forward to a spirited and stimulating engagement with you, as we go about the people's business of Lawmaking, so welcome again.

Mr. President, before I dive into the substantive part of my presentation, I must comment on the surreal nature of the time that we find ourselves living in. Over the past few months, Mr. President, we have been caught in what I can only describe as a dystopian dream which we could have never imagined would have materialised in our lifetimes. And what is unique about this experience is that it's not localized, this isn't

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something that is just happening to Grenada or the Caribbean it's a global experience. It's a global occurrence and that only operates to deepen our despair, our collective despair and heighten our apocalyptic fears, if I may say so, Mr. President. COVID-19 has really shaken our perception of reality and for some it may have shaken their faith. But, Mr. President, I believe that we can find hope and solace in the regenerative nature of human civilisation. Civilisations have risen and fallen, plagues have come and gone, wars have been fought and won, but in the end, human life and the human spirits persists, Mr. President. I am confident that Grenada and the world at large will survive this biological onslaughts and emerge stronger and better prepared to face any similar future threats.

We have thus far managed to do what many in the developed world have failed to do, prevent the unchecked spread of this virus and prevent the loss of life. This is not an easy feat to achieve, Mr. President, and as such we must recognise the exceptional job that this Government has done to curb the spread of this disease (**applause**) and safeguard the health and wellbeing of our people. Mr. President, thanks to the remarkable job that this Government has done and in particular, I will like to single out the Ministry of Health and the COVID Committee, we can have hope in the continuation of our species and the preservation of our way of life here in our little corner of the world. Mr. President, I mentioned the Ministry of Health and the COVID Committee, yes they have been at the helm of our efforts to fight COVID-19, but this has largely been a collaborative effort among all of the Ministries and one such a Ministry is the Ministry of Legal Affairs.

So I will now segue into the Ministry of Legal Affairs and the summary of the activities will be very brief, Mr. President. The Ministry has played a prominent role in the fight against COVID-19 by working closely with the Ministry of Health and the COVID Committee. The team at the Ministry of Legal Affairs including and especially the legal drafters must be acknowledged for their tireless work throughout this pandemic providing the legal regulatory framework for the fight against COVID. Every week we saw updated regulations, new regulations, these regulations has to be prepared,

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proofread and of course sanctioned by Cabinet. So, Mr. President, I believe that they deserve special recognition for that. Mr. President, while the Ministry has been occupied with the business of managing this crisis, there is a lot of other work going on in the ministry. In particular, I would like to single out three (3) Bills that are currently being prepared and have been the subject of many consultations and the lengthy consultation process; there's the National Sex Offenders Registry Bill which, Mr. President, I think you will be particularly interested in, then there are proposed amendments to the Criminal Code, the Evidence Act and other related legislation to help address the sexual or the prevalence of sexual criminal activity in Grenada and then of course there's the Cocoa and Nutmeg Bill, which is currently undergoing a series of consultations.

Now, Mr. President, notwithstanding what is being said and has been said in the media, consultation has been customary in the Ministry of Legal Affairs. It has been customary to engage stakeholders in the drafting and finalisation of Bills. However, Mr. President, we must acknowledge and the Ministry acknowledges that a lot more needs to be done. A lot more needs to be done to engage the public, a lot more needs to be done in public education not just on Bills but pertinent legal issues. And the recent discussions and protests regarding the roll out of the COVID-19 Control Act highlighted some of those deficiencies and the Ministry has recognised that and they have pledged to improve the infrastructure in the Ministry so that the public can become part of this discussion. To this end, Mr. President, the Ministry will endeavour to make use of the technology that's available to it. There is a website and the Ministry plans to make all Bills available on that website, it also plans to use the Government Information Service as a tool for public education, again not only on the Bills but put on pertinent legal issues.

And recently, we have seen the creation of an email address to receive comments and questions from the public regarding pending legislation. Now the Ministry plans to make this email address, Mr. President, not only specific to that particular Bill but to any future legislation, so this is something that is in the pipeline. Mr.

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President, the Ministry will continue to improve the legal framework in Grenada, it will continue to advise and support the Cabinet and especially in these unprecedented times, it will continue the fight against COVID-19 and the preservation of our health and safety in Grenada. And that concludes a very brief summary of the work that is happening in the Ministry of Legal Affairs. I will not endeavour to delve into any other matters which are not officially laid before this House.

Mr. President, now for the Ministry of Social Development Housing and Community Development. This Ministry performs an indispensable function in supporting the most vulnerable in our society and it's role has become even more crucial in addressing some of the deleterious social impacts of COVID-19 and the resulting lockdown period. During COVID-19, its still occurring, but during the lockdown period, the Ministry ensured the continuation of its major services acknowledging that at this time or at that time moreso than any other time people will be in need of those services and programmes. One such programme, Mr. President, is the SEED Programme which provides financial support to the poorest and most vulnerable citizens in Grenada. Beneficiaries of the SEED Programme were paid at home or at central points at the community level and this method recorded major success. But what it also did, Mr. President, was to highlight some of the issues that are faced by the recipients of those funds. For example a major problem is the withholding of funds by family members of some of the elder recipients of the SEED Program. So while the circumstances were unfortunate, there was some good to come out of the situation, in that the Ministry was able to evaluate its processes, identify problems in the procedures of the program and try to rectify these issues. So the Ministry has spared no efforts to ensure the safety and comfort of the elderly recipients, the Ministry covered the cost of transportation to and from all geriatric homes and continues to make SEED payments directly at the village level and at the homes of the recipients.

Mr. President, a total of 4,933 households from all constituencies received the payments over a period of two or three days. 1,560 households received their monthly grants through the Banks and Credit Unions around the Island. The House must be

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reminded, Mr. President, that the SEED Programme supports 6,493 families, not persons, families, throughout the Island. And that may not seem like a lot but in a population of just over 112,000 people, this is remarkable, Mr. President. This level of assistance to the people of this country is unprecedented. We are talking about \$300.00 to citizens from the Government purses without any strings, Mr. President. This is clearly a Government that cares about its people. **(Applause)**

Now, Mr. President, one of the unfortunate consequences of this COVID period is the deterioration of the mental health of persons and in some cases the exacerbation of existing mental conditions. And we have seen that manifested in a number of suicide cases unfortunately. The Ministry has recognised this as a pressing issue especially in this period and therefore it has ensured continuous access to counselling services. In particular, the public was able to access counselling hotline that operated 24-hours a day during this period. The Counselling Unit at the Ministry provided support to persons in quarantine, churches, workers in the Public and Private Sectors and persons with mental health challenges. To date, Mr. President, the Unit has made over 1,000 psychosocial interventions, 1,000, Mr. President. Who knows how many suicides we have prevented by administering this assistance?

Mr. President, another unfortunate consequence of this COVID period is the increase in the frequency and the intensity of cases of domestic violence and sexual abuse, domestic violence and sexual abuse. Recognising that, Mr. President, because people have been forced in situations where they are spending inordinate amounts of time with their partners, with their significant others, being unable to leave their houses, being unable to separate and of course that would have created the conditions for friction and in some cases unfortunately, instances of domestic violence. So therefore it was important, it was imperative for the Ministry to make the services of the gender based violence unit and the Special Victims Unit available throughout the COVID period and these services continue to remain available.

Now while I have dealt specifically with the challenges that the Ministry has faced, specific to COVID, it must be noted that the usual business of the Ministry

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continues and one of the pillars of the Ministry is its Housing Programme. The Ministry has continued to increase the housing stock in Grenada, it has continued a number of the housing projects throughout the country, a number of them are scheduled for early completion and a programme which I think should be lauded and should be recognised, Mr. President, is the National Bathroom Assistance Programme. And this programme aims eradicate the use of pit toilets throughout Grenada, Mr President. It focuses primarily on vulnerable households who cannot afford indoor facilities, including the lone elderly, the disabled and low-income families. And in life we take the simple things for granted, we take using indoor facilities for granted but for many people in this country that is not their reality but this is something that's important in preserving people's dignity and making them feel like valuable participants in this human experiment. I think I got a bit poetic there, Mr. President.

So the Ministry of Social Development will like to recognise and thank it's staff who worked throughout the lockdown, whether it's at home, whether it's in the communities themselves. These people never got a break, never got time off, they were on the ground everyday lending valuable assistance to the people of Grenada, Mr. President. **(Applause)** The Ministry will also like to recognise the general contributions from the Private Sector, NGO's and persons in the diaspora. We will like to truly thank them for their voluntarism and for their spirit of giving, Mr. President. And with that, I will just conclude the Ministry of Social Development component of my presentation and I move to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs lastly.

Mr. President, since the start of the pandemic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through friendly Governments and its offices abroad has been making efforts to provide support to the diaspora as well as mobilise resources aimed at assisting the central Government in its fight against the virus. If you will allow me, Mr. President, to just list briefly some of the support that we have been receiving from our friendly Governments; firstly the People's Republic of China, the following were donated by the Central Government, the Chinese Embassy in Grenada, Provincial Governments, and the Private Sector. And, these items are as follows: 40,500 face masks, 500 personal

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protective equipment (PPEs), 100 infrared thermometers, 500 medical protective goggles, 500 disposable surgical gloves, 500 medical isolation shoes, 1,536 PCR test kits, one PCR machine, and 6,800 rapid test kits, all from the Government and People of the People's Republic of China.

Mr. President, we also would like to acknowledge the assistance received from our friends in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. They donated to us 3,000 rapid test kits. From the Government of Sri Lanka we received 15 PPE suits.

And, now I would like to specifically highlight the work done by some of our offices. The Embassy of Grenada to the People's Republic of China, since the outbreak of the virus, has been relentless in their efforts to ensure the protection of Grenadians currently residing in China. Despite their lack of funding, Mr. President, the Embassy has managed to do the following: the Embassy distributed 250 N95 masks, as well as, hundreds of latex gloves to students in China on two separate occasions. They also provided direct funding to these students. In fact the Embassy sent students 500 RMB on a biweekly basis. Additionally, when necessary the Embassy provided students in other parts of China, funds to ensure their well-being. In addition to supporting students in China, the Embassy in China also sent supplies to Grenada. They provided 16,000 surgical grade masks, 100 medical gowns, 15 medical goggles, and 1,500 viral swabs. Mr. President, I think it's important to highlight that even though we cannot ever provide to China the assistance that they provide to us on the same level; in a gesture of goodwill, the Grenada Embassy in Beijing mobilised resources and donated a quantity of 5,000 masks to the Government of the People's Republic of China during the heights of the pandemic in China. **(Applause)** Mr. President, I think it's important that we highlight this because, yes, we may not be able to give our support to the extent that we want to, but it's important to show our neighbours, our friends, in the diplomatic arena that we are also willing to assist in any way that we can and we deeply appreciate the assistance that they continue to give us, whether we are in a crisis situation or not. **(Applause)**

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Mr. President, continuing with the assistance provided by our foreign offices, the High Commission of Grenada in the United Kingdom donated \$18,500, to the COVID Relief Fund. The High Commissioner was also instrumental in facilitating the repatriation of Grenadian nationals, including students, stranded in the UK, back to Grenada.

Further, the Consulate in Dubai donated \$10,000 US to the COVID Relief Fund. The Mission to the United States, Mr. President, facilitated and negotiated the following donation of supplies: 5,500 surgical and N95 masks, 2,000 surgical disposable gloves, 90 oxygen masks, 10 oxygen masks for children, and 100 units of medical accessories for oxygen masks. The Consulate General of Grenada in Toronto donated 30 gallons of sanitising fluid which was handed over by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Minister of Transport for the Sanitisation Programme for the Transport Sector. The Consulate General of Grenada in Miami donated 5,000 masks, and the Embassy of Grenada to the United States, this Embassy played an instrumental role in negotiating a repatriation flight from New York.

It would be remiss of me, Mr. President, not to mention the Government and people of Cuba for their internationalism, for their sacrifice, and the goodwill that they have shown, not only to us in the Caribbean, but nations throughout the world. We were fortunate to benefit from their provision of nursing personnel to Grenada to help combat COVID-19. And really, the people of Cuba have been on a crusade providing this help to nations throughout the world. I think that they are being considered for a Nobel Prize in medicine and certain elements are trying to characterise that as something nefarious for some reason. There have been indications that this country is somehow involved in the nefarious act of human trafficking by providing medical personnel to help people, which is completely absurd, Mr. President. So, I hope that Cuba will seriously be considered for that Nobel Prize (**applause**) and I know that the Government of Grenada will not hesitate to throw our support behind their bid, (I don't know if it's a 'bid') but in support of their receipt of that prize.

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Mr. President, having regard to the current economic challenges occasioned by COVID-19 and the decline in Government revenues, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is committed to mobilising resources to assist Government's Economic Programme. Particularly, our Missions to the European Union in Brussels and United Nations in New York are working with officials at the Ministry of Finance to ensure that Grenada gains access to the COVID related financing packages currently available through various agencies.

Mr. President, this sums up in a nutshell some of the work specifically related to our response to COVID-19 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Those were only three Ministries that I have reported on. My colleagues have proffered reports on the other Ministries, and of course, the Leader of Government's Business is next. But, what is common in all of our presentations, the common thread is the connectivity of the Ministries and the collaborative effort of those Ministries working together to ensure that we come out of this crisis alive and well and safe, Mr. President. That is the ethos of this Government. That has always been the intention of this Government, regardless of what other people like to promulgate in the media, it is evident in all the programmes that we have undertaken, it is evident in our response to COVID, it is evident in the results, Mr. President. No death, no COVID related death in Grenada, Mr. President. **(Applause)** So, I think it is reaching to suggest that this Government has anything but the best interests of its people at heart. And, this is where I close my presentation. Mr. President, thank you.

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

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I want to once again congratulate, Senator Williams on her presentation. And, through you, Mr. President, just permit me just to raise that it was not my intention, and it will not be my intention, to question anyone's presentation. But, out of a duty of clarity, I'm asking this question, and to also ensure that whatever responsibility, or position, or rank

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is given to anyone is properly noted in this House. So, through you, Mr. President, my dear comrade, my question is designed to ensure that you have been properly afforded that responsibility which you carry.

In the Minutes, I am recognising, through you, Mr. President, that Senator Williams is being recorded as a Member... because Senator Williams is presented as... for my clarification, I'm seeking this, please. Should it be recorded differently? I don't know, I really do not know. So, could a Member present a Ministerial Statement or as a Parliamentary Secretary, and if this is the case should the Senator be recorded as Parliamentary Secretary. I sat there, I didn't want to do it while the Senator was speaking, so I allowed the Senator to finish and then ask the question, so that she would be properly recorded.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: If I could respond to that, Mr. President. As the Parliamentary Secretary, they are permitted to be able to present Ministerial Statements, so what she has presented is proper and correct within the statutes of the Senate.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Leader of Government's Business, but bear with me, through you, Mr. President, as I further develop my question. In other words...

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Mr. President: It is related to her designation because these designations are done through the Governor-General's Office. So you were proffering the question on what basis?

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: No.

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Mr. President: The opportunity is to question the report that any person with the Ministerial responsibility, and she's the Parliamentary Secretary, so she's entitled to make a Ministerial Statement. So, your question is on what? The content of what she said or is it on her designation? If it's on her designation then maybe you may wish to write the Governor-General's Office because this appointment has been made through the Governor-General's Office. So, is it a question on her Ministerial Statement?

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: No, it was in relation to how... from my understanding, I was asking, not to do with her appointment. I would never question this. In relation to how the other Senators are represented here as Minister for this, Minister for that, and then Members and I was just asking, just in terms of proper recording of the Minutes, would it be, well, I'm not sure if it's proper or prudent.

Mr. President: Well, we are all Members of the House.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Ok, ok.

Mr. President: Anyone sitting here is a Senator, is a Member of the House. I'm kind of lost.

(The Ag. Clerk and the President conversed privately)

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Yes, so am I correct, therefore in relation to my question? Ok, I was not asking the... I could have asked that question during the Senator's presentation, but I did not want to interrupt her, so I allowed...

Mr. President: What I am trying to get to is that...

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Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: How should she, sorry not she, how Senator Williams should be recorded in the Minutes, so I backed up...

Mr. President: She's a Parliamentary Secretary.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President, but it was just not recorded there.

Mr. President: Yes, the Clerk has pointed out there was an error.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much. That's what I was raising, in that context.

Mr. President: Any other questions? Honourable Members, this is how I think we should proceed. Lunch is available, but I would prefer if we work through the proceedings and then have lunch, so we don't have to resume. Rather than to take a break now, rather than stop the flow of things. So, I am hopeful that we can wrap up by about 1:30, 2 o'clock, latest, and then we just break and have lunch. Are there any serious objections to this? If not, I would suggest rather than to break for an hour and then come back in 45 minutes.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Agreed.

(Senators agreed with the President's request)

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Mr. President: Proceed.

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Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Ok, thank you, Mr. President. I wish to beg your indulgence, I may go beyond the 20-minutes that have been designated to us. In addition to Ministerial Statements on Climate Resilience, Fisheries, Education and Trade, which I'll cover, I do want to pick up on the presentation by Senator Garraway on the COVID Control Bill, so a few extra minutes would be appreciated.

Before I start and before I welcome the new Members on the "Other Side", I once again I want to give recognition to the outgoing Senators and the significant contribution that they made to this House during their time. Glynis Roberts, Ron Redhead, and Kerryne James and I was particularly touched, Mr. President, by her letter to you and your response and the humility that she showed in that correspondence and I think we all saw how she grew during her time in the House and I'm sure we will see her again in some other fora as we move forward.

But, in welcoming the new Senators, Senator Noel and Senator St. Cyr, it was encouraging to hear the passion, the vision they both share for the development of this great nation of ours. Some of the observations that they made, some of the frustrations, some of the things that are broken and needs to be fixed, we see too. And, their desire to make a difference, their desire to move our developmental agenda forward is certainly shared and resonates with all of us on "This Side" and the Government as a whole. And, in identifying those many shortcomings, it's also important to remember and appreciate how this great nation of ours has developed positively over the last 20-years or so. We have seen significant development during this time, but, of course, there is still a lot further for us to go, a lot more needs to be done. Their contributions and their willingness to serve and Senator St. Cyr stated her passion for service, and Senator Noel, his progressive thinking, are all part of what is needed to move our nation forward. So, we welcome you and welcome your contributions to the process.

Mr. President, I wish to just pick up on Senator Garraway's remarks regarding the withdrawal of the COVID Control Bill. I think we all have a deeper discussion when we go through the Carnival Cancellation Bill in terms of all of the threats and the rationale behind the presentation of that Bill. I think it's just important to remind ourselves when

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we were here in April, just three short or long months ago, time seems to take on its own dynamic in this very strange period, but when we came to this House to present the COVID Stimulus Package, and the COVID Emergency Measures back then, there were 2 million infectious cases globally, and 145,000 deaths. That was just 3 months ago. Three months on, that's now 17 million people infected globally and close to 665,000 deaths, tremendous increase in terms of the spread of this deadly virus. And, when we look at what's happening in the US and in the UK, our 2 principal sources are visitors to our shores. The US is now lead to the world as being the epicenter for the virus right now with 4.4 million infections, and 150 deaths to date and that number is rising. Sorry, yes 150,000 deaths. In the UK is now the 9th highest in terms of infections, globally, with over 300,000 infected and 46,000 deaths. So, we have seen, and we're seeing it, day in and day out, the chaos that has been created in these developed countries. Countries which have infinitely more resources than we do here in Grenada, and how, with all of those resources, they are completely overwhelmed by this deadly virus. Their health services are crippled, they have equipment shortages, health workers overstretched, exhausted, and the bodies are piling up, Mr. President.

So, it is through discipline, the measures put in place by this Government and the national sacrifices that have been made for all, have enabled us to manage this threat, these risks, as well as we have to date. And, to date, we've only had 24 confirmed cases, all of those cases imported to our shores, 0 deaths so far, and no community spread.

Mr. President, when we initially shut down and we implemented the state of emergency and those emergency measures, the threats outside, three months ago, that threat outside is far less than it is today when we start looking at the figures, the increasing rate of infection outside. And, it's through the successful measures that we have implemented over this time that we are now in a position where locally, we're able to ease some of those measures that were enforced.

Mr. President, in these unprecedented times, times where there is no playbook in terms of how we manage this global crisis that we are in, Grenada has been applauded

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internationally for its management of this pandemic. But, Mr. President, this is not the end game, we haven't reached a landing point. Some of us think that because we have no cases as things stand now, no active cases, that we can afford to let our guard down. As we open up our borders, as many other countries are doing and we grapple with this challenge of how do we keep our people safe, but at the same time, have some semblance of economic activity to address the economic pandemic that the world is now facing. Also, as we open up our borders the threats and the risks that are around us, Mr. President, those risks and those threats are our threats and threaten the safety and security of our people.

So, Mr. President, if we do not remain alert, if we do not take all of the necessary measures to continue to protect our people, all of the sacrifices that we have made in the past 3-4 months would all have been in vain. The chaos, the absolute chaos that we are seeing on our television screens of the developed countries with significant resources, those bodies piling up, that death count, that will be the scenario that will play out right here on our shores.

Mr. President, as we know the virus does not respect age, it does not respect gender, does not respect our religion, our wealth, our political affiliations. Mr. President, we are all at risk. Mr. President, we are putting in place all of the necessary measures to manage these risks. Senator Garraway and Senator Cox went through that in terms of creating this bubble. So, whether it is pre-arrival testing, screening on entry, quarantining, tracing and monitoring, all of the necessary measures to protect our borders and people continue. Our challenge is how do we respond quickly and effectively to any infectious outbreaks in the event that these protocols, as stringent as they are, in the event that any of those protocols fail. These protocols are not foolproof.

So, when we look at the islands that have opened up early here within the region, the Bahamas and Antigua, they've had to shut down very quickly as these outbreaks reoccur. When we look at other parts of the world that's now talking about a second wave, they flattened the curve, they thought they had this under control, and now they're seeing a recurrence of the virus.

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It's within this context, Mr. President, that the COVID Control Bill was drafted. The need for us to have those measures in place, the legislation in place which will enable us to respond quickly and effectively in the event of an outbreak. And, those outbreaks, Mr. President, the reality of it, will happen. So, those of us who think that this, we have reached a landing point, are sorely mistaken, the worst, the worst is still to come. So, Mr. President, the protection of our people, the control of this deadly virus the need to protect our people was the intent of that Bill. There are no conspiracy theories attached to this, there are no hidden agendas associated with this legislation. We've heard that agenda is a dictatorship, creation of a police state and position of martial law. Mr. President, these concepts are so divorced from who we are, what we are, where we are, Mr. President. The words within the Bill were limited, specifically limited to containing the Coronavirus, nothing more, Mr. President. There were claims that the draft legislation is unconstitutional. Mr. President, the Bill contained exactly the same provisions, exactly the same provisions that existed in the... that currently exists in the regulations. There were statements that it's a permanent state of emergency that was being imposed, that is false. There is nothing permanent about it at all, it was sunset legislation, it had a time limit of one year and it could be repealed at any point within that year. The rationale for that time period was that we know the virus is here for the immediate future at least. And it needed to be there, in place, for sufficient time for conditions and the threat to reduce.

We heard statements that the legislation is unnecessary. Why do we need such legislation when we have no active cases in Grenada? We are COVID free. As I said, Mr. President, the worst is still ahead of us, just because we are COVID free today does not mean that there will not be an outbreak tomorrow. We heard about the extra powers and those extra powers were excessive but once again, Mr. President, the powers within that draft Bill were no more than what exist today in the current regulations. The technical rationale for pulling this... for drafting this Bill was to pull all of these different provisions, either in the Quarantine or in the Emergency Powers Laws, the Public Health Act, to pull them under a single umbrella, a single piece of legislation

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that could be more effectively administered and bring some level of certainty in terms of the legal approach to it. It was a more elegant solution from a legal perspective.

Mr. President, when you consider the provisions in the draft legislation, the provisions that exist within the regulations are identical, virtually identical. And those emergency measures already are currently enforced for the past 3 months. There has been no abuse of those powers, Mr. President. If during this period, the management of these situations with these extensive powers have been implemented fairly, justly, appropriately and has gotten us to where we are now, where technically we are Covid free, we have achieved what we need to achieve to this point. Why will we throw that all away, Mr. President? Why would we then change our approach? So, Mr. President, I come back and say the intent of this legislation is simply to protect our people. Where we do deserve criticism, where we have made a mistake and we have taken full responsibility for this, is in not consulting extensively enough, not ventilating the draft legislation, not running through, not only the content but the context of this legislation with the public in advance. That, I believe, was our error, and we have taken full responsibility for that through the withdrawal of the Bill. If we could turn back time which we can't, but if we could turn back time, I genuinely believe that with the right ventilation and appropriate consultation with all stakeholders whether it's the legal fraternity, the churches, civil society, the Unions, the public at large, and it was explained why we are doing it and the rationale for doing it, I don't believe we would be in the position we are in today. So, Mr. President, we have shot ourselves in the foot and we have taken responsibility, we will go back and consult.

And that consultation will be extensive and whether in soliciting input, whether we have to amend, modify, replace, we will do so. So if that draft Bill, if it was too long or it's too short, whether it's too broad, too narrow, too straight, too strong, too weak, too high, too low, we will amend after consultation. As long, Mr. President, as long as that final mechanism, legal mechanism however it looks achieves the goal that we need to achieve which is the protection, the health and safety of every man, woman and child in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, it will be a framework that stakeholders are

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comfortable with and addresses the enormous challenge that we have. So, Mr. President, I don't believe it is too late.

Mr. President, our politicians are not a threat, our police are not the threat, our health workers are not the threat. The deadly threat that we face is COVID-19, that is where we should be channelling our national thought and our national efforts, it's in addressing that threat. And it's only with the unity as we stand shoulder to shoulder to be our brother's keeper in this and we put politics aside. Let us put politics aside, where we have a chance at protecting those that we love most. So, Mr. President, the next step will be those extensive consultations **(bell ring)** and out of that we hope we will have a framework that will provide the protections that we require.

So, Mr. President, I now will indulge in requesting some more time. So I'll now go to the Ministerial Statements. First, the Ministry I am substantively responsible for, Climate Resilience and I will speak to the Fisheries. So the first update, Mr. President, is the Climate Smart Cities Programme, this is the project that is funded by the Green Climate Fund with a technical support from New York University. New York University is in a position, they are completing their final draft of their proposal which will establish St. George's as the first Climate Resilient and Smart City in the region. It will be submitted to Government for its final approval and then onwards submission to the GCF and seeking funding proposals and the projects. And some of the projects are contained within the Smart Cities Programme is the protection of the Carenage from sea level rise. Urban Development Plan for the St. George area addressing some chronic issues such as traffic congestion and urban sprawl and how we protect some of our most vulnerable communities within the area.

Addressing the vulnerabilities of our southern corridor between town and the airport, again looking at the road system, looking at issues of congestion and traffic flows. Addressing the vulnerabilities of Grand Anse Beach, how do we protect that using nature based solutions against sea level rise and erosion. Sewerage system for the south of the country, looking at how we can protect Maurice Bishop International Airport, the runway is virtually at sea level, vulnerable to erosion and sea level rise. The

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Grenville Coastal Road, highly vulnerable to sea level rise, solutions to address those vulnerabilities and general capacity building. Climate change, Mr. President, is here to stay. This is our new normal, so building capacity as a nation to address the challenges that we are faced with climate change moving forward.

So at the end of this prefeasability stage, we will be applying not just to the Green Climate Fund but other funding organisations for the resources for the implementation of this programme. We have sourced additional support from the World Bank who will be doing some of the financial analysis, building the business cases, identifying some of the funding sources that will move the project forward and then also working with the IMF as we're wrapping the Climate Smart City Programmed into their disaster resilient strategy which is looking at the macro fiscal elements. How will we absorb the hundreds of millions of dollars that's required to implement such a project? How will that be absorbed into our fiscal management framework?

And at the end of this, we had actually planned with the IMF, it should be taking place around this time if it wasn't for COVID but a Donor Conference to bring investors, international donors, international development partners to Grenada looking at how the forward financing of this programme can be achieved. But in this COVID environment, we are having to rethink how that is done, whether it is a virtual means or whether we postpone it until such time as we are able to do something more substantive.

Mr. President, in discussions with the international community, the talk out there is that in this Covid Stimulus Post Covid world, the talk internationally is how do they build back better after this pandemic? Looking at all of our vulnerabilities, not just social, health, not just our economic vulnerabilities but also our physical vulnerabilities and we've never been at a time in recent history when all of those vulnerabilities are so exposed as we move thorough this COVID period. So the international community consistently speaks of opportunities of harnessing investment for a sustainable long term development in areas such as renewable energy, in terms of climate smart infrastructure and nature based solutions and how those investments in addition to addressing climate change and other vulnerabilities could also lead to green and blue

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jobs and economic stimulation. So there are opportunities out there. The challenge for us especially in this difficult period, is how do we turn those words, those beautiful words into real action in terms of capacity building and the financing that we need to fulfill our ambitious plans.

Fisheries Division, Mr. President, just a couple of things. We have requested support from the Government of Japan and we're in the final stages... proposal stages for accessing a 2 million US dollar grant fund specifically for Grenada for the long-term management of sargassum. So we're looking at the the supply of booms, nets, tugs, badges, beach raking equipment that will assist us in the management of sargassum which is a plague to the entire Caribbean region. And I don't know if you have been noticing but we are seeing this year for the first time, we're seeing these sargassum migrating along or western coast. We're used to seeing it on the eastern coast, now we're seeing it on the western coast. So some challenges ahead but as I said we're in discussion with regards to longer-term assistance there.

Moving on to the Ministry of Education, Education System has been seriously challenged during this period. How do we continue during this lockdown period, with stay home orders, how are we able to continue the education and constructive occupation of our children? And I want to commend the principals, teachers, parents, students for their cooperation, their patience during this new normal period and in ensuring that our school kids are able to still receive a quality education. I just want to highlight a couple of areas. The first is the area of CPEA, so far our school children transitioning from Primary to Secondary School, it was viewed that the CPEA exam this year would not have been appropriate, would not have been from a health standpoint, the safe thing to do. So instead a formula was derived by which school children were assessed based on their CPEA SBAs and their MCT results to do an objective assessment. And out of the 1,872 students who were assessed, 1,743 attained a pass grade to transition onto Secondary School. The 128 students retained would be receiving one-on-one support through the Ministry to determine their best path forward, to ensure that no child is left behind.

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Also the successful reopening of schools, phase 1 of reopening of Secondary Schools for Form 5 students to enable them to prepare and sit their CSEC Exams. And again having to applaud and teachers, parents and principals for the work that went into that and what we've actually found in this challenging period, has forced us to actually do many of the things that we've been talking about doing for so many years, with regards to E-Learning and the use of technology in the delivery of education services. So whether it is the launch of Apps which had thousands of 20,000 practice questions for students done through a computer app. The launch of the MStar education platform, platform for E-Learning, so the complete CXC Syllabus is available on that platform enabling online electronic learning.

With Support from LIME and DIGICEL during this period to zero rate their service charges so that those families at home, schools, were not charged for the broadband access used during this education period. The training of over 2,000 teachers to support students in E-learning and E-Learning support for parents, to again assist them during this time. So the next phase, that was phase one of school opening. The strategy moving forward with the opening of all schools in the new school term, a proposal will be put to Cabinet within the next week or two to look at the safest and most effective way of achieving that. But we believe it will be based on a hybrid system where some classes will resume, others will be maintained online so that the the social distancing, physical distancing that's required within the classrooms can be observed.

Laptops and tablets for teachers and students for Secondary School, 65% of the volume of laptops and tablets that are required have already been delivered. The remaining 35% have been held up due to transportation issues affected by international restrictions but by the start of the new school term, we will have the full complement for Secondary Schools, Primary Schools will follow. And again what we will see throughout the course of the 2020, 2021 term is a blended approach of traditional physical books and tablets and laptops. So we're moving, we're removing our whole education system has moved, Mr. President, into the 21st Century.

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School infrastructures, very quickly 50 million dollars earmarked for the development and construction of new schools, repairs to existing schools, upgrades of existing schools and so whether that is PBC 4.5 million upgrade, work started 2 months ago. Whether it's a Grenada SDA, 7 million dollars, work started this month; Bishops College in Carriacou 10.5 million dollars, work is expected to start in August and construction of other schools, repairs to many more. So Government's commitment, on-going commitment, not only in supporting our teachers and improving a teacher learning experience with our students but also the physical infrastructure and significant improvements. And we have never seen these unprecedented levels of investment in our school infrastructure.

Finally, Mr. President, I just want to touch on the Ministry of Trade and hone in on one specific area which is Small Business Development Fund. It recognises a significant contribution micro and small businesses make to our economy. Of the 4,400 registered businesses, 90% of those are micro or small businesses. In the 2020 Budget, 5 million dollars was allocated to that Small Business Development Loan which was supporting businesses in the area whether it's fishing, agriculture, tourism, retail. But as part of the COVID Stimulus Package, an additional 5 million dollars has been invested in that area and of that for this next tranche, the terms are far more favorable than before with the value of unsecured loans increasing from \$7,000 for an individual loan up to \$10,000 without security, a loan ceiling increased \$20,000 to \$40,000 and an interest rate reduction from 6% to 3%. And, Mr. President, at this time where businesses, especially our small businesses require support, support they're not receiving from Commercial Banks, from Credit Unions because their risk adversity, the boost to whether it's supporting existing businesses in these difficult times or providing an opportunity for our young entrepreneurs to start doing for themselves.

So, Mr. President, I wish to conclude my Ministerial Statement, and here I just wish to pick up on the comment from Senator Lewis, again about Government's Stimulus Package and I want to underscore the comment, the response from Senator Cox. Instead of applauding the Government for the significant financial support to those

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most vulnerable of our businesses, sectors and specifically our workers, I was surprised at the approach taken and the lack of recognition of the level of due diligence, the accountability, the checks and balances that exist within the Ministry of Finance to identify errors, mistakes whatever they were and ensure the public funds are appropriately used. And I wish to close on that note, Mr. President. Thank you.
(Applause)

Mr. President: Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. And once again thanks to the Leader of Government's Business. I have basically two questions under the Minister's portfolio; is there... it has to do with the marine protected areas, is there any marine protected rangers... marine protected area rangers or enforcement taking place in the MPAs on mainland Grenada? And secondly, is there an MPA manager and communications officer?

Mr. President: Senator Lewis, you will have to direct that question. His Ministerial Statement did not... to the best of my recollection, touch on any matter concerning MPAs. So that question, because this would be a question arising from his Ministerial Statement, you would have to commit this to paper and send it to the Clerk.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, also being respectful of the time if I could propose that we suspend the other matters on the Order Paper and go straight to the Carnival Cancellation Bill, which I think is the most critical. We can pick up the others when we readjourn on Wednesday.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

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Mr. President: So the rest of the Order Paper stand adjourned... suspended to the resumption of the Senate on Wednesday next week. But before you proceed, Senator Stiell, I would wish for us to as the Senate and as an example of the nations sentiments, for us to stand in a 2-minute moment of silence in recognition of the life and times of a number of persons. Beginning first and foremost with Parliamentarians, I wish for us to pay our respects, and to convey through the office of the President, the sentiments of profound condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of the late Owen Arthur, former Prime Minister of Barbados who passed away rather untimely. He was the longest serving once sitting Prime Minister. He took office on September 6, 1994 and served his three successive terms until the 15th of January, 2008. Owen Arthur has been a distinguished Caribbean leader, a very celebrated and worked tirelessly for Caribbean integration. Only recently, he played an important role in attempting to resolve the issues involved in the Guyana elections when he headed the Commonwealth Observer Mission to Guyana. I have very good and lasting memories of him. I have had the opportunity to work with him on many occasions and the deep humanism of this individual as seen by my experience with him, when several years ago, I can't remember exactly now the year, I was trying to research it, but couldn't in the time I've done so, was an occasion when LIAT and it is strange how events unfold because Owen Arthur was the current Chairman of LIAT in its most critical difficulty. But at the time when LIAT could not pay wages during a Christmas period in December a few years ago, as Head of the LIAT Group of Unions, I initiated a meeting with LIAT management and the then Chairman of the Board, Dr. Holder, and we all traveled to Barbados for an urgent meeting. And, when we did the scribe I laid out the purpose of the meeting, Owen Arthur said to me, he said **“Senator, let me say something before we take our seats. I will not allow Caribbean workers as Caribbean people to face a Christmas without income. So while, the company doesn't have the money to pay, that money I will ensure comes from the Barbados Treasury. We will pay that and then LIAT will sort me out.”** And, he immediately called his Ministry of

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Finance and the meeting ended with a commitment to pay, and indeed that Christmas, LIAT workers received their wages. Such was the kind of person that Owen Arthur was.

I want to come home a bit and to ask that we send our collective condolences and salute the memory of an outstanding Grenadian woman. In fact, the work of Lauret Clarkson, her life's work as a nurse, we are reaping the benefits of it today. And, as we recognised how successful we have been so far in dealing with COVID, the fingerprints of sister Clarkson is on that achievement because many of the nurses, she was a nursing tutor. She held many significant positions in the field of nursing. She was President of the Grenada Nursing Association, and at another occasion became President of the Caribbean Nursing Association. She held yet another important presidency, she was President of the Public Workers' Union, came into that presidency, I think sometime in 1989, and happy am I to have in my life, walked along the journey with her as a celebrated Trade Unionist. In fact, the longest Public Worker's Union strike to take place in the history of this country took place under her stewardship, when we collectively led Public Workers then. We held a strike that lasted eight (8) days, and what is most noteworthy about that strike, we lost not a single day's pay and that strike registered one of the largest blocks of increases ever paid to public servants or public workers in the entire history of Grenada going back to colonial times.

So, sister Lauret Clarkson, today the Senate wants to pay its deepest respect to you and to convey our sentiments and condolences to your surviving children, your husband, and your other relatives and close friends, and to the Trade Union community who have lost, in fact, a stalwart. As I say, I was privileged to be able to walk along the road with her and I am profoundly moved by that.

I want to move now to Guyana and pay tribute again and condolences to yet another outstanding Caribbean person. A long-standing member of the Guyana Parliament, in fact, he died while being a Member of Parliament. He led Guyana's largest trade union, Guyana Agricultural and General Workers' Union, GAWU. He had been President for the better part of 30 or so years. Normally in the Trade Union

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business, we would refer to him as a comrade and he was a Parliamentarian, Comrade Komal Chand.

I first met Komal in the Soviet Union in 1980, and since then our friendship has grown over time. He had been a dedicated trade unionist, fighting the cause of workers, fell ill, and unfortunately died in Cuba on the 8th of April. We had real difficulty in getting his body repatriated from Cuba given the COVID conditions, but that repatriation took place last week. And again, I want to use the opportunity to convey to his family, his other comrades in arms, and comrades in the Trade Union Movement here, our deepest and most profound respects. And, that moment of silence that we will stand for will also be in his name.

Coming a bit back now locally, I wish Honourable Members to include in this moment of silence that we would stand, a great Grenadian cultural icon, the late David 'Peck' Edwards, who has contributed so much to what has made Grenada unique, what has given Grenada its cultural characteristics in the field of the steel pan and steel orchestra in the arts. Peck had been an outstanding Ambassador, a dedicated panist, and one who gave all of his life to the steel band movement and the steel orchestra in Grenada. I want to take this opportunity, as we stand, to pay homage and to recognise the contributions that he has made in the cultural field.

I also want to recognise, Mr. Andrew Stewart, a former national boxer of Grenada who, unfortunately, lost his life due to COVID in the United States. He made Grenada proud by his distinguished contributions in the field of boxing. He was an outstanding boxer. It's my understanding that he was probably one of the beneficiaries of training from Cuba. Again, I want to use this opportunity to convey to his family, his surviving relatives, his closest friends, and his community, the most profound condolences as we salute his memory and pay homage to the contributions that he would have made to our nation. Our 2 minutes moment of silence begins now.

(Two (2) minutes of silence observed)

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Mr. President: Thank you Honourable Members. Pray you be seated. I'm directing the Clerk to prepare the necessary card of condolence, which I would issue on behalf of the Senate, to each of the families, and I'll do a special message, with respect to the Members of Parliament. Thank you. Senator Stiell.

Assistant Clerk: Item 15 - Bills.

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, COVID-19 Cancellation of August Celebrations Bill, 2020.

Ag. Clerk: An Act to cancel the Carnival August Celebrations for the year 2020 and the recognition of those days as bank holidays, shortly entitled COVID-19 Cancellation of Carnival August Celebrations Bill, 2020.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. Mr. President, before this Honourable House is the COVID-19 Cancellation of Carnival August Celebrations Bill, 2020. Mr. President, this Bill became necessary as we are in the midst of a pandemic, Mr. President, and for reasons that were even mentioned earlier on by other colleagues from a health perspective, and safety and well-being of the Nation, this Bill became necessary.

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Mr. President, I think it's important to give some historical context as to how we arrived at this situation where we are today. Mr. President, I can recall in March, I think it was the 22nd of March, I think that was my first day as a Member of the COVID-19 Task Force and sometime around 11:30, thereabout, in the night, I was in the company of the Minister for Health, when he received a report of our first COVID case. And, that was strange territory for us for Grenada, and I just want to put on record, Mr. President, to recognise the work and the efforts of the Ministry of Health, and of course, the Minister for Health, who has worked very hard in ensuring where we are today. I must commend him on his efforts and his stewardship. **(Applause)**

Mr. President, we, taking this decision to cancel carnival, is one that we believe is on the right side of history. We will be on the right side of history. Carnival means everything to Grenadians. It means, I don't think we could disuse words to describe what carnival means to us. Everybody, basically right now is probably looking for a fete, including me, but, Mr. President, we know that the lives of persons are far much more important. And, as I said to someone yesterday and they mentioned to me about carnival, I say, **“Yes, we’re having carnival in 2021, just continue to prepare for it. That is the best that we can do at this point in time.”**

Now, Mr. President, this is important, because none of us here will rest easy if we take a decision or do something that could cause someone's life to be lost in this process. Mr. President, I say this because a few weeks ago, my wife and I, we were having a conversation and she said something to me which was very, I didn't even think about. She said that if the younger persons are asymptomatic, what will happen when our kids go back to school? And, she's saying that in the context that she knows and she is aware that she has an underlying condition, which means that her kids could go to school and catch the virus and take it home to her and cause her to lose her life. Mr. President, I say this because right now, where I stand, I am not even certain if my kids will be able to go back to school, I don't know. That is the situation that is before us. And, that situation is becoming more and more clear. Because why? My colleague Senator Stiell said it, our greatest challenge as a country is ahead of us, is before us, as

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we open up officially tomorrow. I want to repeat that, our greatest challenge is before us.

We are going to be tested going forward as we try to get back to some level of normalcy. This is a time when we need to be more vigilant, more than ever because, one key word, Mr. President, and the word is 'novel'. Novel Coronavirus, meaning that it is new; it is new to the entire world. It is new to scientists; it will bring new challenges, it will bring you surprises, and that is what we are faced with. And, it is because of the context of which carnival is celebrated, it's a mass gathering, large gathering, that is an ideal catalyst for spreading the virus and spreading it quickly. We've seen it with persons in Florida, when they had a spring break, decide, we don't have time with that, we're going on the beach. Now, the State of Florida is in a state of chaos right now. You have more than a thousand persons in the United States dying daily for the past week or more. Mr. President, I just want our nation to be aware of these facts, these occurrences that are out there. Let's not get distracted. Let's not get distracted, Mr. President.

Mr. President, this is so serious, I don't even know how we, as a people and Government can try to communicate so that persons can understand the gravity of what is before us. This is serious business, this is serious. This is not time for joking around. We are speaking about people's lives which is definitive. If somebody were to... we cannot replace that. We have to be responsible. And, it's for this reason we cancelled carnival, and as such, cancelled the holidays. And, one may say, why not give us the holiday for us to relax because we've been inside and whatsoever. Mr. President, we're also looking at setting another precedence. Should we just give a holiday for holiday's sake? We can't do that. While, we recognise the economic side of it, of not giving the holiday, because, of course, when there is a holiday, Government loses revenue, businesses lose revenue because everything shuts down. But, most importantly, from the health standpoint, it means you're giving an opportunity for people to go out and gather and we have a responsibility to try to minimise that as much as possible and not to encourage it. While, we allow some of the private promoters to do small things to

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keep people, at least in some semblance of recreation or enjoying some parts of our culture, we as the Government have a greater responsibility to ensure that the nation remains safe. And it is for those reasons, Mr. President; we believe that this is the right step. And, I say this, and there is precedence in what we're doing. All our regional Islands have cancelled their carnivals as well, going from St. Lucia since March, St Vincent in April, Barbados, Antigua in April, Dominica, and Martinique. They have all cancelled their carnival for the very same reason.

But, instructive enough, Mr. President, we cancelled last because we were looking to see if there was any avenue, if we could have postponed it, but at the end of the day, the right decision was to cancel. Mr. President, it had people calling me **“Minister what you doing, cancel the thing, that isn’t making sense. What are you all waiting for?”** Then it have other people calling me, after we cancelled **“Why you cancel it? We could have had something? We could have a jump up? Give us one jump up.”** Mr. President, those are the varying views that are out there, but we believe that the only view that must resonate is the one that protects the lives of people. And, as such, we are asking the nation, we’re asking all the revellers, everybody, we are asking you, COVID-free doesn't mean that there is not an asymptomatic person within our communities. It doesn't mean that. COVID-free means that we have not seen it, and we have no reported cases.

Mr. President, do you know how we found out about our first case? The person fell ill and lucky for us that person fell ill. If that person didn't fall ill, that person could have gone on and infected more persons. And, the analysis is that for every positive case you have in the community, you multiply that by 10. So, we were fortunate in that regard. And, not only in that regard, those persons, they cooperated with us when we had limitations then, in terms of monitoring, and quarantining, they worked with us. And so, we are asking the nation to work with us to protect you, by following the protocols.

We have done so much to get to where we are. We are commended everywhere, all around the world, on radio stations everywhere, throughout the world. We are commended for our efforts. I think it is right and fitting and proper for us to go

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the distance and we can do it. I believe that if we continue to do what we have to do, it will allow us to get back quicker where we are than breaking those protocols. Mr. President, I just want to close on this part of the presentation by saying, again, I believe that this decision will show that we were on the right side of history. Thank you very much.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Mr. President: At this point, you could make whatever points you wish to make. Whether you want to proffer some amendment, some idea, this is your opportunity to do so, and then the Bill will then go to its Committee Stage. And, at its Committee Stage, we will take it Clause by Clause, and if there were some Clause you see that you felt should be amended or something otherwise, than you would offer that at the Committee Stage, but this is your opportunity now to make your contribution and you may wish to exercise it.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I stand to fully support the Bill. Having said that, I think it would be remiss of me, as someone working in academic public health, to go against this Bill. However, I would want to advise, I would want to encourage that the same vigour, the same effort, the same attention that is placed on addressing the physical issues aligned to this disease be given to the psychological ones. Because, you see Mr. President, we keep refusing or disregarding or failing to look at mental health issues. And, carnival, mind you, Mr. President, I am not a reveller, I have not played carnival ever in my life, but I do have friends and family members who play carnival and who see this as an opportunity to free up, as they would say, to reduce or relieve some of the stresses that they would have had throughout the year. And so, by removing the holidays, it does remove an avenue for them to release that type of frustration. And so, it is our responsibility or maybe the Government's responsibility to ensure that there is increased vigilance in

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addressing the mental health issues, in appreciating that persons would exhibit mental health issues, things that you know are still tabooed in our society. And so, we find that person's may be suffering in silence when really and truly they should have some sort of avenue for assistance.

I welcomed Senator Williams' report, Mr. President, in this regard, where the Ministry for Social Development would have extended some initiatives towards the community. But, I hasten to add; many times the persons who are in dire need of these initiatives would not call the hotline for confidentiality issues perhaps or for different issues. And so, my stance would be as an encouragement to perhaps the wider community, to be a bit more observant of our family members, of our community members, and of persons in the workplace who may be suffering in silence to open our eyes a bit more to observe, to see what is going on, so that, in the very passage of this Bill, by revoking the carnival, we would not have done any harm in another dimension. And, that would be my stance on this Bill, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Anyone else? Senator Judd.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. President. I know with the new layout you're probably trying to adjust on recognising Members now part of the larger gallery. Mr. President, like my colleagues, I stand too to support this Bill. Mr. President, this virus, COVID-19, took everyone by surprise, we were never prepared for it. And we were preparing for Carnival, I know a lot of young people was preparing for Carnival, Mr. President, I miss Soca Mornach this year. I miss supporting having the discussion on whether it is the north, south or east will take the crown. And I know a lot of young people feel the same. I mean I hear the conversations, but, Mr. President, this is about lives, it's about saving lives and having large gathering or promoting large gathering is an ideal condition for the Coronavirus. Actually of recent, in fact about a day ago, the World Health Organization would have released a statement that the spike or the resurgent in cases is as a result of or partly due to young people. The fact that many do

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not want to be quarantined and they're having their small parties and they are, as Minister Cox would have said, they are putting others at risk like those with under health situation. So you're seeing places like the United States, Portugal, Israel and you're seeing the spikes or the resurgent in cases. In Brazil, look the situation in Brazil, at the start of the year, we weren't talking about Brazil, we were talking about Italy and in no time look at Brazil, number 2 in the charts when you look at the number of deaths and cases by country. Mr. President, that could easily be Grenada. The potential of the virus could wipe out the population. You look at the death toll of COVID, it's about, the last time I checked it was about 648,000 people have died from it. In other words, I was telling one of my friend, just think about the size of Grenada's population at just about 112,000 people, that's like almost every Grenadian dying 6 times.

Mr. President, a virus at this potential we should not play games and yes I understand that to some, they love their Carnival but once we maintain or keep the protocols, once we are safe, I believe in 2021, we will have Carnival and it's our duty... **(inaudible comments)** ...well, we are hoping that in 2021, we will definitely have the Carnival. Mr. President, I am confident that... **(inaudible comments)** Well, Mr. President, I won't want to be the devil's advocate but I think definitely, I believe in my view, hopefully in 2021 we will see some ease and there will be some level of activity happening, maybe a different type of Carnival or it may not be the same. But definitely, we will definitely see some activity happening.

Mr. President, it is my responsibility here as a young person to talk to the heart of the youths and say listen, I understand the frustration and I understand the concerns. I am hearing the view, as well, Mr. President, of conspiracy theories. I am hearing about a new world order, I am hearing about those things. But, Mr. President, there are signs and there is facts and as a Government we have to deal with the signs and we have to deal with the facts. The signs is that this is spreading, this is killing people and we cannot afford as a responsible Government to allow this virus to get here and have a potential effect of wiping out our population. So therefore, Mr. President, I give support

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to this Bill and I hopefully will like as well, others to support as well. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Cadet. Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, thanks very much. Mr. President, I rise to give my unwavering support to the passage of this Bill before us and primarily to just say this... use one country as an example as to why we need to do this and to make sure that in our practice we keep our borders and our country safe. Up until three days ago or a week ago, Hong Kong who shares the border with China was seen as poster child in the world as it relates to keeping the virus. They didn't believe in lockdown but they had strict measures to control the population but yesterday the report is, they saw the highest number of infections in this period, 149. And what has changed, Hong Kong opened its borders to its students coming back from overseas and that's where the virus crept in. You may have asymptomatic people coming in and just like that and right now Hong Kong has made the decision strict measures that they will not allow foreigners to enter the borders as of now.

So only nationals coming back yes, but as nationals come back, they have to take the COVID test, the PCR test and whatever is available but also mandatory quarantine for 14 days. Why they have moved and taken these drastic measures? Because they realise things are getting worst, so the health authority say, our hospitals are about to collapse. Hong Kong is massive, yes they have their resources and we're looking at Grenada, not very many ICU beds, not very many ventilators but we have a disease that has shown us in the bigger and first world nations that it has the ability to wipe out populations. And historically when it was believed that this thing was affecting more senior people, it's not so anymore, it's affecting young people as well. I have the testimony of a 18 year-old young girl from Houston and this young man who is no longer with us went to this COVID party and said, they believed as young people that is a

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hoax, because part of the conspiracy theory is 5G and so forth and so on. But they don't believe and he went to this COVID party and everybody was just having a good time, yes to relieve the stress and the caged up mentality that we have had, try to release it and when he got into hospital in ICU, just before he expired he said to the Nurse, I made a mistake, a terrible mistake not believing that COVID is real and not believing I have to follow the protocols and he died.

Mr. President, the cancellation of Carnival this year will have implications for the economy, of course. And I said earlier, this Government has demonstrated its care for people. To raise revenue and to make sure that you are able to provide those sort of support that you have been given. Revenue is down now by 50%, so it means that the reservoir you had is drying up but you are still required to make contributions. So Carnival would have been a big thing and historically it has shown that quite a lot of revenue is being raised during that time. But Government is saying the health and well-being of our people is worth more than the revenue that we can raise in Carnival, so let's put it off.

So the Bill is Carnival is off and the Bill is saying let's not create a new normal by just giving a holiday for holiday sake. But we do know and I value the comment made by the young Senator St. Cyr on the "Other Side" because I know this. I've been hearing people saying, they're going to play ah mass and what they're going to do? Yes I could understand that but if we just give the two days holiday, what are we saying to them? Go play ah mass wherever you want to do it. But there are inherent risks and as a Government and as a people we cannot expose ourselves and our people to these risks. So that's why we need to do what we are doing. If next year, things are better, you will get an opportunity but for this year, let us work together with this one aim in mind, that one life is too much to lose to COVID. I thank you.

Mr. President: Honourable Members the question is that the Bill be read a second... Sorry, Senator Lewis.

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Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I rise to give my support and to indicate that it is the right decision to make and the Labour Movement and I am sure the people of Grenada will support any Administration that shows that level of concern in relation to ensuring that we minimise the possibility of any social gathering. I want to use the opportunity one time also on the same Bill to encourage our workers to remember that the days are now working days and be guided accordingly. We will, the Labour Movement support the responsible and right things to do and the cancellation of Carnival that we called for very early in the year, it is only proper to, once it is cancelled to remove the holiday. And we will give the support as we have said and it shows that there are measures that we can take in a responsible way to manage the health risk and Senator St. Cyr, that is an important aspect that you have raised and I want to encourage the Government and all of us, not just the Government, to keep speaking to our colleagues throughout the State of the importance of remembering the challenges that we face and to give encouragement to find means and ways of addressing the psychosocial aspects that will come around. And we can achieve the minimising of the possibility of the spread of COVID without having to give any police officer the right to come into my house at anytime without a warrant. And we will support all the responsible actions and give our commitment to this. Thank you.

Mr. President: Senator George.

Sen. the Hon. Kim George: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to give my support to the Bill as it has presented before this Honourable House. It would be remiss of me, Mr. President, of course if I did not take this opportunity to welcome my fellow colleague Senators to this new House. I was heartened and encouraged by the tone and the content of their Maiden Speeches. In particular, I listened with interest to both and especially to that of Senator Noel. I am an avid student of history myself, I am always heartened when there are those amongst us who take the time to start at the beginning before we get to the end and that's important. I listened to your comments in relation to

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Revolution which is excellent, I look forward to a discussion as well on evolution because I think the importance is sometimes overlooked of us considering how we have evolved as a people and what we need to do as a people to fashion a system of Government and development that serves us is indigenous to us as a people. And so I welcome you as we say and look forward to, as Senator Cox said, robust debate as we will have a very good time in this House I am sure.

Mr. President, I won't belabour the point too much, my colleagues on "This Side" has made several very valid and pertinent points in support of the Bill. I will say in addition only that we must... I think it behooves us as a people and as a Government to be driven by the science as it relates to COVID-19 and to recognise that this disease as Senator... the Leader of Government's Business indicated, it's no respecter of persons, it's no respecter of gender, of income and so our obligations in these times is to keep the circumstances that we find ourselves in at the forefront of our minds. And if we are serious, and I know we are as a people about keeping COVID at bay, then we have to be driven by what the science says which is that we ought to avoid at all costs, large celebrations or large gatherings. And I know it is in this spirit that the Bill was brought before this Honourable House. And so in those circumstances, as I said, Mr. President, I give my full support to the Bill and look forward to working with my colleagues on the "Other Side". Thank you.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Kim George. Ok Senators, the question is that the Bill... Oh, I'm so sorry, you will have to excuse me.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: You're forgiven, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Senator Williams.

Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to give my support to the COVID-19 Cancellation of Carnival August Celebrations Bill. Mr.

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President, I believe that this Bill is necessary given the circumstances that befall us this year. But I believe underlying the ratio behind this Bill is a larger lesson in adaptation. There's a Chinese proverb that says **“the wise adapt themselves to circumstances as water molds itself to the pitcher”**. And it was Charles Darwin who said **“it is not the strongest of the species that survives nor the most intelligent it is the one that is the most adaptable to change.”** And, Mr. President, in this year more than any other in recent times, Grenadians have had to adapt to this new normal as we like to say. We have had our liberties restricted, we have had our hygienic practices scrutinised and it is not a desirable state of affairs but for the time being, Mr. President, it is necessary. And our Government has shown a deep understanding of the importance of adapting in times of crises, we have seen it during Ivan, we have seen it during the economic crisis and now we have seen it during this pandemic. However, Mr. President, these successes have had the unfortunate effect of allowing a spirit of complacency to creep in. Many of us and unfortunately, those in positions of power and Influence have been labouring under the illusion that we are out of the woods but nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. President.

We have seen for example with our neighbours to the north in the Bahamas when they reopened their ports of entry, there was an immediate surge in cases and thus their ports had to be shut down once again. So the prospect for an onslaught of new imported cases especially with the imminent reopening of our ports, is a very real one. Therefore it is crucial that we inculcate in our people a spirit of serenity and self-restraint. We hear a lot about the 1918 Spanish Flu which claimed the lives of millions of people and what that event has taught us, is that we must not rush to return to life as normal in situations such as these. Now during that pandemic, the 1918 Spanish Flu, the cities that closed the schools and banned public gatherings, fared well but the other cities that ignored these restrictions suffered a resurgence of the disease. For example in Philadelphia there was an infamous decision not to cancel its Liberty Loan Parade and that's resulted in 1000 deaths and a span of 10 days making the city one of the hardest hit by the pandemic. Also in Denver they lifted restrictions on Armistice Day to

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celebrate the end of World War I, only to experience a deadlier pike. Now note, Mr. President, that these spikes were the result of celebratory carnival-like activities being conducted. So with those examples in mind, it is appropriate to remind ourselves of the popular adage that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. We must learn from these past mistakes and even the current mistakes that are being made by those in developed world in order to safeguard our communities.

Now we can only hope, Mr. President, that there are no more cases of COVID-19, we can only hope that no one has flown under the radar but there is always a risk. However small, however remote and the question is, are we willing to expose ourselves to that risk by creating the conditions for people to engage in activities that could be detrimental to the health of our nation. Any reasonable person would say that the answer is no, we should not expose ourselves to that risk. Now, the Carnival celebrations will return, Mr. President, and we shall enjoy them even more so because absence makes the heart grow fonder. So I imagine in 2021 Honourable Member Cadet, or whenever that may be, our celebrations will be more joyous than in the past. But surely this year, Mr. President, we can make the sacrifice, surely this year we can err on the side of caution and to choose safety and productivity over a possible outbreak and loss of life.

Change is hard, loosing the comfort and pleasures of our normal routines is hard but, Mr. President, these aren't normal times and therefore our disposition cannot be normal. We must for the time being learn to adapt and it's for those reasons, Mr. President, that I support the Bill before us. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Honourable...

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Yes, Mr. President, I am conscious of the time, but just a couple of words as I lend my support to the passage of this Bill. Mr. President, we are doing what is right and not what is popular. The people will never ever forgive us if we were to move forward with something like this and we do not, and we ignore the

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signs. Mr. President, this is about leadership and this has been shown from the very start of this crisis and it is an approach that we are going to continue with. Making those hard but right decisions and it's not about doing what is popular. Agaib, Mr. President, I lend my support to the passage of this Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

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

The Bill was read a second time.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

House in Committee.

House resumes.

Mr. President: I wish to report that the Bill has been taken Clause by Clause without amendment.

Mr. President: Senator Cox.

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

Question proposed.

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Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

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

Question proposed.

Mr. President: And for our newcomers, even at this stage you can make an intervention if it is necessary but generally people don't, especially when lunch is nigh and we're all in a stage of ergonomic anxiety.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. President: Clerk.

The Bill was read a third time and passed.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move a Motion for the adjournment until Wednesday at 9:00 a.m to conclude.

Mr. President: That date is what again? Wednesday is what date?

(Acting Clerk converse with the President)

Mr. President: The 5th, ok. Honourable Members, I just want to make one point before we move to the adjournment and I want to take the opportunity to speak on the

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adjournment, while not denying you the opportunity so to speak. But I would prefer if you don't as the lunch is awaiting us. On the Mental Health issue which was raised by Senator St. Cyr, I want to use the opportunity to make the following suggestions.

As the Senator has correctly said, quite often people with mental health issues, don't easily vocalise them and part of the challenge in dealing with this health issue is because it is not vocalised, it is not easily picked up and people go through all these emotional crises rather quietly. And before you know long, it's expressed in quite often deadly ways. I want to suggest and that is for the Trade Union colleagues and Senator Lewis, for the Unions to consider setting up in each Union a particular hotline and to convene a series of clinics, mental health clinics with mental health professionals and there are quite a number of them on Island now, utilising the shop steward system, because the shop steward system is a well established and functioning system within the Trade Union Movement; all work places have shop stewards and to provide what I would call mental health kits. All that simply means is that in a training programme which can be done virtually, shop stewards can be armed with tools of observation by mental health experts, people in the field of psychology and so on. And these kits can be given to these individuals and they could become part of the monitoring. Because in my days.. back in the Union Movement, we had a programme of intervention especially for substance abuse. We had several doctors, who were consultants to the Union. Unfortunately, two of them died, I'm speaking about the late David Lambert and the late Barry Mc Barnett, who were consultant doctors for the Technical and Allied Workers Union.

Kits can be developed where the shop stewards can be trained. They can observe at the workplace, because Workers tend at the workplace, to develop a kind of camaraderie, especially if you are working in a factory and you are on the line, a camaraderie situation develop where workers know things about each other. If workers are armed with that knowledge, especially the shop stewards who quite often work as health and safety officers, they can assist in being part of this system of monitoring.

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Then reports can be made, and those reports can go to the Health and Safety Officer and then early interventions can possibly be made in order to help.

As I said before, in the Substance Abuse Programme; in the Technical and Allied Workers Union, that was a very successful program, there were many workers who we were able to identify, who were either alcoholics or were using cocaine or marijuana. Many of them had mental problems, but we were able to get help to them. Quite often the Union paid for that help and many workers recovered. We were able to make interventions on the job with management and get the cooperation of management to assist. Workers at times were given time off to go for the necessary treatment and that kind of thing.

So I want to suggest that in this time that the Unions all think of setting up these hotlines based along the shop steward system, as one more way in which we can make the intervention for people who would be suffering with mental depression at this time. Given the fact that you have all of these issues, workers have lost their jobs, family incomes have fallen dramatically, and while all of this is happening your bills are not falling. In fact your bills are increasing because you're not able to service them so there's greater anxiety within homes of working people and all of these situations. That's a suggestion I would want to make on that. Without any further ado, well, I see there's a light of Senator Cadet. Senator Cadet.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Sorry, I would just like to, basically welcome the new Senators. I know the last time I came, when it was my first time basically, we did it at the adjournment. So I was basically preparing to welcome them at the end. I probably would have done it at my presentation. But, Mr. President, I just basically want to welcome Senator Terry Noel and Senator Tessa St. Cyr, both I know very well. Senator St. Cyr would have taught me French at secondary school. And Terry as well, we are very good friends. I think St. Andrew's has a greater representation in the Parliament, in the House and in the Senate, and that's very good, Mr. President. Mr.

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President, I know we have our lunch, but I just wanted to welcome the new Senators.
Thank you Mr. President.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Mr. President: ...my own big way of being a little bit facetious. Honourable Members, the question is that this Senate now stands adjourned until Wednesday the 5th at 9 in the morning. I wish to thank all Senators. Please be safe and have an enjoyable weekend with your families, and a safe weekend. This Senate now stands adjourned until Wednesday at 9 o'clock.

Senate adjourned at 2:39 p.m. until Wednesday 5th August, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

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Resumption
Attendance

Senate resumed on Wednesday 5th August, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

PRESENT

Senator the Honourable Chester Humphrey	- Mr. President (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 Terry Noel	- Member
Senator the Honourable Tessa Alexander St Cyr	- Member
Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie	- Member
Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis	- Member
Senator the Honourable Dunstan Campbell	- Member

ABSENT

Senator the Honourable Kim George	- Member
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Prayers

Announcements

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

Mr. President: Good morning, Honourable Members. Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Good morning, Mr. President and 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.

(Sound of Gavel)

Mr. President: Honourable Members, the Third Session of the Tenth Parliament, now commences. At the adjournment on Friday last, we did as it were, skip over a number of items in order to ensure the timely passage of the Bill which dealt exclusively with the postponement of Carnival, which as you know, falls under Statutory Regulation, and therefore necessitated the introduction of an amendment to the existing Statute and for reasons which needs no debate.

So, at this point in time, we will resume and we will go back to where we departed. From my recollection, we had covered all the items, one through five, through six. We did Ministerial Statements, and we are now at the point of Presentation of Papers. Mr. Clerk is this correct?

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(The Clerk responded)

Mr. President: Yes, it is. Although I'm entering the age where, biologically it says that certain things don't function, this morning proves that theory somewhat in error. So, the floor is now yours Senator Stiell, Leader of Government's Business.

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

- (i). Financial Statements of the OECS (Regional Tourism Competitiveness (ORTC)) Project for the year ended 31st December, 2018.
- (ii). Report of the Director of Audit, on the Resources Managed for the period from 1st January 2018 to 31st December, 2018 by the Project Co-ordinating Unit in the Ministry of Finance, Planning, Economic Development and Physical Development, for the Regional Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project (RDVRP).
- (iii). Report of the Director of Audit, on the Performance of the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF) for the year ended 31st December, 2018.
- (iv). The Annual Report of the Grenada Bureau of Standards for the year ended 31st December, 2018.
- (v). Annual Report of Grenada Authority for the Regulation of Financial Institutions (GARFIN) for the year ended 31st December, 2018.
- (vi). Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Grenada Food and Nutrition Council for the year ended 31st December, 2018.

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- (vii). Report of the Director of Audit, on the Financial Statements of the Office of the Ombudsman for the year ended 31st December, 2018.
- (viii). Annual Report, Financial Statements and Audit Report thereon of the Grenada Ports Authority for the year ended 31st December, 2018.
- (ix). Grenada Solid Waste Management Authority Annual Report 2018.
- (x). Financial Intelligence Unit Annual Report 2016 – 2018.
- (xi). Grenada Airports Authority Annual Report 2016.
- (xii). Fiscal Responsibility Oversight Committee 2019 Annual Report; and finally,
- (xiii). The Report of the Director of Audit Grenada on the Resources Managed for the period 21st July, 2017 to 31st December, 2018 by the Project Accounting Unit in the Ministry of Finance for the OECS Regional Agricultural Competitiveness Project (AGRICOM) and the income and expenditure for the accounting period ending 31st December, 2018.

Sorry, I have missed a couple

- (xiv). Report of the Director of Audit, Grenada on the Financial Statements of the T. A. Marryshow Community College (TAMCC) for the year ended 31st December, 2018; and finally,
- (xv). Addendum to the Report of the Director of Audit on the Public Accounts of Grenada for the year ended 31st December, 2015.

Thank you.

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Mr. President: Honourable Members, the following Papers now do lie on the Table.

(The President recalled the Papers into the records)

Mr. President: Honourable Members, I do now order these Papers to lie.

(Sound of gavel)

Mr. President: If you give me a second Honourable Members, especially for our freshman Senators, I just wish to bring to your attention a matter which I have raised in this House consistently as the Presiding Officer, and that is to say, it is very important Senators for these Papers and Reports that lie on the Table, for them to be studied, and to form the basis of debate and examination. Too often these Papers are brought here and nothing happens. It is by virtue of the Constitution, a responsibility of the House of Senate, especially those who sit on the non-Government side to examine these Reports, it is part of your duty. These Reports are Reports on the performance of different Government Departments, Statutory Authorities and other businesses, which falls under the direct control of the State. These are by and large Fiscal Reports, so, you have an opportunity to examine the conduct of these businesses, you have an opportunity, if you wish by way of a Resolution to engage with those who are charged to manage these businesses, to explain these accounts. It can be the basis for questions to be asked. This is a very important function, which historically, except for a brief... well, except for a moment in the past, and Senator De Allie has been here long ago to know that when I was a companion of his on the floor, we would raise a number of questions on these Reports and engage in a number of debates.

It's very important because your role is to hold the Executive accountable, and the Constitution says so. It says that the Cabinet is accountable to Parliament. And these are essentially Reports of the performance of Cabinet's management, not

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necessarily directly, but certainly indirectly, because all of these Boards and Statutory Authorities, by Law, have to report to the Cabinet. In all of the statutory instruments you would see, where at a particular time in the fiscal year cycle those authorities have to submit a Fiscal Report and other reports to the Minister, who must then table them in Parliament and, this is what all of these documents represent. This is what all of these documents represent. And again, I want to appeal, especially to the new Senators, do not just allow these documents to gather dust. It is your responsibility to study the documents. It's your responsibility to formulate questions that you may not be clear on, and if necessary, and you wish to make recommendations you can do so by way of a Motion, brought in your name with the sufficiency of notice, and you set out what in fact your Motion seeks to do.

So, this is a very important function of the Parliament, which in recent times has been significantly overlooked. And, I think really Senators are failing in their duties and responsibilities to their constituents. So again, I want to emphasise this. I'm just looking at the section in the Constitution, I will find it because I have it highlighted. Okay, it's right here. It's in fact, Cabinet of Ministers, section 59 (3) of our Constitution. And, I will read that section in its fullness to underline what I'm saying, **"The functions of the Cabinet shall be to advise the Governor General in the Government of Grenada, and the Cabinet shall be collectively responsible for Parliament for any advice given to the Governor General by under the general authority of the Cabinet for all things done by or under the authority of any Minister in the execution of his duties."** And, therefore, if a Statutory Authority falls under the purview of the Minister, he has that responsibility. Yes. And, an important part of that are these Reports which are laid in Parliament because it tells you all about the financial going ons. Right. And, in some Parliaments there are Standing Committees, in which management personnel from various State, and we've done this before, we have in fact requested, several years ago, at that time the then Michael Baptiste, Leader of the Opposition. And it was one of the early times that I sat on the Finance Committee, we would summon different Departments and Ministries and different Statutory Bodies to come before us and

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explain this Report. We will ask questions and so on. And, it gives you really an opportunity to be engaged, governance is not just... governance in its broadest sense is not just the responsibility of the Cabinet, you have a role in the governance, because Parliament is a significant component part of the governance of our State. So, again, I just want to emphasise this because I've been emphasising it, but it has been falling on deaf ears. I've been very disappointed with the fact that with the exception of Senator De Allie, most, if not all of the Senators on "This Side," pay no regard to these documents at all. It's a serious omission, which I hope that we can correct.

So with those words, Clerk, I think we can move on. So these Papers now lie, and it's quite a number of them, quite a number of them. You can take them one by one. You have a whole year in which you can do it sectionally, you all could meet between yourselves and divide up who will do what. Right. You know, it's just one of those things that we really need to, in strengthening our parliamentary democracy, making it more functional and meaningful, we really need. Parliamentarians, Senators really need to see that it is not just attending one sitting of Parliament, that that is their function.

In addition to which, I should indicate to you that the Speaker and I have had some discussions on how we are going to develop a Parliamentary Outreach. And, one of the things that we've planned to do is to first of all put into Motion a Joint Committee of the House. Secondly, we want to see more Bills being discussed by the public, so that more Bills rather than come to be taken through all of its stages, which rarely is a mechanism for emergency issues. But, the citizens have a right to know what Laws are being contemplated in their name. And so, what we want to do is to develop a Parliamentary Outreach Programme, in which quite a number of Bills, of course, there are going to be urgent Bills that you can't do it with. But, there are certainly Bills in which we can set a Committee up, put the Bills up on our website, invite interested parties and groups who may have a peculiar and particular interest in a particular Bill to come in and comment, study the Bill, make recommendations for change or strengthen the Bill or whatever. That Parliamentary Committee will then hear you. Right. And then

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we will go back to the drawing board, advise Cabinet that these are recommendations, what say you, and then the Bill comes into Parliament and we could go to the Second Stage, and the Third Stage of the reading of the Bill rather than every Bill that comes to this House, goes through all of its stages at one sitting, which is really not how Parliament ordinarily functions. All right. So I'm just serving notice, right, that we need to engage the public.

We have a more literate population. The vast majority of working people now are people who certainly are graduates of primary school. So, not like 40 or 50 years ago, when the mass of the working people were agroproletarians with limited literacy, that has changed. And therefore, our concept of governance, and how we engage has got to change. And, these are the changes that we are contemplating. So, I bring that to your attention. Sorry, for being long winded, but then that's what Parliamentarians do, we speak. Mr. Clerk.

Clerk Assistant: Item 9 - Petitions.
Item 10 - Government Notices.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell, I thought I saw your light. Okay proceed.

Clerk Assistant: Item 11 - Unofficial Notices.
Item 12 - Questions.
Item 13 - Personal Explanations.
Item 14 - Motions.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell.

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

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WHEREAS debate on the Gracious Address delivered by the Governor-General on the occasion of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Third Session of the 10th Parliament, on Friday the 4th of October, 2019 was further deferred to a date to be fixed;

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

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell, you're sailing with this? Again, just let me explain to the other Senators.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Well, just to provide a context to this, the Throne Speech, the Gracious Address by the Governor-General was presented, which was the precursor to the Budget, which was extensively debated at the end of last year. And, the idea of having this still open in terms of the debate around the principles, the policy direction of the Government as outlined in the Throne Speech, as detailedly articulated in the Budget Presentation remain open to give the opportunity to further discussion throughout the course of the year. As we sit, this is only the second Sitting of the Senate since that time, because of the COVID situation. And therefore, the passing of this Motion simply leaves the scope open for discussion, for a date, where it will be viewed if that sufficient time has passed, there has been sufficient ventilation of those policies and, once that time has passed, we will then close this item. So, in terms of the Motion that is before us, it is to keep it open just to give Members a chance to raise any matters that they may feel pressing. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: New coming Senators, the Throne Speech is a broad outline of the intention of Her Majesty's Government, in terms of what it hopes to do, its policy issues. And, that Speech then forms the basis really from a policy position on the structure of what goes into the debate on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. So, in a sense, it's a duplication. One is a broad policy online and, the other one is an interpretation of that outline in terms of what would be implemented for the Fiscal Year.

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So, one is broad, the other is narrow. Generally speaking, one can debate this, but having gone through the long and winding process of debating the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, in a sense really this is a duplication. So, what we normally would have allowed in sometime pass, and if Members of the Senate are not minded to rehash any issues, then rather than put this off to a date to be fixed, we sort of introduced a mechanism which just gets it off the Order Paper. So, and I think it would be only fitting giving that you're new Senators... Senator could we allow this, as you suggest one more time and then, but it's all up to you. Yes. But, that is a process why this Item on the Agenda is still here. It's because we've not had another debate and many people find it repetitious, so to do.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion further deferred to a date to be fixed.

Clerk Assistant: Item 15 - Bills.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway and that's the Consumer Protection Bill you're piloting, Senator?

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Yes Sir.

Mr. President: Well the floor is yours.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, I rise to beg to introduce for first reading, a Bill for an Act shortly entitled the Consumer Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Ag. Clerk: An act to amend the Consumer Protection Act No. 2 of 2018 shortly entitled Consumer Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

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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 its stages at this Sitting.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

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

Question proposed.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Mr. President, the Consumer Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2020 seek to amend the Consumer Protection Act No. 2 of 2018. It is important to note that after the Bill was passed in Parliament, it was assented by the Governor-General and it was placed within the Ministry of Finance. Nothing much was done but on the 1st of July, 2020 the Act was transferred to the Ministry of Trade for implementation. And during that time, Mr. President, it was observed a number of typographical errors to the Bill and today we are here seeking approval to correct those errors and to ensure that the Bill or the Act is given the opportunity to benefit the consumers as it was so designed when it was first passed.

Clause 1 provides for the short title, Mr. President, and Clause 2 seeks to amend section 8 (1) to provide for the Director of Consumer Affairs to be a public officer rather than an officer being appointed by the Minister. And while the Officer could have been appointed by the Minister and there is no problem with that, but it is stating here that the Director of Consumer Affairs or the office which is a department within the Ministry responsible for Consumer Affairs, the officer which is a public officer will be given that

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responsibility to ensure that the affairs of the Consumer Protection Department is administered.

Clause 3 seeks to amend to remove paragraph (c), because review of the work plans and programme of the Consumer Affairs Office should be exercised by the Administrative Department of the Ministry responsible for Consumer Affairs rather than the Advisory Body.

Clause 4, Mr. President, seeks to amend section 13 to provide clarity on the procedural connections between the investigations of the office and referral of matters to the tribunal and to require the payment of a prescribed fee. And I will go into this a little later because I saw this as an extremely important piece within this legislation in that historically what was first prescribed, if a consumer had some grievance or some complaints and needed to file this, there was a fee attached to it. It could have been a deterrent in the sense that consumers may feel what if I lose in this appeal? Double jeopardy. I paid for the commodity which I am not enjoying the usefulness of it and I'm paying now to file a complaint.

But this is not the case here, this has been removed. But what is in my mind, very instructive here, the Consumer Protection Bill seeks to ensure that consumers are protected. And we have seen and heard quite a lot of complaints and you listen to the talk show programmes and so many complaints of bad service that has been provided to the consumers and there seems to be like no redress. This here seeks to ensure that we fix this. And in a part of building or developing any society, you want to ensure that commodities that is on the sale is of the highest quality, that's one, and two, consumers are able to benefit from the commodity that they have purchased in the first place. And I think this will create the environment or the atmosphere for peaceful and harmonious relationship within consumers and suppliers. And of course a society where there is harmonious relationship between consumers and suppliers, I think it creates the bedrock for more development, probably more young people wanting to get into business. But most importantly to wanting to do the best to ensure that consumers benefit.

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Clause 5 seeks to correct a typographical error in the numbering of section 31. It says while the section is correctly positioned between section 31 and 32, it is numbered as 11. So we are seeking to have that corrected.

Clause 6 seeks to amend section 33 (1) to remove the requirement for the payment of a fee for lodging a complaint, which I was speaking to earlier, since there will be a fee for instituting proceedings before the Tribunal. So the fee for lodging a complaint has been removed because so long as the cases will be brought before a Tribunal, there will be a fee attached there. And let me just expand on this a little, in as much as you remove the fee for lodging the complaint and only if the matter goes before the Tribunal, there would be a fee attached obviously to take care of the work of the Tribunal and the administrative responsibilities. But at the same time in lodging the complaint, it gives the opportunity for the complainant and the supplier to amicably come to some solution rather than taking this thing onwards before the Tribunal. It will save time, it will save the added stress and harassment that one will have to go through. And if you're coming from way off into the countryside and having to come to a hearing, it will cost you something more, besides your time and effort, but there will be associated costs, transport, lunch and so forth. So this is an extremely great move to ensure that we bring parties together. And mind you, it is important to note, while we bring the parties together to amicably solve the matter, there'll be no expense to any of them. Government will absorb that fee and that is a contribution to ensuring that there is good consumer and supplier relationship within the country.

Clause 7 seeks to amend section 34 (5) subsection (c) to correct a typographical error. Section 34 (5) reads as follows **“upon receipt of a complaint, the office shall proceed to investigate the complaint unless the office is satisfied that the complaint was filed in accordance with section 38 (4)”**. But the problem here is section 38 (4) does not exist. Instead section 36 (4) is most appropriate and provides as follows: **“subsection (5), the office shall not investigate the complaint unless it is filed within two (2) years from the date on which the cause of the action has arisen.”** So there is a lot of protection here for consumers. Yes there is a window of two (2) years in which to file a complaint after which it is in my view here, no longer

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valid. But two (2) years is a pretty long enough time for you to decide if you want to move forward in making a complaint over whatever service or lack thereof that you may have received.

Clause 8 seeks to amend section 35 (2) of the principal Act to correct a typographical error. Section 35 (2) reads as follows **“if the opposite party fails to make a written response in accordance with section 34 (9), the office shall complete its investigation based on the complaint and any other evidence or supporting material or documents submitted by the complaint or the complainant.”** However section 34 (9)... sorry **“if the opposite party fails to make a written response in accordance with section 34 (9) the office shall complete its investigation based on the complainant and any other evidence or other supporting material or document submitted by the complainant.”** However section 34 (9) does not exist, instead section 34 (8) is most appropriate and provides as follows: **“no later than 30 days or such greater period up to 45 days the office may specify which shall exceed the 45 days”**, I spoke of. So in other words, if a complainant would have lodged a complaint on a service provider or a supplier for whatever reason within a 30 day period, if the service provider refuse or for some reason were not able to lodge a defence, the office will take the side of the complainant and proceed. However, if the supplier or the service provider within 45 days came into the office and would give the reason why he/she was unable to fulfil that first part of the law, the 30 days to file a defense, so long as the office feel, in their view that the reasons given are plausible, they would accept and file that defence as part of the proceedings. This I consider to be very reasonable again and to give everybody an opportunity for their voice to be heard and I consider this to be extremely important in going forward to finding an amicable solution to the situation.

Clause 9 seeks to amend section 54 to correct reference to **“respondent”** in subsection 3 (a), with reference to **“defendant”**. Section 54 of the principal Act refers to criminal proceedings in which the correct reference for the party would be defendant rather than respondent. Some very simple and logical explanation here given for that correction.

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Clause 10 seeks to amend Schedule I to correct reference to “**Tribunal**” in section 3 with reference to “**Advisory Body**”. Schedule 1 provides exclusively for the composition of a Consumer Affairs Advisory Body. So basically, what we are looking here is to remove Tribunal and replace it with... let me just take this again. Section 10 seeks to amend Schedule I to correct reference to “**Tribunal**” in section 3, yes, so to remove Tribunal to ensure that we have the Consumer Affairs Advisory Body.

Clause 11 seeks to amend Schedule II to correct reference to “**subsection 14**” in paragraph (5) subsection (d) with reference to paragraph 15, since “**paragraph 15**” addresses the requirement to disclose a conflict of interest and would justify operations of paragraph 5.

Mr. President, I want to believe that with these amendments before this Honourable House today and to ensure that the Consumer Affairs Act is implemented will give consumers the opportunity to ensure that their concerns are heard and they are treated fairly.

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

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: So, Mr. Deputy President, it is important for us to note that in any society, a democratic society, there must be avenues for redress where there are instances of, if you want to say wrong doing, instances of, you're feeling that you are being deprived of services that you paid for. There must be avenues to bring redress and this Consumer Protection Bill today seeks to do this for consumers within the state of Grenada. And for these words, Mr. President, I commend the Bill for its second reading.

Mr. Deputy President: Senator Simon Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. I am sure if you had sat in your seat, you would have had quite a few things to comment and I hope you are given the opportunity to comment. I only want to add just a couple of words in

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support of this proposed Bill. The refinements, the amendments to this Bill will help with the operationalisation of the Act and addressing some obvious typos etc. within it, but the refinement of its operations.

What I think is important to underscore and Senator Garraway did a very good job of that, is just reiterating the importance of the legislation as a whole. The principal legislation, the Consumer Protections Act and the significance it has to consumers in general and the ability now or the mechanism that is afforded to consumers for recourse from suppliers of goods and services for, whether it's for defects, faulty goods, services that do not meet the quality standards that are within that contract.

And historically, I think in the region as a whole, the whole area of consumer protection where institutional support for consumer protection has been very weak. And the genesis of the principal Act was to take a harmonised approach throughout... certainly throughout the OECS if not broader... the broader CARICOM region. And what exists, is a massive step forward, but there is still some way to go but it is certainly a step in the right direction. It provides for doing what is just and fair to consumers and I believe as time progresses, as the years progress, as institutions develop to implement and support those consumer needs and all the arrangements around that, we would see ourselves coming back to Parliament, not just here in Grenada but Parliaments throughout the Caribbean to strengthen the rights of the consumer. And it's for those reasons, Mr. Deputy President, that I lend my support to the passage of this Bill.

Mr. Deputy President: Senator Campbell.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Dunstan Campbell: Thank you, Mr. Acting President. I rise to support the Bill and what it proposes to do especially for the farming community. We have been seeing in the farming community, products with expiry dates for the application of pesticides and chemicals and plants and this is extremely dangerous. And what the farmers have been doing because there were all these burden of going to complain, having to pay for complain, these never reached to the Tribunals that was supposed to be monitoring these irregularities. And it is extremely dangerous for the

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health of the people who consume our local products. There is also the issue of products coming to Grenada and reaching the consumer with a foreign language and there is no English, so you have that product and you're wondering what do I do with it. It looks like 2 teaspoon so I will add 2 teaspoon or it looks like 4 ounces, so you just put 4 ounces and what could happen to our consumers. So I welcome this Bill especially the one that says you do not have to pay when you lodge a complaint. And the Tribunal which would be replaced by... the Body that replaces the Tribunal could be more proactive in addressing the needs of products, which are being used by farmers and in the farming community. So I thank you and I support the Bill, thank you.

Mr. Deputy President: Senator Cox.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. Deputy President, I rise to give my full support to the amendment of the Bill before us. Mr. President, this Bill is a very important Bill and I think in the context of economic development, economic opportunity, economic activity, I think this Bill lends itself to be very complementary to those initiatives and in the context of post COVID, you would want to, now more than ever, ensure that you have those measures in place to offer redress for persons who are purchasing various items. For example, now there is a requirement for hand sanitisers, hand dispensers, you don't want somebody just go in the back door and just picking up anything and they say they're selling that and that creating a problem. And you have defects, supplies, materials, products on the market. So it is within this context I believe this Bill lends itself to be very supportive towards economic development. What it does, Mr. Deputy President, I believe that it offers a sense of comfort especially for countries who may wish to trade with Grenada going forward, for export, for agriculture produce and other manufacturing produce here. It says that look you can buy from Grenada, if something was to go wrong then there is a facility, there is a medium for redress. And, if you do not have that, then nobody wants to go and buy something somewhere, and if something goes wrong, then they have no opportunity to go back and say, well look, this is the effect after a month or two, and it's

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not working. So, this in itself lends itself to make Grenada more marketable in this regard. And, I think this is something that we really have to ensure that we implement successfully, and also make sure that everything is functional. So, hence the reason why these amendments are critical towards ensuring that when the Tribunal, the office is set up, that these institutions provide that opportunity for persons to trade with Grenada safely, and most of the persons in the local market as well. I think it's important that persons here who work hard for their money, and when they go somewhere to purchase, they should be given an opportunity to get a proper product for their hard earned living. So, with these few words, Mr. Deputy President, I really want to support this Bill, and give my support towards the second reading in this context. Thank you very much.

Mr. Deputy President: Senator André Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy President. I'm just seeking a bit of clarity, then I have some comments. The proposed amendment in relation to Clause 2 which seeks to and which is a good idea to move the powers of the Minister in terms of appointing someone from the, in terms of experience to that the Director now coming from within the public domain, within the Public Service. The question that I would like answered is, who will, what would be the process for appointing that Director? Who would have the final say? It's just a question, because the objective, which is good was to make an amendment which says that the Minister shall appoint a Director. And, it says that the mischief that we are trying to correct is to take away the Minister from making that appointment. But, the amendment, although it now says that the Director shall come from within the Public Service, I'm not sure who would be responsible for making that appointment. Yes, so that's one.

And, just to extend and to identify with some of the comments made by Senator Campbell. There are a number of items in the country, that apart from having only foreign language and they're written so small that even if you want to take the foreign language, and try to get it translated through Google or whatever it is, you can't do that.

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I've come across some pesticide recently and apart from the directions being extremely small, there isn't any direction as to what the mixing levels should be. In other words, it is said that it ought to be mixed, let us say with water for instance, but it does not say, like if it is one teaspoon or one tablespoon to four water, and as such because it has to be used, the purpose for which it was intended was for short crops, and it had to be sprayed onto the fruits and leaves itself, so you are now asking yourself, should I take that risk on things that I have to consume? Or should I stay away from this? So, this is just one of the observations.

We also wish to recommend that there should be an increase in the public awareness, public education, public education of the Consumer Protection Authorities. Quite a number of our people feel lost and intimidated many times after purchasing items and recognising that there is a defect. So, apart from setting up and giving strength to the legislation, we have to find creative ways and means, and it's a responsibility for all of us, I'm saying that. But also, the respective Department has that responsibility to increase its education, and to have that complaint desk, whichever complaint desk to be as friendly and accommodating as is possible because as we continue to be more aware, as consumers become more aware of their rights to quality products, that in turn will assist us the local producers of items, and the importers of items of raising the quality of the items that we have available to our community. So, these are just some of the observations that I wanted to make, but, we support fully an effective consumer protection and one that has teeth that can actually act. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. Deputy President: Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy President. I would want to start with the last one first. So, if we can look at the amendment of Section 33 of the principal Act. Section 33, as explained by Senator Garraway, the section that this amendment seeks to correct is actually still incorrect because the section that's cited, says section 33 of the principal Act is amended in subsection (1),

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deleting the words **“and receipt of payment of the prescribed fee,”** after the words **“upon receipt of the complaint.”** And, I am looking here at the the principal Act, and that section is actually (3) and not (1). So, I think it's misquoted. We're actually discussing 33 (3) and not 33 (1); 33 (1) reads **“Subject to subsection (2) a complainant may lodge a complaint to the office orally or in writing.”** Three (3) reads, **“Upon receipt of the complaint and receipt of payment of the prescribed fee, the office shall...”** So, I don't know if I am reading it wrong here or if there is actually...

Mr. Deputy President: You are correct Senator. It's referring to the wrong section.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: So that section needs to be corrected. My second comment on this, and I stand in support of these amendments. My question here relates now to section 10; section 10 (c) and I'm pulling that up one time. And, it speaks to the removal of the Advisory Committee's responsibility to review work plans and programmes. I am seeking some clarity here as to why this is being removed. I know Senator Garraway said this should be moved to the Administrative Body. But, I'm kind of concerned here as to why the Advisory Committee cannot have the responsibility of reviewing programmes. It is an Advisory Committee and in reviewing programmes, it may give some direction to that as well. So, those are my two comments for now. Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I do have a final question as it relates to section 13 of the principal Act. And, I'm going to read the section (c) that says, **“the complainant makes the payment of the prescribed fee.”** Perhaps Senator Garraway can give us some idea as to what that prescribed fee is because I would have read the Act and I see some places where it says, no more than \$1,000 in some instances, but in this case, the payment of the prescribed fee is not noted. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy President: Senator Garraway.

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Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. I sat still because I was expecting you to make your comments as, as...

Mr. Deputy President: I have many. Unfortunately where I'm sitting now I can't.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: As leader of... the Senator representing the Business Community, I was expecting to hear from you, so unfortunate. Mr. Deputy President, I want to start with the last first, and just to commend my dear Senator, colleague, Senator St. Cyr for your observation and it is testimony that you would have done some work as it relates to to the Bill. And I realise that, and I want to jump out and say when in my first presentation to you guys, I said to all of us that we have to be responsible, we have to be honest, basically truthful to the people. And, I thought this was extremely nonpartisan, it was a question of wanting to make sure that the consumers are very well protected. So, yes, there is a typo in this 33(1), it should have read 33 (3), so, in Committee Stage we will fix that. Also, I want to say a special thank you to all the Members for supporting and their comments. And, just to say to the question as it relates to, seeing that it be an officer within the Public Service. The rules of the Public Service indicate that the Public Service is a Public Service Commission appointment, and the rules governing such appointment will take precedence. So, of course, the Public Service will advertise the post and appointment will be made via the Public Service Rules and Regulations.

As it relates to the concern as to labelling in foreign language. My knowledge, told me that this will not get onto the market. There will be foreign language on the label because you're selling to various jurisdictional destinations. But, our mother tongue, our English Language must be on the label, if not the Bureau of Standard will not approve it to be sold on the market. If this would have happened, there was a slip up. But, I remember not too long ago, probably about three/four years ago, Bureau of Standard would have stopped the sale of toothpaste on one brand of toothpaste in the market, because it was all in a foreign language. And, I know quite a lot have been said, but knowing how proactive the Bureau of Standard is and ensuring that the consumer is

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protected, they will continue to do the job. And, I I want to say here with assurance that the Bureau of Standard will continue to ensure that whatever is put on the market, one, meet the standard that has been established and it is safe for consumption etc. etc. etc.

Again, expired products, if by chance you were to purchase something, I know there is often this in certain supermarkets and other places, there will be either a convenient line or some little table with special deals and those things will be drastically reduced and if you examine them it's because in two days time, the goods will be expired, probably less than a month's time. And, one may go to this line and take the things, but if you see something expired, why would you consume it? Why would you purchase it? I think the need here now is in the public education that will ensue as a result of this is to have an understanding with the Business Community. If it is expired, it should not be on the shelf. It should not be on any special discount area, it's expired, it should be gone. There should be no temptation to our people who are looking to save a dollar my brother. If you give a man an opportunity to save a two cents, he will do it. I know one person, he used to travel from the supermarket in the Market Square, look at the price of the items there and move across on the Carenage and look at the price, and if it is five cents cheaper in anyone, in the Market Square, they will go back to the Market Square and purchase it there. Because... **(the President entered the Chamber)** ...I hope you get the opportunity, I'll beg for you **(speaking to Senator De Allie)**.

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

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator De Allie.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. So, you have another opportunity at the Third reading. So, as I've said, we'll go back to get the five cent difference. That's by nature our people and I will say, very thrifty and want to ensure that they get the most for every cent that they have. So seeing a table with

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special deals, there will be the temptation. So, I want to ask that we remove the temptation, it should not be there.

I do believe this Bill also will encourage suppliers to ensure that the products they bring onto the market is of the requisite quality and standard. Yes, we understand the markets and we understand the economy, and we'd love to get special deals. But, whenever you decide to get a special deal to bring your stuff so it could be at a reasonable price, ensure it is of the highest standard. Because I've seen here that after two years or up to two years of the time of the defect of a commodity, you can still make your claim or complaint. And, one may say, well, there is a warranty, what happens? I see this here as an extremely good piece of legislation, as I said, to be fair and balanced, and to ensure that consumers, their rights and privileges, are protected.

I want to end by saying, Mr. President, in thanking the Members for their further contribution, we have seen that the very vulnerable in our population will always look for special deals, and there's nothing wrong with this. And sometimes, the very vulnerable, their rights and privileges are the ones that have been trampled upon. And, this Bill here, seeks to protect them at all times. And I want to commend this Bill, Mr. President, for a second reading.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Mr. President, if you may indulge me.

Mr. President: Yes, Senator, the timing was right. But, I may have to go again.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: So you may. If I may offer some of my comments on the Bill. Thank you, Mr. President, and before I get there I didn't get the chance in the other Sitting to welcome my two new Senators on the side of me and to say how pleased I am to see how they have conducted themselves so far. I think we're in for an excellent move with the two additions. **(Applause)** And, I am certain that they will lend quality to the debate and keep the reputation of this House where it ought to be and continue to be. As you can see from Senator St. Cyr, she takes time to do research and that is a good thing.

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Having said that, Mr. President, let me get to this because I think all of us in Grenada understands the importance of having a properly functioning and effective Consumer Affairs Division. I don't think we can overemphasise the need for us to have a properly functioning and working Consumer Affairs Division and that is it the key thing here working and properly functioning because without that, anything can come to our market and our consumers, as was said, by the mover of the Bill, for want of economics and other things and deals, will get involved in products and services, it involves services as well, that are less than what it should be.

In terms of the Director issue and moving to a public officer and when I read this initially, I had some concerns, but at the end of the day, if we get the right person in the position, I don't think it will be an issue and this is what is needed here. If it creates a better efficient and proper functioning department, I have no objection to it. And, I believe it doesn't have to be the Minister, it will be, once it goes through the process, the person as was stated, by the Public Service Commission, I didn't have a difficulty with that.

The amendment... but I want to raise the issue of safety of products and our ability of the Consumer Affairs Department or Division or whatever we call it, when we get it working, and the ability of the department to be properly staffed with technical people to deal with the issues that will confront them. Because this is not only consumer products in terms of food and food related items.

We have a number of vehicles on our roads that comes in from Japan, as we call wherever they come from, that totally doesn't meet safety requirements and, this is a safety issue of our consumers. And, when they end up in accidents what happen and who die and so on and so on. And, it goes back to the other point of standards, we don't seem to have standards set up properly and working that will require these products and services that come in to meet a particular standard. So, for example, a vehicle can't enter the US market unless it has certain safety bars running on the side of the doors, to the front, crash points and all of that and so on. We seem to just let anything come into our market and then endanger the lives of our people. And, that is consuming of products outside of food, this is a vehicle. And, we need to set the

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standards because how could a Consumer Affairs Division properly function without standards to work against or with? You must have standards set on all of these product items that are coming in, whether it be toothpaste as was mentioned by the Leader of Government's Business. And, then when we look at the issue of these products that come in, the question becomes where is Customs, Bureau of Standards and Consumer Affairs? How are we working in collaboration, in tandem, to ensure that the consumer is protected? I know Customs have the authority to refuse these things, once Bureau of Standards do an inspection. We do heavy inspection on tyres. Bureau of Standards would come, especially on used tyres, and say these don't meet the requirement, they're not up to standard. There are times in the history where a whole container of used tyres were turned back, cannot be allowed to come into the market and to be used by our consumers. That level of collaboration is something that must speak to and it mustn't just be in an Act, it must... how we operationalise that? Is it that when these plans are drawn up, the plans that they talk about here that Senator St Cyr referred to. Is it that these operational issues between the Customs, the Bureau and the Consumer Affairs, is it that they're going to meet weekly, is it that inspection or inspectors are going to go out and inspect all of these things to ensure the languages is there, the measurements are there, as Senator for agriculture spoke about. So, there are a number of things in operationalising this department that needs to be looked at not just from a Consumer Affairs and the issue of consumers bringing complaints and then there is the issue of time to react. Because if you cannot react quickly on some of these issues, you would have defeated the purpose. The authority given to Customs and to Bureau within the Consumer Affairs must be a direct link where they can react quickly to an issue that has come that may be life threatening. And, you know, we in a Private Sector have nice ways of getting around things. So, when you talk about the expired products, we are not bringing in expire product, but we're bringing it close to the date of expiry, three months to go, six months to go. And again, that speaks to our standards and our laws. Should we allow any product to come in...

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Mr. President: For a moment I thought it was Senator Lewis speaking.
(Laughter) They say confession is good for the soul.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Mr. President, you know I say it as it is. My constituents that I represent must follow the proper rules and at the end of the day we're protecting people. So if a consumer wants to buy a product and a lot of our businesses do it, they look at products that are going to be expiring within a year and they get really great deals. Because in the US and other countries where these things come from it is against the law to have anything on the shelf within a year of expiry or whatever the time frame is. And then we go and we buy these deals and we get huge discounts, we bring it to our people and at the end of the day we discount it and as you said mover of the Bill, Senator Garraway, that for the want of deals we get into these things and then we get ourselves in trouble. So I reinforce the point, Mr. President, that we have to set standards for ourselves, we don't have. A lot of these countries set standards that sometimes end up being trade barriers depending on how they set it. But it is not that, it is about protecting your people and to ensure and it's not just goods, I mean it's goods and service acquiring a wide spectrum. There is electronics, there is a lot of things that come into our country that you pay for it and then when... within six (6) months, three (3) months, it spoil, you can't get no warranty, this, that gone, and you lose.

As you said, Senator Garraway, when people come to discussing the issue of their hard earned money, how do we recover? And with internet shopping and post COVID or in this COVID environment we going to be doing a lot of that and the issue is, is there recourse and is there standards that when we go on the internet and we buy these things, are they meeting the standards of the country? Again these are the discussions that need to be dealt with.

I fully support the removal of the fee to lodge the complaint because I don't think we can encourage people to come forward if they have to pay every time they make a complaint. And if I have five (5) complaints, I have to pay (5) fee, I mean come on, so we need to remove that to encourage people to come forward. But in encouraging

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people to come forward, we need to react timely as well because if I don't have to pay a fee to complain about a product or whatever service that we get, the issue becomes, what is the sense I am complaining, I won't complain again. So if a contractor is providing a service to me, Mr. President, that is woefully under the standards I require and you know we have a lot of strange things going on in construction after Ivan and we had nowhere to complain really; Consumer Affairs covers that. So when we have fraudsters coming in and doing things, we could deal with them quickly and immediately. But we need to react timely to the issues when the complaints come in because it would then not encourage people to come forward and complain when they have issues that they are facing.

I want to finally say that I support Senator André Lewis on the public discussions and the education. I think Senator Garraway raised that point. I would even go far as to say that you know when complaints come to the Consumer Affairs Division barring issues of confidentiality and when it goes to Arbitration or wherever, in Appeals, the public must be part of that hearing and must understand what is being discussed. We need to have these kind of public discourse. That must not be held behind closed doors because the average person... suppose somebody complain about tyres and the person who, buses and so using these tyres have defective tyres on the market. If it's not in the public and people understand the discussion that is going on, I may continue to buy and put people's lives in danger. So we need to have something set up where these discussions can happen in public and not behind closed doors. Probably when it reach to a certain place in the discussions, we may go behind closed doors but initially I think when complaints come forward and the Consumer Affairs Division decides this is a valid complain and something that needs to be investigated, some aspect of that needs to be in the public domain whether through a PR Programme or whatever. But even the discussions, I don't think it's something we should hide behind closed doors. It should be happening in the public and invite the public to come in an comment and give their... I think these are things that's not supposed to be behind closed doors, Mr. President, and I will urge Senator Garraway in his considerations when they develop the work plan and so on for this department and they operationalise it in great detail that these are

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things that need to be considered. Because the public at the end of the day is the one that we are trying to protect with this Act and the only way to do that is to be open and transparent in the issues that's being discussed as we see them being discussed.

So I fully support the amendments being made and of course the corrections as made by Senator St. Cyr as we go into Committee to change those. But I think it's an excellent move and in operationalising it I think your Research Department of that Division has to be carefully looked at and people brought in or engaged, not necessarily working full time but engaged in different sectors of the economy that could come in and properly advise the consumers. Whether it be vehicles, whether it be electronics, whether it be food stuff, whether it be whatever, they could get proper advice so that when we look to investigate these matters, they're properly investigated. And alongside that, we really probably need to engage the Bureau to get far more active in setting standards for a wider range of product and not just limit it to the some that we have now under mandatory standards and so on. We really probably need to set standards quickly in conjunction with CARICOM. Because we're not reinventing the wheel, there will be standards set for a number of things across CARICOM, so we just need to adopt it, look at our particular situation and see how we could deal with it. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator De Allie. Senator Noel.

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Mr. President, I share the same sentiment with my colleague regarding the corrections that need to be made on the Bill. And let me commend her for good observation and so forth. But in regard to the intention of the Bill I would support the intention of the Bill, because I believe that good governance has been exercised and democracy. And we often hear about the rights of the customer and protection and so on and I think that we are going in the right direction in regards to protecting the customer and protection overall, in terms of defect goods and so on, because it has been the custom in this country, I think, where people, numerous problems in terms of complaining and you have some of the business people that gives

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a lot of problems in terms of compensating these people for the defective goods and so on.

So I think it is a step in the right direction and that will also benefit in my view the ordinary man, the poor ordinary man is more likely to suffer in this case without a Bill like that being passed. Whereas different people in society might be better off in terms of having access to a lawyer or being able to pay a lawyer and so forth in this case, I am glad to see that the Bill address the issues where the ordinary man could be compensated and so forth.

Especially in regards to the removal of payment for lodging the complaint again I think that is a step in the right direction whereas it addresses the poor and vulnerable people and so on. This is very good. Again the Bill seeks to benefit the poor and exploited, the people who has been taken advantage on a daily basis in this country. But the only thing is before I mention that, let me also support Senator Campbell in regards to the agricultural products and so on, in terms of the label. Just yesterday I used some stuff on my plants and at times the label could be a bit difficult to read. Not just being difficult to read but the label sometime doesn't be... in terms of being specific in terms of whether it's two (2) tablespoon and so on, it could be difficult for the regular ordinary farmer to get the information. So I think those are things that need to be considered going forward as well as the environment, taking into consideration. So some of the chemicals that we bring in for Agricultural use and Agricultural produce be ensured that it does no harm to the environment and does no harm to our good soil here on the long term.

So these are some of the things that I looked at on the Bill that I think is good and I see a step in the right direction where we have the removal... which is Clause 2, the removal of the Minister where prior to now was given the authority to appoint the Director of the Consumer Affairs and so on. That post would be given to a Public Officer, so I think that is a step in the right direction again. And I also would say Senator Lewis brought the point that is how this is done is the issue and so on but again I would say it is a step in the right direction in terms of consumer protection and so on.

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The only thing is that I am just a little bit appalled that this has taken so long in a modern society because I would think that Bills like that would have been enacted already in terms of protection of the consumer and so on. Because as it is, it appears as though in the construct as it is before, it seem as though we were... we tend to protect more the businessman than the consumer, which is the ordinary man. So in my view I'm just a little bit appalled that this Bill in terms of proper protection of the customers and so on was never really done in the past.

So I applaud the... not because we are opposition we will just oppose everything. I think once something is in the interest of the ordinary man and the people of this country where we could benefit significantly, again the intention of the Bill as Senator St. Cyr pointed out some of the errors, mistakes there going forward. I will support the Bill. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Noel. Just as a point of information to let you and other Senators know that the demand for a Consumer Protection legislation and at the time an Agency, was part of the programmatic platform of the Trade Union Movement before 2008. In fact in the manifesto of workers' interest published by the Trade Union Movement that demand was made. And it was one of the things we were demanding when we were also demanding formation of social dialogue grouping. And so it is not only your frustration but certainly the frustration I would think of the Labour Movement, because it took quite a long while. As you noticed, this legislation was just... the Bill was just passed in the Consumer Protection Bill is 2018, yes, and it took that long for the Bill to come into force. And we were campaigning, there was a significant campaign and Senator Lewis would tell you that by the Trade Union Movement making this demand in 2008.

So it literally took 10 years of pressing legislators and the problem is pretty widespread especially with electronic goods. People bring in electronic goods, you bring in parts, things go up and arrears and quite often these goods are purchased through hire purchase where the worker has to pay massive amount of interest. Because quite often the hire purchase industry is really the sale of interest and not so

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much goods. So they make the goods readily available at little or no money but paid over a long period of time with massive interest. And it's unfair to working people to have to buy a television, a refrigerator, washing machine and it's inappropriate for me to call names but I can tell you that people have suffered a significant amount of disappointment and agony. And then the other problem with these things is that they bring in no parts. So there are worn known parts of this equipment will go. I mean if you're buy a washing machine, one of the most replaceable parts is the pulley, that rubber pulley that spins the machine and that goes and that's understandable because it's actually a consuming part of the machine and for a simple pulley, having spent \$3,000.00 plus interest to buy a piece of equipment and within 12 months that goes and you know what some of these businesses do? They offer you a new round of credit, rather than replace it because you can't find the parts and that's one of the significant problems that I hope at some point...

But this is where public interest matters and legislation comes in. So the Trade Unions, people like yourself can raise public interest issues and even through Private Members Bill, seek to strengthen legislation in order to better protect the public and ultimately in many instances protect yourself. I just thought I would make those comments, right. Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to further provide some clarity to the questions and probably suggestions that was raised by two additional Members. And I want to start with the last first and that is the concern raised by Senator Noel as to the fact that such an important Bill took so long in coming and we share the same concern as well. As we would have stated in the presentation that this is a part of a harmonised piece of legislation within the OECS and it has been taking too long, we moved ahead of everybody to get it. So we have to give kudos to this Government and just listening to what Senator Humphrey, the President, would have said before 2008 they were making moves for something of this sort to be implemented. It didn't happen, but we know the history in Grenada over the period of time. And we are here today to ensure that this is given the all the teeth necessary to

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provide the protection for consumers. And I am extremely happy that it is happening. It took too long but it is happening, because this Government decide we are going to move. There are certain things, yes you wait but you can't wait indefinitely when your people are hurting as a result of this long wait. So we have to be grateful that it is happening, it is happening today and you are part of history, making it happen. Probably it waited for you to be apart of this process.

The whole idea of safety raised by Senator De Allie, we can belabour the point but it is a very important point. Safety will always be the number one priority of this Government, safety for its people and we have learned something new today. You get an opportunity on great deals, commodities and products that have a short lifespan and could bring it onto the market and I do agree from what he has said. And I'm putting this together, there will be a greater collaboration with the Bureau of Standard which is a part of the Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Trade is implementing the Consumer Protection Bill, so there will be greater collaboration and of course with Custom. The Custom is the first gateway to things coming into this country and if we're to ensure that we maintain the standards, it is one thing to have it and the next thing to have officers who will implement it. And based on what I have seen in the past, officers are very responsible about their job and I want to believe that we will continue to see this happening in as much as ensuring that the goods that comes on the market is of high standard and high quality.

We can't do nothing less, Mr. President, because there is a correlation to health as a result of, if our people will consume faulty products. Yes, and I want the business community to recongnise it this way, we can get cheaper goods to come on the market and it all will turn out good in terms of their profit margin. But if those goods because of expiry dates and so forth would create health problems, the very country's health systems would be stretched. So we have to see this as all of us, we're in this together, working to ensure that whatever produce or products are on the market is of the highest standard.

Secondly to this, the Bureau of Standard your work will be scrutinised daily to ensure that those standards have been maintained and I agree with Senator De Allie.

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We have to lift the bar, the standard that you will find in one jurisdiction stating that commodities one year to expiry should not be presented to the consuming public, but why we cannot have that too? Standards should be across the board for everybody. That might be one of the reasons, we're saying first world nations and second and third world. But the health of the people should be paramount and if one standard exists in one country, let it be here as well. We have moved recently to ensure that vehicles, ten (10) years and over will not be landed in this country, why? We are talking about environmental issues but health issues as well. That is the standards we have established because in the first world nation, they recognise those vehicles are creating serious environmental problem and people with underlying respiratory problems are having issues with those vehicles. So they get it off from their lands and dump it in those third world nations.

We here, and we're taking the lead again and saying as a nation, ten years and over, don't come, there is no free port for you. And I mean some folks saying, why are you doing this? Because of the reasons I have shared. It is a bigger problem, the health issues that will be created. The environmental key issues that will be created, it will cost us more to correct them. So rather than getting into it and getting into problems down the road, stop it. So who knows, we may get to one day where it's going to be less than ten (10) years, but that's where the world is going. And we are promoted in the region as going to be the first Climate Smart City in the region. We have to lead by example, and, Mr. President, we are indeed on the right track. We are making those steps because the health of a nation is the wealth of a nation.

And as a Government we will continue to put in place systems and measure to protect our people, that's what it is. Sometimes because... as I have said last week, we are a free spirited people and what is free, there are consequences. So in this period we ask people to observe our protocols for the COVID pandemic and so on and so forth. But this goes against our free spirited nature, so we have to continue with the education to get people to realise the inherent risk associated with some of our behaviours and practices. And for these reasons, Mr. President, I commend the Bill for second reading.

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Question proposed.

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 the Senate resolves itself into a Committee of the whole Senate to consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate in Committee.

Senate resumes.

Mr. President: I have to report that the Bill was considered Clause by Clause and with one typographical change in Clause 6, amendment of section 33 of the principal Act where the typo reference was subsection (1) ought to have been subsection (3) where only matters referenced there.

Question proposed for the adoption of the Chairman's Report.

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

Mr. President: Senator Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted. **(Inaudible comments)** Mr. President, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

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Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading, a Bill for an Act shortly entitled Grenada Tourism Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Ag. Clerk: An Act to amend the Tourism Authority Act No. 24 of 2013, shortly entitled Grenada Tourism Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: 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 Sitting.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

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

Question proposed.

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Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, the Bill before us seeks to amend the Grenada Tourism Authority Act, 2013, otherwise known as the principal Act. There are two specific amendments that are being made to this Act of 2013. The first is increasing the scope of properties that will be covered under this Act and the second is amendments to the penalties that are associated with noncompliance to this Act. The Grenada Tourism Authority, Mr. President, is responsible for regulating all Tourism related accommodation facilities but within the Act it specifies that that focus is on properties with 3 bedrooms or more and the purpose of the licensing and monitoring is for quality adherence standards. However, the Act doesn't cover properties of less than three properties, so the smaller properties that exist that are being privately managed and many by service providers such as Airbnb are not covered under this Act.

And, Mr. President, we've seen a proliferation over time, in recent times of the number of smaller properties, those of two (2) bedrooms and less being offered through the likes of Airbnb. And, just to help illuminate the role of providers such as Airbnb, providers such as them have revolutionised the Tourism Sector, where you have across hundreds of cities across the world, millions of properties, whether it's person's rooms within person's private homes, private properties are being offered as accommodation for visitors. And, we're seeing a lot of those now, it has become very popular here in Grenada. But, what we have to be conscious of is these properties do not fall under the remit of the Act. So, all of these properties that are being privately offered, privately rented out are not regulated. And, it's important that these properties are regulated also. All of the Accommodation Sector needs to be, needs to be monitored and regulated.

The Accommodation Sector is an important part of the tourism product. We go beyond just the sun, sea and sand, it's about the experience of our visitors. And, those experiences are not only based on, you know, what they experience in terms of what that destination has to offer, but also where they stay is a critical component of that and the experience that they are able to enjoy. And, it speaks to, whether it's a safety, basic safety of those properties, whether it is hygiene and cleanliness, whether it's the maintenance of the properties, the staff who attends to them during their stay and

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whether that service that is offered by that accommodation provider is in keeping with the service that's being offered, that's being advertised. And, in these modern times with social media, where you could have a visitor, a consumer, who has one bad example, that experience is not just limited to bad press for that one property, but it can also damage the reputation and the quality standing of the destination as a whole. Therefore, as the Tourism Sector becomes more and more sophisticated, as the product offerings become far more, far more exotic, far more complex, it's important that the services that are offered, the product that is offered is able to meet a standard, a quality standard that ensures that Grenada as a destination remains competitive.

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

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. Deputy President, it's also important to note the importance in the relationship between the Accommodation Sector and airlift which is so critical to servicing Grenada as a destination, whether it's the accommodation that creates the demand for the airlines to come in to be able to fill those seats. We have, and this is not just unique to Grenada, many destinations, regions, such as the Caribbean, other parts of the world, especially those smaller destinations. There are arrangements with the Airline Industry where you have to provide seat guarantees. You have to ensure that those flights that are coming in, all those seats that are coming into your destination are actually filled and there are financial implications if those flights are coming in less than full, and that adage, **“you have to pay to play.”** So, the more hotel rooms we have, the more accommodation we're able to offer, the more demand we're able to generate as a destination is first of all the more viable that airlift is. So, those guarantees either don't have to be provided or the fees that have to be paid are kept to a minimum or we are able to encourage more flights, to bring in more visitors to our shores and be able to attract and encourage more airlines, whether it is from existing destinations, whether it is from new destinations, to service our tourism product and having as many rooms as possible, quality rooms as possible to generate that demand is absolutely critical.

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So, Mr. Deputy President, It's because of the importance of the Accommodation Sector, that it is important that all types of property, whether they are villas, whether they are hotel rooms, whether it's bed and breakfast, guest houses, private dwellings, it's important that they all attain a basic competitive quality standards. And, Mr. Deputy President, with the comments that you made with regard to the Consumer Protection Bill, in terms of the need for ensuring quality of goods, quality of service, it is critical, if we're talking about a vehicle, if we're talking about a car tyre, whether we're talking about the goods that are in our stores, it is equally as critical when we come to speak to our tourism product and our Accommodation Sector.

So therefore, Mr. Deputy President, the Grenada Tourism Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2020 seeks to amend the principal Act to revise the definition of the terms **“Apartment, Guest House and Villa”** ensuring that all tourism accommodations are subject to the regulations and the monitoring of the Grenada Tourism Industry to ensure that those service levels, product, quality levels are of the greatest, and minimum standard that ensures our competitiveness. So, this will include the amendment, will effectively include those properties of two bedrooms and less.

Mr. Deputy President, the second amendment speaks to decreasing the penalties that are associated with non-conformance to the licensing requirements. And, it's decreasing it from a fine not exceeding \$50,000 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three years in the existing legislation to a lesser penalty of a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months. And, then for reoffenders, so once you've been convicted of a breach, then the fine will be reduced to a daily penalty of \$200 for every day that that offence continues.

Mr. Deputy President, it's important to note that the reduction in the penalties does not in any way diminish the significance and importance that's associated with regulating the Accommodation Sector. The intent of reducing those penalties is certainly in this next period to encourage more properties to register with the GTA, so that they will fall under the regulatory umbrella rather than persons trying to avoid registering because of the penalties that are involved. What is going to be absolutely critical in this is the enforcement of those regulations and the enforcement of the

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penalties that are associated with this. And then, in addition, there is a transition period of 90 days from the passing of this Bill to enable those that fall outside of the two bedrooms and less category to comply with the regulations. So, there is this transition period to enable those properties to do what they need to do to register and then to do what they need to do to comply.

So, Mr. Deputy President, the Bill before us contains four Clauses. The first Clause provides for the Short Title; Clause 2 provides for the amendments of section two of the principal Act to revise the definitions of the terms, **“Apartment, Guest House and Villa;”** Clause 3 speaks to the amendments of section 52 of the principal Act to decrease the penalties for non-compliance and, Clause 4 speaks to this transitional period of ninety (90) days for those who fall outside of the current regulations to comply.

So, Mr. Deputy President, the amendments before us speak to a greater focus on ensuring that all properties that fall within our Tourism Accommodation Sector are properly regulated, that standards, quality standards are set, that they are enforced to ensure that the quality of the product that we're offering as part of our destinational product is as competitive as possible. And, it's for those reasons, Mr. Deputy President, that I commend this Bill for its second reading. I thank you.

Mr. Deputy President: Senator Cadet.

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Deputy Chair, I rise to give my unwavering support to this Bill. And, Mr. Deputy President, like most Lws or Bills that have come through this House and the Law previously, the Bill previously, Laws are made that you have to adapt to this current situation or as society changes things need to change and so too is the Law. And, looking at the amendment here, Mr. Deputy President, you see in here that in the definition of **“Apartments”** at paragraph (a) by deleting the words **“three or more”** where they appear. So, basically, Mr. Deputy President, what is happening here you're taking consideration places like Airbnb, individuals offering one or more rooms. And, Mr. Deputy President, I just want to speak specifically to Airbnb because it's a really interesting concept. I call it the uber

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of the hotels. They don't own any real estate really. It's just you putting up your room and getting guests. And, what is interesting about this Bill is how it ties in Airbnb is to ensure that we maintain safety and hygiene, cleanliness, and also taking into consideration, Mr. Deputy President, the current times. The fact that now with COVID-19 and it will change the way how things operate, it will change the way how we do business, it will change the way how we live and also the type of tourists we'll attract. It is said that, Mr. Deputy President, that a lot of our tourists that comes in here is usually seniors, majority of seniors. And, the interesting concept is that, it is believed that post-COVID, the market will change to a younger audience of tourists. And, you know, the interesting concept of Airbnb is that there are over 260 million users, and you know, 74% are within the range of 18 to 44.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator De. Allie.

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

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: Yes, Mr. President. So, you have 260 million users and guests across 64,000 cities using Airbnb, and 74% of that are between the age of 18 to 44. So, it's a very youthful base using Airbnb, they don't use traditional hotels, they use small rooms, live in the village. And, Mr. President, I think it's very important as a tourism, dominant market that we protect the image of this country. And, I think with ensuring that it is regulated, that you ensure safety, you ensure that the brand, the name of the country is protected, and you protect the market for even people who want to get into Airbnb. So, you're basically putting money in the hands of people, putting money in the local community and spurring economic growth and development.

So, Mr. President, understanding the concept and the intention of this Bill, understanding the way things are happening globally, and understanding that we have to adapt and change with the times, therefore, Mr. President, I give my full support to this Bill.

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Mr. President: Senator St. Cyr.

Sen. the Hon. Tessa St. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, in our last sitting on Friday, last week, it was, I remembered clearly that there were some Members on the “Other Side” asking the question, what are we saying to the Grenadian public? And, today I would take the opportunity to ask that question.

Mr. President, it would appear as if there is a trend, and like my, I'm standing in support of Clause one and the other Clauses, but I do have some queries, some questions, some discomfort on Clause 3. And, in doing so, maybe I can just highlight something. Senator Stiell, according to the document in front of us, we have “**not exceeding \$1,000**”, I think you read \$5,000. And secondly, you said \$200, and the document in front of us, says \$250. So, I don't know. I want to speak to it correctly.

There would appear, Mr. President, to be a trend as I was saying. Mr. President, it seems as if the business places are more or less put in a position where they're getting just a tap, not even a slap on the wrist for any noncompliance with the regulations that are set. Mr. President, bear with me. Now, according to section 15 of the 2020 Regulations, the Emergency Powers COVID-19 Regulations, number 15, Mr. President, the penalties for a regular man breaking the Regulations would be \$500, \$750 and \$1,000. Those are the penalties for that. Interestingly, Mr. President, the Honourable Prime Minister would have said in his response to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition's question, would have highlighted that there were no plans to press charges against the businesses who were either making false claims, or where there were issues of disbursement to employees. Now, Mr. President, this Clause here seems to be written in the same faith. And, I really question the thinking behind, I heard Senator Stiell and what he said based on, you know, using this as an opportunity to get persons to come out and you know, get involved, to register their businesses and so on. But, I question that thinking, because if there is a penalty for doing something wrong, I cannot understand why a business place would not want to register, somebody thinking of, you know, getting into the business, not want to register the business because there are penalties. To me, Mr. President, that just seems flawed in all its respects. If I am

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interested in registering, if I'm, for example, as Senator Cadet would have spoken about, Airbnb, why should I be so concerned about the penalties for breaking the Regulations as opposed to presenting my room or my, you know, house to be used, or even to have the hotels registered to be part of that? So, I question that, Mr. President.

Furthermore, Mr. President, I do have a question for Senator Stiell. I would like to understand, Mr. President, what formula was used for the reduction, because here it is, we're having a reduction from the initial Act of 2%. So, now the business, the hotels, those that are falling under that category, would basically be having a penalty 2% of the original penalties. So that's what they have and then a 10% respectfully. So, let me put it again back into context. It says here, **“on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$1,000.”** That, Mr. President, is 2% of the original fine that was in the principal Act. Lower down it says **“not exceeding \$250.”** That, Mr. President, is a reduction of 10%. Now, I do believe that a reduction needs to be given, but I do not understand the formula, the rationale behind the figure quoted.

So, I would perhaps ask if Senator Stiell can give us some more clarity on that, so I could better understand what is happening here. But, I would caution that there is a trend that we're observing. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator. Senator the Honourable Dr. Dunstan Campbell.

Sen . the Hon. Dr. Dunstan Campbell: Yes, Mr. President, I rise to support the Bill and to make some comments with regards to the trend. The Honourable Leader of Government's Business mentioned that this Bill is going to revolutionise the Tourist Sector. And, I support that and I would like to make a suggestion. I've been fortunate to be part of a team developing Action Plan for revitalising the economy. And, during that period, we were working with the Tourist Sector and it came up on more than one occasion that we need to add additional things beyond the Airbnb. And, the suggestion was a day on the farm, we should have a product called **“A Day on the Farm.”** And, right now that you are actually discussing standards, right, in terms of accommodation,

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you can take this on board, look at accommodation, look at the products that you're going to be offering to the guests, you expand the experience, not the sea, sun and sand anymore but you go out to the rural areas, spend a day on a farm and learn something. And, you know, Mr. President, sometimes we take certain things for granted. You know, last year, there was a group of fifty-nine (59) Martiniquians that came to visit our shores and they visited my farm and I had all prepared about, you know, how to do intercropping and ecology and so on. And, in my presentation, I said, well, you know, we have the male and female nutmeg plants and immediately everything changed. They all wanted to see what's a male nutmeg plant, and what's a female nutmeg plant. So, my whole presentation just gone. And, you know, I had to go and look for male nutmeg plants and they come, you know, looking to see the difference between a male and a female and when they found it out, they were, you know, so happy that they know exactly what a male is. But, there are so many, so many things that we can do in packaging this product, "A Day on the Farm", right.

For example, soursop is now a big product, hand pollinate the soursop. So, you get up in the morning and you know the pollination takes place at a particular time of the day. So, you have that time of the day when you go to pollinate your soursop and then at a certain other time because you can go pollinate passion fruit, you know, and then you can go pollinate vanilla, you know, and all these things you can do, feed the chicken, you know, feed the goats, and all sorts of things like that. So, I am proposing, I'm taking this as an opportunity to pass on what was said not by the Agricultural Sector but, by the Tourism Authority personnel on that day, to say that we must move to the rural areas. We must move away from the medieval model. My colleague Senator, Senator... **(inaudible comments)** Terry Noel, very good, I'm couldn't get the name. Yes, move away from that model and start moving the earnings, the tourist dollar would go out into the rural area, and of course, create economic growth and help in the development of the farm.

So, yes, Mr. President, I'm proposing that as we put together the standards for the villas and the apartments and so on, I would like to have them engage in looking at this product, **"A Day on the Farm."** Thank you very much, Mr. President.

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Mr. President: Thank you Senator Campbell. Senator Christopher De Allie.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to support the changes that is being proposed to the Tourism Authority Act. From the point of view, Mr. President, that and I'm going to use this word loosely, in these "covidious times," you know, we have to think about things differently. **(Inaudible comments / Chuckles)** So we need to look at what we do and how we do. I am of the view that quality assurance and quality standards for the Tourism Sector is critical and is important. And, we have a number of five star and other stars, and Airbnb is a quickly expanding rapidly developing sector of the business that needs to be looked at. And, I believe it starts to understanding, first of all, what under the Tourism Act that we need to look at to ensure that we have the right standards and the right safety measures in place, and in these covidious times the ability to track and do a number of things. When we sat on the tourism subcommittee dealing with how we open back up, there was a lot of issues around what we do and how we do to deal with COVID and the cost. That is another issue that is going to be significant. When we introduce these changes to the legislation, and in order to fall under the principal Act and what is required, there is going to be some costs associated, in what they do and how they do in order for them to do things properly.

So, I support that, from the point of view that these are things that we need to look at and we need to standardise to ensure across the board, we are aware. And, the Tourism Authority as well need to understand how they collect data and what they do and when we're looking to help the various sectors of the Tourism's Business, these Airbnb can come in also within the net to get assistance under programmes that we may offer and see how we can develop them as well, particularly in the Sister Isles of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. There are areas there and accommodation and properties there, that would probably need more assistance than they're already getting. And, if they fall under this transition arrangement here that we're doing, they probably now can access what we're doing there. So, moving it and allowing them to come in under the umbrella will also help develop them as well.

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Now, the point raised by Senator St. Cyr is an interesting one because I don't want to get the impression out there that businesses are being given, whether it's tourism or otherwise because on the adjournment, I would have something to say about what has happened under the Stimulus Package. But, I think that the idea of moving the penalties and the reduction and the penalties is one to look at the sizing of the operations and where we look at how we do what we do with various properties. A one bedroom, Airbnb operation, or a two bedroom operation cannot be charged \$250,000 or \$5,000.00 for a penalty, it will just blow them out of the water. So I think some consideration has to be given there as well when we size what we do in terms of this and I suspect part of this is to deal with that.

The mover of the Bill will obviously will give us more details, but your point is valid, in that what formula, how did they come around, how did they come up with 2% in one case, 10% in the other case. Again you know, Mr. President, I say, we have... the level of intelligence here that is asking us to bring the Movers of the Bill, you know they have to come a little more prepared now. **(Chuckles)** You're going to be examined in a little more detail. Some of us don't have the time to look at all the details but we have a young Senator here that is going through and she's definitely raising issues for the mover of the Bill to consider. So I have no issues with that at all. I think the House needs to be given the information as to how the Tourism people came up with that. I don't know if Senator Stiell could answer but certainly it will engage us as we move forward, as we look at these Bills.

So, Mr. President, I fully support the changes, I believe it brings some level of standardisation to the industry, some level of control and in these times we need that to understand what we do. We don't want sporadic things happening all over the place and we have no control. Particularly, we need to bring them into the registration umbrella so we know who are out there, what they are doing and how they are doing it. Thank you.

Mr. President: Senator Noel.

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Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Yes, Mr. President, I just want to make some remarks regarding the Grenada Tourism Authority Bill. I would understand the reason from... in terms of the licensing from three (3) bedroom to a one (1) bedroom and so on. Because it increase the stock, the accommodation and so on. I understand all that and again in a highly, I believe Tourism is a highly competitive venture because in terms of the space Caribbean space, almost every country in the Caribbean are competing in the same industry with the exception of Trinidad but even Tobago, I think, is engaged in some level of Tourism as well despite the energy sector and so on.

So we have to come up with innovative ways to attract more people and so on and similar to the point that was made that in regards to the room stock in terms of the availability of flights and so on, more flights will be coming in and so on. I support the point, because the fact that you have more flights coming in, which means you would have more options. It may well lower the cost of tickets and so on because you could shop around in different Airlines and so on and those type of things.

Again, in terms of the standard, because it is important when you are in a highly competitive environment which is in the Caribbean, everybody competing in the same Tourism Industry. So the standard is very important and key to moving the industry forward as we compete and developing to certain level of brand and so forth. Again, the whole issue of the capacity, room stock and so on I believe it encourage the airlifts and more tourists will be coming. So in essence more revenue would be coming towards the state. But also not just the Tourism... the Tourist, but Grenadians in the diaspora would benefit from it as well in terms of booking flights and so on, they have more availability of flights and they may have more access to cheaper tickets and so on being available.

Because, I know for instance, living in Barbados for a couple years, you sometimes have two Virgin Atlantic flights on a daily basis coupled with two British Airways flights and then we're talking about Thomas Cook and so on. So sometimes on a daily basis in Barbados we may see about 7 to 8 jets on the ground at one given time. We have the Air2Sea thing there with the Tourism going on in Barbados. So this will encourage people to come and bring in more revenue and so on to the country.

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Also, the fact that we are moving the business towards the rural area a little bit, I am happy to see that, because once we lower in terms of licensing in terms of three to one bedroom and so on, people who have private homes who would construct a downstairs and so on and get involved in the business, it is good for the rural community where tourist and so on especially maybe people in the diaspora could live. But the only problem that I have with that to a certain extent is people in the community, taking COVID into consideration, which you will have tourist living in home dwellings along with people in the community and stuff like that. I think that should be taken into consideration and should be considered. And the other problem that I have is the fact that, I share the same sentiments with Senator St. Cyr. In the case of the penalties, why is it that we have to drop the penalties from \$50,000.00 which is three years to \$1,000.00 especially in an environment where COVID is concerned. Because I think...

Mr. President: Senator, if I may be a bit facetious. Sorry for my intervention... you don't have to sit, I'm just light hearted. I suspect part of the reason is that not for this Bill to be seen part of the martial law arrangement (I'm just kidding). I think Senator St. Cyr got it. **(Chuckles)** I'm saying the nature of the reduction from what could be seen to be draconian to something slight on the wrist, I said the motivation might be that this Bill not be seen as part of the great martial law plan. **(Laughter)**

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: Yes, Mr. President...

Mr. President: Just a light moment.

(Laughter)

Sen. the Hon. Terry Noel: I still have a little problem with it, I share the same sentiments in terms of reducing it but I understand somebody with just one room and the penalties may be a bit steep. But at the same time we're operating where things are not normal under the situation where COVID is concerned as well as we have to be

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careful again, because this Bill will go well under normal circumstances, where things are normal. With COVID right now... as we are seeing in the Bahamas, the Bahamas is getting ready to close, they could already be closed, I think from today or something for another 2 weeks. So I'm not... **(inaudible comments by, Mr. President)**

So in terms of debating a Bill where Tourism is concerned right now, I'm not seeing a rebounding of the Tourism Sector in any not too distant future and I wonder why sometimes we are discussing Tourism at this very moment. I think we should be discussing something maybe more of the Agriculture Bill where we could boost the economy and so on. But at the same time after, we are hoping that COVID will soon sweep away and things will return to normal.

But as it is now under the condition as it is, I'm not seeing that is quite applicable at this moment, where you're seeing countries that open up like Trinidad, Jamaica seeing deaths. I think Antigua again has some concerns as they open up and so on. So these are some of my concerns going forward with the Bill, but I know it's all in the interest. Once things are under normal circumstances, we are going to bring in more people, it's going to bring more people to the state, bring in more revenues. Again Grenadians in the diaspora would have access to it, more air travel as well as Grenadians in Grenada who're travelling outside of the country will have more access to Airlines and so on and maybe lower cost. So again, these are some of my concern, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you Senator Noel.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. So in wrapping up I wish to thank all Members on the floor for their comments. For the purposes of clarification, the reduction in the penalty, it is to \$1,000.00 and not \$5,000.00 and picking up on the point that Senator St. Cyr made and the question that you asked in terms of the rationale behind it, is a valid one. It's the right question to ask. Mr. President, I welcome that comment, I welcome others, it is important that we challenge

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and we are able to provide where we can the rationale behind the policy decisions that are being put forward.

And to address your specific point as to why the reduction in the penalties associated with this. What we have found, Mr. President, is that the larger established properties, those of three bedrooms and more, their compliance rate is actually very high. The Grenada Tourism Authority and before that the Grenada Board of Tourism has worked tirelessly for many years in ensuring that the properties are registered and are compliant with the quality standards. And there is a dedicated team that goes around every year visiting properties and ensuring that they are adhering to those standard levels. And so the penalty structure that has existed and existed since 2013 is wholly appropriate but as I said the compliance rates for those larger properties is high. What this amendment is now focusing on are properties of two bedrooms or less, one or two bedrooms. Mr. President, these are mom and pop businesses, these are ordinary people with an apartment in their home, a spare bedroom in the home, small property. So to face a fine of \$50,000.00 or imprisonment, up to 3 years imprisonment for non-compliance, for that demographic of accommodation provider is hefty. What we're trying to do is take advantage of the successive Airbnb which we've seen successes throughout the world. It is a valuable contributor to the roomstock of a country and where Grenada we have spent years building our roomstock so that we have a critical mass of accommodation that not only services the sector, services the economy as effectively and as efficiently as possible, but it also enables us to ensure the viability of the airlift that comes in. So this recent or relatively recent trend that we have seen with Airbnb and many persons here in Grenada taking advantage of the opportunities that are provided, and so the characteristic of that smaller grouping, it was felt that at this time it is necessary to reduce the penalties so that we can encourage not just persons to comply, there is a carrot and stick but it's also to get more persons to consider getting into this emerging sector. So that we can have more persons who are encouraged especially at this time where we know the economy, global economy is severely challenged. We have and will continue to have our challenges and if there are opportunities for ordinary persons not just in the South but throughout the country to be

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able to offer their homes as part of the Accommodations Sector to keep stimulating, keep pushing our sector forward especially in these difficult times, we have to take advantage of it. So, Senator St. Cyr, through you, Mr. President, that's the rationale, that's the sector that we are trying to target.

But it is important to note and this speaks to Senator Noel's comments and his Maiden Speech, Mr. President. I listened carefully to what the Members on the "Other Side" outlined and something that struck me and it is pertinent to this debate is the decentralisation of our tourism product. Outside, let's move the product to our rural communities, outside of the traditional tourism base in the south. And it's something that we have talked about for generations and we have talked in theoretical terms. But, Mr. President, under this Administration, we are doing just that, the projects... the two major hotels that grounds have been broken in St. David's, the La Sagesse, the Six Sense Project, 5 star hotels that will be constructed there. There is the Levera Project in St. Patricks, again moving the tourism product from the south of the country. And then we've had developments in Carriacou, we have a world-class marina that is now operational in Tyrell Bay in Carriacou. The Yachting Sector which is important to us, so this Administration, Mr. President, has, since we came into office in 2013, a significant amount of focus on the development of our economy as a whole, not just Tourism and there's the debate constant debate, is it tourism, is it Agriculture? It's both, Mr. President. In fact it goes beyond just the two, it is all areas where Grenada has a comparative advantage where we can diversify our economy, that we need to take advantage of that. And we have certainly been doing that within the Tourism Sector and focusing not just on the Accommodation Sector. I mentioned the Six Sense Projects in St. David's, The Levera Project up in St. Patrick's. But we have had, whether it was the opening of Sandals when we came into office, whether it's the construction of the Silver Sands Hotel, whether it is the Royalton, the upgrade of the former Rex, Kawana Bay, Calivigny Point, whether it is the proposed developments, major developments of Port Louis and Mount Cinnamon, significant investment, significant job creation opportunities, significant economic stimulation for Grenada at a critical time. And all of those projects over these... with these challenging COVID times

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and discussions with all of those developers continuing. There is an appetite for the further expansion and development of that sector. But coming back to this Bill, it also signals this Administration's attention and focus on our smaller investors, our smaller operators and trying to encourage development, trying to encourage investment, trying to encourage our ordinary persons with homes with a spare room and apartments that they wish to rent out so that they can take advantage and be part of this growth in our Tourism Sector that we have seen up to this point and the plans moving forward. So local economy, and macro-economic picture, jobs created for all, Mr. President.

So it's a major... so just addressing Senator St. Cyr's once again, the rational is now to focus on the smaller properties and Senator Noel, in terms of diversifying the product, in terms of reaching out and looking for opportunities that can be realised within the rural economy is a major focus of this Administration.

And then Senator Campbell's suggestion in terms of the "Day on the Farm" in terms of developing the product, rooms are important, our beaches are important, but it's about the experience and it's making that link between the Agricultural Sector and our Tourism Sector. So the suggestion that has been put forward by Senator Campbell is certainly a very valid point.

So, Mr. President, I wish to, in wrapping up just to say that the amendment that is before us is there to ensure that quality standards are adhered to. There is registration, there is the regulation of the smaller Accommodation Sector and the fee structure to again, the fine structure, sorry, is one to provide that carrot and stick. And we can always come back if there is a need to increase it, to alter it, we can always do so. But this is viewed as being relevant for this given time and it's for those reasons, Mr. President, that I commend this Bill for its second reading.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Stiell.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

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Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

House in Committee.

House Resume.

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

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: I beg to move the Chairman's Report be adopted.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Assistant Clerk: Item 16 - Public Business.

Item 17 - Adjournment.

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Mr. President: Before we go into the adjournment... **(inaudible comments)** from Senator Kim George, the Honourable Kim George that she... due to pressing legal matters she was unable to attend and I only saw this message after we commenced the proceedings of the House. So I wish to apologise but to enter into the record that she did communicate with me on her regrettable absence today. So Clerk, please take note. Now for the adjournment. Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I want to address a few matters on the adjournment which I didn't get chance to address on Friday's Sitting...

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you.

Mr. President: ...and normally people don't allow these light refreshments to go cold, so.

Sen. the Hon. Christopher DeAllie: I will be short. Mr. President, I listened to my colleague Senator from Labour when he spoke of the issue of the hoteliers that did not adhere to the Stimulus Package rules and as a result staff members and employees suffered in terms of delay in getting monies to them and so on. And I thought that was very unfortunate that members of the hotel group would have engaged in activities that wasn't following the rules, the rules that was clearly stipulated that they needed to follow and that only a certain group of employees will be eligible to receive the monies from the Government and the Government had put out the Stimulus Package. I was the one who said here, that stood in this Honourable House and felt that the Stimulus Package wasn't enough and we probably we could have done more.

But that being said, it is very disappointing to know that members of the Private Sector including the hotel group that had access to these monies would have engaged

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in activities that would tend to put their own employees at risk and not having monies received to them. And I mean, Mr. President, we're not talking about a lot of money, if someone is making \$1,000.00 base pay and they're getting 40%, this is \$400.00 they're getting as a help. So this is not monies that you know is a huge amount of monies that you would engage in activities to try and to basically defraud the Government from monies coming to ordinary staff members. So I am very disappointed that this has happened and from where I sit, I believe the Government... I hear Prime Minister say they wouldn't pursue this in a certain degree but these businesses would have signed an agreement stating that if they were found to be negligent in what they're supposed to do, they have to pay back the money. I think we should go further and name and shame them. I don't believe that **(applause)** this is an issue where we should just put this aside just because... you know most of us in the Private Sector try to follow the rules and follow the Laws and do what we're supposed to do and I don't think COVID is an excuse to break them.

And I believe that we need to treat our employees... we say our employees are our assets and we can't do it without them and yet we engage. I have had people come to me and say, you know, Mr. De Allie, I know I'm suppose to get \$400.00, I'm given \$300.00 and when I ask a question, I'm threatened to be dismissed. And I cannot understand how we could engage in that type of activities and blame it on COVID. I am sorry, I'm disappointed that that is the case but I believe that we need to as a people operate better in an environment like that.

When my colleague Senator in Labour spoke about he blames Government, I was confused about that and when you try to link that Government according to him needs to be blamed and the Private Sector is to be blamed. There is an insidious link between Government and Private Sector I believe is being made and that we are against Labour. I want to make it very clear that I don't support that insidious insinuation. And to say that if Private Sector people are not following the rules that they're supposed to follow, they are to blame. I was part of a Committee that looked at when this incentive package was supposed to be rolled out, the key intention was to get funds to people that are affected quickly.

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We started talking about giving the monies to the managers of the Enterprises and then only to hear that they're not getting the required... the staff not getting the required amount of money and things were being done otherwise with the monies. So you know from where the Government sit I thought the intention was the proper one, and I don't know how we could come back and blame Government. I thought my colleague Senator was talking about something else but not really the monies getting to staff. And I say this, Mr. President, with no apologies that I think when Private Sector companies engage in things outside of the remit of the rules and Laws, they must be held accountable and I say I am quite happy to name and shame, because I don't think we need to encourage that kind of activity at all.

Mr. President, I also want to touch quickly on another matter which is the issue of the COVID Bill and you know what we saw recently happening in St. Andrew in particular with the Jab Jab and what is happening there. I want to just say quickly, Mr. President, you know when we look at what is happening in our sister CARICOM country Trinidad, Trinidad has moved from 137 cases to 192 cases in a matter of days and we're speaking about a second wave in Trinidad. Quite frankly, do we really believe our borders are totally shut from people out of Trinidad? We have so much territory to patrol, anybody could come and take a yacht, power it up to Carriacou and Petite Martinique from Trinidad and it may slip through, it may and that person may be positive and we may get another spike in cases in Grenada, we may.

Our health services have been doing an outstanding job in keeping control and doing what we have to do (**applause**) but that job comes with sacrifice, it comes with sacrifice and most importantly, Mr. President, responsibility, responsibility of our people. We were very good in the lock down, we adhered to the Laws and we did what we had to do and as a result we have very little cases now in Grenada. No deaths, a major achievement. But could you imagine that we let down our guard and we start to violate all the protocols that we know kept us safe; social distancing, wearing a mask, sanitising, for what... wanting to play Jab Jab? I have a problem with that, Mr. President. And if 2020 is a year where we have seen all kind of anomalies because for COVID, what is wrong with postponing the Jab Jab celebration? What we saw in St.

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Andrew, in recent times that came over social media, children being exposed, no masks being worn, everybody, for the excuse of wanting to have a good time and to play Jab Jab or is it an excuse for us to say we want to go against the authorities because we say no carnival this year. I have a difficulty with that level of irresponsibility among our nation. And, you know, the disheartening thing about Mr. President, is that, if somebody who playing Jab Jab and they get infected and it stay there and they're in their little cocoon, no problem. Because you can say well, I violate the rules if I catch it I have to deal with the consequences, but that is not the problem with this particular virus. It's the innocence, and the innocent one outside of that bubble that is going to be affected. So, they will have the possibility of infecting people who are innocent and may kill them. I don't want that, I can't understand how we could think so irresponsible by saying that we want to have a good time and engage in activities like what we saw in St. Andrew, with Jab Jab.

And, I also believe, Mr. President, that when we're talking about introduction of the COVID Bill, and we postpone Carnival, as we did on the Friday, when we did the Bill, how could we send mixed messages. There is an event I'm told to be happening in the stadium, where some people is going to come in and have a kind of a soca show. What is that? If we're cancelling Carnival, we have to cancel it in totality. Why are we sending mixed messages and giving permission to have these shows and have people come in an environment, we really believe that we're going to be able to control social distancing when we start to drink and enjoy ourselves and have fun? I have no problem with people having fun and going out and exercising themselves and getting, I have no issues with that. But, in a carnival atmosphere and environment, we do not follow the rules; that is something.

I mean, Mr. President, social distancing is not a normal thing for us, people. We Caribbean people that like to enjoy ourselves and fete, social distancing is a difficult thing. But, if you have to, and you cannot social distance, at least wear your mask. They're going to tell you the mask is very uncomfortable, so we're not wearing any mask. But, we have to make sacrifices and be responsible to ourselves and other people. And, I am not happy with the mixed messages that's being sent, that if we say,

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there is no Carnival, we put 2020 as a lost year. Let us start to plan for 2021, if there is room for that in 2021, because we don't know what is going to happen with this virus and how it's mutating and what's happening or whether a vaccine is going to come. And, if a vaccine does come, are we going to have it available to us when the first world countries, all of them now spending millions to buy millions of doses of what possibly could come? You might see us not getting a vaccine two or three years down the road, but that is another discussion.

The COVID Bill, Mr. President, I could not understand the emotions and some of the things that we were hearing about the Bill. I will be the first to blame the Government and say that we need to use the White Paper process as you alluded to this morning, Mr. President, to bring Bills of this nature, early and use a first reading and expose it and let people discuss it, and let the public get an understanding of the intent, the true intent of the Bill, so that they can have an understanding of what it is and why it is we're proposing to bring this through Parliament. But could...

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: Thank you. I would wrap up quickly. But could we...

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie: I'm aware, Mr. President. I have listened to the debate. I looked at a Bill and watched at what was being proposed and I had real difficulty with some of the emotions and the extremes that was being levied in the public. As I say I blame us for not and the "Government Side" for not doing this properly, in terms of exposing it properly and the intent of the Bill. But, I want to say quickly, emergency powers and what was brought up about the Bill about emergency powers. Since March when we locked down, the police had emergency powers. I am not aware of any case that the police used their emergency powers to violate people

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and burst into peoples' houses and arrest them or put them out of their vehicle because they make a cough and arrest them and seize their vehicle. I'm not aware of the police doing anything like that. I thought our Police Force under this emergency status issue handled themselves highly professional, they were very accommodating. There were many times they will come to blocks and they will tell you well listen. where are you going, what you're doing, **(applause)**, do you have on your mask, you don't have on your mask. They were very accommodating. There was no time the police used their emergency powers to the extreme. So, I couldn't understand this argument being made.

Then could we really talk about the public health issue? Really and truly for us, Mr. President, if we get a run in our system, how much ICU beds we have? **(Inaudible comments)** You understand. How much isolation? I mean, come on. We cannot afford a run on our public health. And, this is why I believe the Ministry of Health through their various other affiliations is working so hard. And, I thought this Bill was the appropriate thing to say, listen, yes, we talk about these rules that the police will put out and we did during the lockdown and we're not talking about curfew here, we're just talking about trying to put into Law that if you violate and you don't wear your mask, something that needs to be done. Look at US, I mean, we have the example right here, around us and what is happening.

Protection of our people, I think this is mandatory. The Government has a responsibility to make sure and put things in place that the people are protected and that is part of their duty, they cannot give up that to anybody else. And, of course, when we look at this possibility of this virus and what is happening, I believe, Mr. President, this virus is here with us for a long time. The issue is how we manage it going forward. And, whether that management process requires us in everything that we do in this country, management, we were discussing all these things this morning about the hotel and consumer, it is about creating the regulatory environment for us to manage ourselves and the situation better and that is normal. That is how we do our things all the time. So, I don't see why this Bill created that fuss. Of course, we could have discussed it more and put the intent there, but I thought we had emotions move into this

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thing and politics, of course, come into it. I mean, these guys on the “Other Side” have to play the politics. We’re not playing politics on “This Side”, I don’t know about St. Cyr yet, but obviously she doesn't seem so, and brother Noel, we will get there.

But, Mr. President, at the end of the day, we can't play politics with people's lives and we cannot continue to play politics with the economy that we have now. **(Applause)** That, to me, is a no, no. And, I've always stood up in this Upper House and declared clearly that I will certainly not play politics, whether I'm representing my Private Sector, or I'm representing generally, but we have to take our country and our people as the parameter, and primary concern. And, I thought this COVID Bill was addressing that and putting the environment in place, the regulatory environment in place for us to enact and do what we have to do. And, let me just say, all of these things that they are saying about emergency powers is going to cause these extremes. We have a Police Force here, Mr. President, that operates under stringent conditions and constraints and they don't ever go there and I thought so. I think sometimes we just as the police are a little too lenient. When you see certain things and how people roughing up police, I think our police could be a lot more stiffer than that, but that is another discussion. And, people are going to say that they're abusing their power and they want to beat up people and so on, but when they get up in trouble, you understand is another thing.

So, Mr. President, I wanted to touch on these things in the adjournment because I believe that as a people, we need to be a lot more responsible because the amount of things you're hearing outside about what is being planned for this weekend, I am of the opinion that our Police Force is going to be significantly stressed. And, you know, if they were to come down hard on them based on the Law, they're going to say we're taking advantage, you understand, Mr. President.

So, I make these comments and I hope that the people listening outside will exercise a degree of responsibility, not only to protect themselves and their children, but all of us because if COVID comes in a local community spread, we're in plenty trouble. Thank you, Mr. President.

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Mr. President: Thank you, Senator De Allie. Senator Cox.

Mr. President: Mr. President, thank you very much. Mr. President, I want to just touch on a matter that Senator De Allie just raised, just for clarity or correction. I think it's important, not to speak on behalf of the private promoter, but more so from a stakeholder standpoint, because stakeholders of the Ministry of Culture are a part of that event. The event that in question that Senator De Allie spoke about, about persons going the stadium, that is incorrect. It's a virtual event that affords our local artists an opportunity as with other aspects of our culture which have been displayed virtually as we have seen with the Emancipation, as we have seen with our Spice Island day in Canada, and various other aspects. We believe that there is some avenue for that to take place and, that is being done virtually based on everything because we, of course, we will be involved and we'd have some say in terms of what is taking place and once it is done within the protocols that are established for COVID-19 here in Grenada. So, the event is purely virtual, it's a televised event. I do understand also that they have partnered with FLOW who would be selling packages, and it's a Pay-Per-View event and FLOW is selling packages, so that persons who have cable and television at home can subscribe to see our local cultural acts portraying out there in the world. So, it is not a seating event or VIP as it has been populated on social media.

While, we are very much concerned about that, but, we have, we know that we have other persons who have been given an opportunity to do, apply their trade through virtually because we have to understand that some level of sustenance, of some semblance and some of the same context, in terms of not allowing people to do anything that they're in a different mindset. So, Mr. President, we think that this is satisfactory in terms of striking a balance. And, it's in that regard, I think that we want to support all our stakeholders in the best way possible. And, I know, Mr. President, the calls, sometimes if you don't understand what persons are going through from a financial standpoint, maybe you're not able to appreciate. But you have persons whose main livelihood for the last 10 decades is through expression of culture and, all of a sudden they now don't have an opportunity to make their livelihood and have

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commitments, have kids. I think those are some of the things that is missing in the discussion. And, we as Government, as leaders, we have to try to find some common ground to ensure that everybody is safe at the same time. So, hence, the reason why virtual events are given some leverage there for persons to apply to express themselves from a cultural standpoint. So, I just thought it would be important to clarify that.

With that being said, Mr. President, I said it on Friday, and I say it again, our greatest challenge is before us. And, I speak that from appreciation of having a more intimate knowledge of what is taking place. As we continue to open up, as Senator De Allie rightly stated when we look around, in cases like Bahamas in the last three days, they recorded 100 and something new cases. **(Inaudible comments)** So, that is the challenge before us. But, Mr. President, I think we must not underscore where we are now as a country. And, I think oftentimes, we tend to forget that we must appreciate where we came from since March and where we are now. And, I think it is important for us to keep that at the forefront of our minds and more so to understand how and why, how, we have been able to get to this point and I say that in the context of recognising the work of our frontline workers, the nurses, **(applause)** the doctors, the farmers, the utility workers, the teachers, the public servants, the police officers, the Private Sector, every fabric of this country came together and brought us to where we are today. And, the only how we can sustain that is for us to continue to do this together. And, I think that is something that is being missed in the whole discourse of what is taking place. Some of the discussion that is taking place around Carnival whatsoever, by Tuesday next week we're having a different discussion about schools, going back to school, the start of the semester, should we go virtual, should we do partial? Those are discussions that we're going to have in a couple of days. And so, I think we need to stay focused on those challenges. Bahamas also, they have decided that they're going full virtual from next semester. So, we have some tough decisions ahead of us. I want to commend the Minister for Education who has been doing a remarkable job in being able to transition from books to tablets, during COVID. I think that is also, is underscored and is misse in the whole discourse. **(Applause)** So, this Government have been working.

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Mr. President, I want to speak to a particular initiative that we took in terms of being proactive and, to follow up on the COVID-19 Bill, that has become a sense of discussion throughout the nation. Mr. President, I could recall when we were in the Task Force meeting, and the Prime Minister joined us in a meeting on one of those days and we were getting ready for a repatriation flight, I think our first repatriation flight. And, he clearly indicated and I can't remember if I could quote him, but he said, "Colleagues, persons have to be tested before they come to Grenada." And, he insisted on that and I think, if I could recall, he was the first person who raised that recommendation at that meeting, when all other countries, some of them scoffed at us for putting that measure in place because the Minister for Health at the time, Mr. President, he had several conversations ongoing, with his colleagues, ministerial colleagues throughout the region, to find out what they are doing, to see what gaps that we have to make sure that we are moving forward in the best manner possible. And, today, we see today, Mr. President, that recommendation, other countries are now following what we did, they are following what we are doing. And, I must put on record, Mr. President, the leadership, the leadership by the Prime Minister, is one that is remarkable throughout this process **(applause)** and I must commend him for that.

Mr. President, just this morning, I know as regards to the rules of the House, when you make reference to certain articles it should be shared with Members, but, that I can do thereafter. I received an online article that speaks to the city of Melbourne, that took a decision because they had new deaths, 11 new deaths, and they took a decision. Mr. President, if I can, permit me to read from my mobile device.

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: Mr. President, I think it's important for Members to understand as it relates to the COVID-19 Bill. Mr. President, I think it's very important and let me just pull this article up. And, I'll just read the heading and I quote, "Melbourne cops may now enter homes without warrant after 11 people died of COVID-

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19, Australia, this is madness, not democracy.” So, that is how they feel. Mr. President, that is what is taking place in Australia as we speak.

And, I'll tell you why, Mr. President, and I say this to any Member of the House, and let's just put a simple scenario. If you are at home in your house and knowingly see, and you know that your neighbour is COVID-19 positive and he or she is in isolation and you see or you know that that person have visitors and is going out and maybe infecting persons. Mr. President, would any of us want somebody to go and find a Judge to get a warrant before they come and deal with that matter? I beg not. I think nobody wouldn't want somebody to go and find a Judge to get a warrant before the police deal with a situation of that nature. Persons will ask, where is the police, why are they taking so long to come? Mr. President, this Clause was there and is there for instances like this.

Mr. President: Senator Cox, I don't want to stop you, but my understanding is, under current legislation without emergency powers, the police can enter a home without a warrant. If in an instance where I was chopping up a man with a cutlass and ran into a home, the police do not have to go to a Judge to get a warrant, in hot pursuit, they can pursue me into that house. And, there are lawyers here who can pronounce to that. **(Inaudible comments)** That is not emergency legislation.

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: That is quite true. Mr. President. I sort of chose not to delve too much into the legal aspect because, you know, I leave that for the persons who, that is their area of competence. But, I like to give a scenario in layman terms, so that persons can understand and resonate with that. And, I think that is the challenge that is before us, Mr. President. I think my colleague, Senator Lewis have continued to advocate the aspect of education, and I think that is an area that we have to do more to bring persons up to speed in understanding what is before us. But, I say this because I still believe that not everybody understand the gravity of what is before us, and the only time that persons understand that is when it hits home.

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Just yesterday at a particular meeting, a staff member of the Ministry of Finance, there was a discussion about a family member who was found positive with COVID and wasn't feeling so well, went to the hospital in a particular State in the United States and could not get a bed, could not get a bed, had to go back home and wait until a bed was available. And, you know what happened? The person got worse and they are now struggling for their life. Mr. President, there are a number of stories that we can speak about. There are a number of our citizens, our brothers and sisters who passed, who died as a result of COVID. I do not know what else is enough to suffice for us to understand, I do not know. But, the only thing that I believe that we can do is to continue to educate our people and let them know what is before us.

But before I close, Mr. President, I think it is proper and fitting as a Government that we recognise entities, businesses, persons, who would have stepped up in the crunch time and gave significant cash donations to bring us to this state of readiness for COVID. And, if you permit me Mr. President, I just want to call a few names here, Mr. President. Mr. President, I first start with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, who were first and foremost in terms of bringing Rapid Test Kits here to Grenada. **(Applause)** They didn't send them, they fly and drop them here for us, Mr. President. We want to thank the Government and people. The Government and People of the Republic of China, People's Republic of China, Mr. President, they continue to support our efforts. **(Applause)** The Canadian Bank Note, they were the first to purchase PCR machines for us, two. Mr. President, I think it's important to note that. Mr. President, DIGICEL and FLOW when we wanted credit phones and phones for persons to do Contact Tracing, they didn't hesitate; when we called, they responded, they asked how much phones you need, how much credit you need because they understand and they were part of our success, Mr. President.

Mr. President, we have Ambassadors out in, also Ambassadors-at-Large in the Diaspora who supported significantly as well. We had our High Commission in London, we had our Embassy in Washington, they played a significant role; our Ambassador in the UN in New York, who played a significant role in providing support to ensure we get to this point. Mr. President, we have support from Republic Bank Grenada, First

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Caribbean International Bank, Grenada, Mr. President; also SP's International, Ambassador Cohen and Silver Sands. Mr. President, I say this for persons who might be listening, if you didn't hear your name, also, Rubis Caribbean, Mr. President, if you didn't hear your name here today, it doesn't mean that we forget you. **(Applause)** We want to thank everybody who contributed in some way to ensure that now today that we can proudly say that we have a testing facility at the general hospital and we have testing facility at SGU, two testing facilities on Island, Mr. President. I think... **(inaudible comments)** ...and I've been told it's the first in the region to have that, two testing facilities, Mr. President. I think we must be commended as a nation for where we are today. And, as a Government, we are pleased to be leading this process at this point in time, because we believe that we are the right team for the job. Thank you very much, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Mr. President: Senator Stiell. Oh, and then Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I just want to start off with your permission by extending condolences to the families of the loved ones who have lost their lives in the accident in Westerhall. I think it is fitting that I extend because three of the people who died basically are workers. We had a...

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: Okay, thank you very much. Okay. Thank you. We have a member of the RGPF, Alister Andrew; we have a member of the Ministry of Health at the Mt. Gay Hospital, that's sister Roxy Baptiste and sister Kimberly Felix, who worked at the general hospital as a Lab Tech, who was a shop steward within the Public Workers' Union. We want to extend our condolences to the family and to those who got injured. And, also permit me to extend condolences, TAWU has lost a member of staff and an outstanding trade unionist and committed worker to the cause of the working class, Comrade Martin Redhead who was the dad of our

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former Senator Comrade Ron Redhead. So, we want to extend condolences to the family. Comrade Martin died while in service and it is the first time and, Mr. President, you can bear me out on this, in the history of TAWU, we would have lost someone while in the service to the Union. As a matter of fact... **(The President indicated to the Member that it was not so)** ...no, so, I stand corrected. Comrade Martin as a matter of fact, left for home while we were on the battlefield in the fight in relation to GRENLEC. He is an outstanding comrade, one full of integrity, one who refused bribe being offered to sell out workers and we know as a fact, and I want to commend them for that, and to place that record. So, we extend our condolences to the those comrades.

Colleagues, through you, Mr. President, I know that we have been debating a number of matters, but there is an atmosphere that is existing in the country currently and as servants of the people, we need to address these matters regardless of what side of the fence we may stand on, regardless of what side of the table that we may stand on. And, I know that Senator De Allie addressed the matter frontally and I want to commend him for that as the representative of the Private Sector. And I dare say, I can see coming out from his upfrontness, brother Anthony and brother Lennard would be very proud of you from out of PBC, brother, Senator De Allie.

But, it is important to highlight the following. As I said last week, Friday, the Trade Union Movement and the Trade Unions in particular have had to deal with the dismissal of workers especially in the Hotel Sector, and I'm dealing with the Hotel Sector for one chicken leg. Where a worker claims that he or she was feeling a bit hungry and were found eating one chicken leg without the permission of management and they were summarily dismissed.

We have had cashiers who have been dismissed from financial institutions for misappropriating or thieving, in this case it is called thieving; an ordinary worker a few dollars. But a few dollars whether it's one cent, we no longer have a one cent, five cents or 10 cents, stealing is wrong and must be punished. So let me read for you the following just two lines; the Report from the Government which says: **"the following are some of the abnormalities identified during the process,"** that is the process of

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reviewing the complaints as to why people were not paid. It says here **“misrepresentation of the salaries, misrepresentation of the salaries of senior and management level staff to make them eligible for stimulus payments despite being expressly excluded from the benefit.”** Misrepresentation is another word for stealing, thieving, doing something wrong.

And for the Prime Minister to just comment that this is forgiven, no action will be taken, must be sending the wrong message and I stand on the point raised by Senator DeAllie, remitting smaller amounts to employees than was received. These are clear, this is not me in the Labour Movement wanting to make someone look bad, this is the Report coming from the State, and why did we say and why do I maintain, Mr. President, that the very act of the Government excluding the Labour Movement from the Stimulus Package Evaluations Committee contributed to this actions and I'm maintaining this and repeating it. Had we been part of the Evaluations Committee as originally intended, we were in a position to flag these things before they occur. And therefore the very action by the State of excluding the Labour Movement has contributed to this activity. Why am I linking this to the current state? There is an air of uncertainty, of rebelliousness, of mistrust occurring in the country. And when we have our servants, our leaders making public statements condemning the actions of the Court, refusing to pay the hard-working public servant, sister Gemma Bain-Thomas, who have given years and years of yeoman service to this country and regardless of what the Court has ruled and has mandated that she be paid and she has not yet been paid and she continues... apart from being paid probably two or three years ago, but she continues to lament the Non payment. And then you have Mr. Dorset Charles, who the Court pronounced on and then our leaders would make public pronouncement of the utter disagreement to the Court which appears, Mr. President, to indicate why the Government is not honouring these commitments. What are the messages that we're sending to our youth outside there?

These are interrelated, these are interrelated and it cannot be, Mr. President, that because I'm the leader of an organisation or the Prime Minister of the country, or I'm the President of a group, I can set different standards and expect people to follow, Mr

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President. These are contributing to the issues that we are having, and that is why in the context, Mr. President, of these mistrust, these levels of uncertainty, the COVID-19 Control Bill must be seen. It is not just about intention because once you speak about intention, then people will relate it to that which has happening. Could you imagine, that on the Friday evening before the “Other Place” sits, there is a Bill which is expected to go through its three stages. In the context, Mr. President, where we have the State of Emergency that we have supported that runs into October, in terms of Parliament making the necessary authorisation for the State of Emergency of a 6 month duration which we passed in this Senate in April of this year and 6 months will take us into October. The question must arise, what is the intention, Mr. President? And I was part of and a proud part of the demonstration outside of this Building to speak about our concern about the attempt and the manner in which this Bill was attempted to be passed, I was a proud member. Despite the fact that there was a commitment given to put it on hold, but we need to send that message that gone are the days when we will just sit and accept anything that comes our way without demanding engagement of a proper and robust discussion.

The Grenada Trade Union Council engaged our legal professionals with a discussion on the matter and there are cause for concerns, there are indeed cause for concerns. We will not want to equate, Mr. President, the fact of someone committing an offence in a house where you, where someone's life, someone is using a cutlass, whatever it is, chopping up someone, we do not expect a police to have to go to get a warrant to go in to prevent the crime from being committed or to save someone life. But we in the Labour Movement see it entirely different as to whether or not there is a suspicion of someone in a house who may be accused of not wearing a mask properly because the proposed Bill itself say **“where there is a suspicion of a crime may have been committed”**, and we give different weight to these matters as to when a warrant may or may not be warranted. So, Mr. President, through you, we have expressed our deepest concerns and we welcome discussions on this matter, the COVID-19 Bill, because it is existing in a period when there is a grave concern as to what one may describe as a certain level of arrogance by our leaders. Because that is what said

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about sister Gemma Bain-Thomas. I am not satisfied that the previous Administration did what was right by having her performing that function, through no fault of hers and therefore it must leave us to wonder probably... well, as to whether or not these are some of the contributing factors as to why she is not being paid. So we have these concerns and we make an appeal that we recognise that the children of the working class as have been said by you, Mr. President, and I want to repeat this and expand on it, because in the Labour Movement we recognised that years ago, Mr. President, that gone are the days when as leaders and as of servant of our people that we can just say jump and people will jump.

We are in the age of knowledge and technology where we have encouraged our working class and ordinary people and the citizens of our country to question our leaders, to hold us accountable. And the best way we can show this, Mr. President, is by indicating a sense of respect and engagement on matters of national importance. I take this opportunity to lend our voice to asking our people to be very responsible in this particular period, we have a duty and responsibility. There'll be 2021. Grenada is not in a position to lock down its borders totally from those who may want to enter. We have seen recently that the police charged or arrested non-nationals from entering by entering into our country without following the necessary legal avenues. And we know that this can happen and it takes one individual to get into our State and to expose all of us. I use this opportunity to make an urgent call to all of our workers, all of our citizens, let us act responsible, let us not expose ourselves to unnecessary harm and danger. Let us not expose our young kids, our elderly and the population to a scenario that we may not be able to manage and control.

And therefore over the next 2 days, let us report to work; Monday and Tuesday. Let us on Sunday reflect, let us pay homage to our ancestors, let us big up, if I may say our Carnival Tradition, let us plan for next year, but let us not do anything that will unnecessarily expose us to potential danger. And to call upon the authorities, to lead by example and be it that we are leaders in the Trade Union Movement, be it that we are leaders in the different political parties or in Government, let us respect the laws and let us allow the police to do its work. We have heard complaints of Police Officers

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enforcing the Emergency Powers Act by trying to get people to stay away from certain socialising but some of our leaders, Members of Parliament, MPs, Representatives may intervene and indicate that these areas are ok and we should allow these people to... and if this is happening I'm making that call, for the relevant authority and the people of Grenada to call out our politicians if and when that is happening. Our country is small and because our country is small if in the south of the Island, this is allowed to happen, then in the east of the Island people will be aware of it and then it will be what we say **"as ole mass,"** not in carnival but ole mass that everyone feels that they can do what they want to do. And therefore this is a period when leadership is extremely important.

And last but not least, it's part of this call that I'm making if what I heard... because even during the period of COVID, the rights of the worker, the rights of the country and the rights of citizen is not on lockdown and it is not on quarantine. If what I heard in the "Other Place" sometime last week is correct, when someone in the "Other Place" spoke about the possibility of State resources being used for party politics resources, if this is correct, this must be condemned and this must stop because people are likening that to the outstanding issue of the use of the cell phone that has been admitted to for thousands upon thousands of dollars by a party activist that has not yet been repayed. And if what is said in that "Other Place" is correct, these are leading to the levels of mistrust and level of rebelliousness that is taking place and our country is waking up. And as the civil rights leader icon, John Lewis said **"there's nothing wrong in giving trouble, once it is good trouble."** I wish everyone all the very best and to end, by welcoming the new Senators. Thank you, very much. **(Applause)**

Mr President: Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to speak on two issues here. I just want to put into context some of the misinformation that I've just heard. I would not support wrong doing in any way, neither will I go against the ruling of the Court and this Government has demonstrated this constantly, I am a part of this Government. As responsible Members of this Honourable

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House, we cannot speak on both sides of our mouths. It's either you're for or you're against. What message are we sending to the same young people my Honourable Member on the "Other Side", when you stand in a demonstration against something that is not. The COVID-19 Bill... we understand the uproar in the communities because as I have said, people and Grenadians are so free spirited, we are not used to this lockdown and Carnival is a form of expression that we have seen from slavery, to express probably frustration and so forth, but this will not be this year because of the pandemic.

Ok, there was not wide consultation my brother, but, Mr. President, the Government was very responsive and listened to the cry of the people and said, hey, we will pull this. We will pull the Bill and allow consultation, let people voice, so then to go and join a demonstration, I question the motive of the Member, that was not honourable in my view. This is very said young people you promise to protect, you are leading them the wrong way. If you didn't like certain aspect of the Bill, allow the consultation, come and speak. And we have seen before in this Government, we listen, several consultations and farmers make contributions to the Budget process you find those things in the Budget paper. We have that reputation, because it is known, it is a caring Government, but to fight against the process and we all understand the dangers COVID-19 presents to us. And the COVID-19 Bill is not designed to shut you down and to take away your rights and your privileges because nobody cares, no. This is about protecting these very young people and protecting the country because we do not have the resources if there is community spread. So it is very irresponsible for a leader to take the people through this misguided demonstration, it was misguided. And we have to come to terms that as a people and we here in this Senate, history will judge us, speak correctly on one side of your mouth. Tell the people the truth, stand for what is right, that's what we ought to be about. But it's unfortunate, we talk about arrogance, it's really unfortunate.

A Government say ok, we were wrong to not have that level of consultation and we're going to pull the Bill, and you will say arrogance? I mean come on. You forget the meaning of arrogance. This is demonstrating to the people that we recognise our

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folly and we will pull it back and give you that opportunity to consult. That's not arrogance, this is humility at the highest level. You've got to change that perspective, man. This Government is known for demonstrating care for its people and we have to take this further into context, Mr. President.

In 2013, when this Government came into office, we met an economy that was bankrupt. Remember we were selling assets to pay salaries, remember we went to the international community and said that we cannot continue as we are, we need your help in restructuring this economy and we got blows from all sides, saying you have to be crazy, you're not dealing... your credit wasn't in a right way but we said we have to do it.

Nobody knew that COVID was around the corner, but I remember the Government saying and Government said "we will go through these three (3) years of Structural Adjustment Programme to realign the economy, and whatever savings we make in this period, the entire country will benefit from it. We got attacked again on that but we were committed to it and we said the lower class of workers, their salaries will not be taxed. But I remember the "Other Side" was saying, start it from 1200, so it means that every vulnerable person in the community had to make a contribution in this regard. We said no, we would not do that but today, look what happened, Mr. President, COVID-19, nobody knew it was coming. But I thank God for this Government and the Bible say that God set up whom he choose and pull down whom he desire. And he set this Government up at this time to take us through this period of COVID. So the savings we had over the years is what is providing the stimulus and so forth. But if we don't manage this properly, that reservoir will fall because what is staring the world in its face could be a massive recession. And everyone need to take the necessary precaution now to protect its economy.

So when we say and we advocate that we need to protect our people and the COVID-19 Bill is to ensure that we protect the limited resources that is in the country, it's for our own good. There are countries right now, Mr. President, can't pay full salaries to their Public Officers, so monthly they paid them 50% cash and 50% in bonds. The workers here are benefiting their full salaries, but there is not an unending bag of resource and we have to protect this. So if there is a massive community spread, tell

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me where would we get the resources from to take care of this country? We have to be responsible, let's not make politics with this, but let's just be real and speak the truth to our people.

This is kind of painful, Mr. President, that responsible people for two moments glory in the spotlight, they'll try to destroy seven (7) years of hard gain that we have made. This is painful and we have to stand up for it... for what is right for this country. It hurts me that we have people who are supposed to be sensible enough to know this is a bigger picture, not just taking away Carnival, no it's not. Mr. President, we will continue to sojourn and we will continue to speak the truth to the nation. It's unfortunate what we have seen over the Emancipation weekend with all the carnival like activities. I passed in Marquis and I saw it, people wasn't wearing mask but they, as they say, quote on quote, "having a good time." But those are the dangers because you are free.

Yesterday I was speaking to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security in the Bahamas, we were in a virtual online meeting and he said to me what they have seen in the short space of time, they have to go back on this total country lockdown. And he highlighted to me, he said nobody followed the protocol with funerals, so they had funeral in one Island and people from three different Islands came together in this funeral. People drove, went over in Miami and so to shop and so forth and right now they are seeing this massive spread that they have to shut down. As of last night, 10 p.m. last night they went on an all Island shut down for the next two weeks. They have more resources than us, we don't want to get there. I heard somebody saying, Mr. President, well if things change then we're going to lockdown. Why should we try to lockdown after the horses bolted, let's be proactive and protect this country.

Mr. President, I want to end on another note, but you would understand my... I don't like this at all because we have to protect our country. The last thing is May 25, 2020 the world changed drastically as it relates to race relations. We saw a video recording showing officer Derek Chauvin comfortably kneeling on the neck of one George Floyd a black man who was in police custody. For nearly 9 minutes the officer

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compressed the neck of Mr. Floyd and though he pleaded for his life, the officer showed no mercy. And after this, around the world we saw demonstration in mass proportion of people all over crying of the injustice that black people face as a result. And rightly so, there must be a change, there must be an occasion for us to recognise that all lives matters and Black Lives Matter in this regard. So the demonstration ended up in Grenada as well, and I saw one legal person, Mr. Jerry Edwin, leading the demonstration outside the American Embassy in Lance Aux Epines, and he had a right to stand up for black people and to make the message known that as Grenadians, Black Lives Matters and we do not support injustice. And that is what he was championing, and I look at him being puzzled, you know why? In 2016, United Graduate College and Seminary International, a Christian University, online University and mind you, I am a Minister of Government and a Minister of Religion as well, so I take my job seriously.

So United College and Seminary International, after following my work and they have seen all that I have done over the years, 2000 started among the Secondary School Female Basketball. Many of our young ladies went on to accept scholarships to United States Colleges; today they are professional people in the South of the nation, some overseas, some back home. I was very instrumental when starting what we call Project We Care and that project basically was to take care of those marginalising communities. And even while I was attending school, that passion was in me and I started helping people from the little resources that I had, I helped people. So Project We Care in my adult life was a simple thing to do and I have been doing that for years, they followed this.

In 2002, I started... very instrumental in starting a bio quiz in Secondary and Primary Schools around the Island and I did it for four seasons, Ivan came and stopped it but I will continue. I also started... very instrumental in starting Junior Basketball in Private Schools in St. George and boys and girls given the opportunity to express themselves on the court. We had a focus; because there is opportunity at a higher level, we start at the base level and I did that. I started a youth group, it started in 1988, Youth on the Move, what was this about? It was to give occasion to young people so that they will be able to see things from different perspectives and I also started within

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that group study lessons. So in the evening, came to the church and did a lot of revision and so forth and I have seen those young people progress and succeed at the secondary level and University, I've seen that. Vacation Bible Schools, I was good at that, a lot of that I did as well. Mr. President, I say all this to say that the United Graduate College and Seminary International US-based Online University, chose in 2016 to award me with an Honorary Doctorate Degree for all that I've done because as I said, it's a part of their mission to promote the work of humanity and a lot of black people are recognised by this University. But you have seen those naysayers who have tried to smear the face of this University, but you know, it's a fully accredited University by... the Seminary College was started in 1982 and it is a fully accredited University by the Christian Accreditation Institute. But, the point is, so United Graduate College and Seminary International offer Ministry Training and Ministry Degrees. It is a private Christian College and Seminary and is a fully accredited member of the worldwide Accreditation Commission of Christian Educational Institutes. And, as a result of this and because of who I am on the "Government Side," Mr. Edwin has been attacking me and attacked the college and call them whatever names. And, today as a black man I stand to defend my name. If you want to take the award you can take it, but allow me to breathe. For the nine, almost nine minutes, Officer Chauvin had his foot on the neck of George Floyd, who cried out for his life and said I can't breathe. Please, Mr. Edwin allow me to breathe. My 77 year old mother who is suffering or recovering from a stroke, she too wants to breathe. My wife of 21 years and my two teenage children they too want to breathe. Release your foot from my neck, Sir.

It's one thing to oppose a Government, when you maliciously attack the credibility of others, it's painful. For my life I tried to help people, but this one is painful. Please, allow me to breathe. Thanks.

Mr. President: Anyone else? Honourable Members, I just want to make a few... Oh, sorry.

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Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you. Mr. President. Mr. President, it would be remiss of me not to respond, if not briefly to some of the comments from Senator Lewis on this adjournment. I listened carefully to the position he took, comments that he made, and it's everybody's right to protest, it's everybody's right to challenge the Government, challenge what is taking place right now. But, listening to the specific points that were raised, leads me to question whether there is a genuine appreciation of just where we are right now in the country as not just as Government, but as an entire nation. We should be focused on doing all we can to address the real threat to the lives and the livelihoods of our people. Senator De Allie made the point, this is not the time to play politics with people's lives and the economy.

And, when I hear statements in relation to the withdrawal of the COVID Control Bill and the example given for the position he took in demonstrating, the pride he took in demonstrating and it is his right. But, it was police officers going into people's houses without warrants, because they're not wearing their masks properly. That's offensive, that offended me, Mr. President, that actually offended me. That is not the intent of that Bill. And, I'm not going to rehash, Senator Garraway went through it in the opening of this Session last week. I went in detail as to the intent behind that Bill, which simply boils down to protecting our people and protecting this country. We accepted full responsibility and admitted we made a mistake in terms of how we communicated in advance of that Bill and our lack of consultation. We took full responsibility and we withdrew it. We listened, we heard the calls and the cries of the people. So, why are we still talking about protesting? We've withdrawn it, we said we will consult. This is a time, Mr. President, for serious minds and serious heads, for us all to come together, work together to deal with this deadly threat. And, as I said in my opening, the threat is not from our politicians, it's not from our healthcare workers, it is not from the police, it is from this deadly disease. And, I'm not hearing that from my brother on the "Other Side," Mr. President, I'm not hearing that. When I hear statements, the intent of the Bill was for police officers to abuse their powers because somebody in their own home is not wearing a mask, right. That's this distortion, and I have to question what the intent of that action is, Mr. President.

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I hear calls for payments that need to be made to persons, called some names. Mr. President, the list of names are people Government... and the Government has stepped forward, it has accepted all of those claimants, and it's a long list of claimants as long as my arm, it's not about two individuals. Why, are we focusing on just two individuals? The list is as long as my arm, it runs into tens of millions of dollars. We're starting to make those payments at a time when Government revenues have been cut in half because of the economic fallout of COVID. I'm not hearing the Member on the "Other Side," speaking to or acknowledging... I don't even want congratulations, but acknowledging the efforts that this Government has made to its Stimulus Package, tens of millions of dollars **(applause)** that are being channeled to those who are most vulnerable and most in need at this time, knowing we can't do everything for all, but, we're trying, we're trying, Mr. President. And, instead of recognition for those efforts, my brother on the "Other Side" focuses in on one element of it where there has been anomalies, misrepresentation by some employers. He's not recognising that the Government has the checks and balances in place to identify those anomalies up front, has addressed those, initiated an investigation to get all of the facts, and I can't, I'm not in a position to speak to individual cases, I don't know, so I can't. But an investigation took place, those anomalies identified, and monies paid back, taxpayers' money. I don't hear the Member on the "Other Side," commending the Government for the work that its done in terms of addressing that.

I hear about state resources with phones, there should be no misappropriation of taxpayers' money full stop. But, in each of the instances that the Member on the "Other Side" has identified, Government has taken assertive action to address and we have and are addressing those. But, that is what he chooses to speak to in this Chamber, at a time when we should not be playing politics with lives and the economy. Mr. President, this all feeds into this narrative that is being pushed from certain quarters about this dictatorship that is being created within this country and not recognition of the intent and the positive actions and the positive results we have had so far, so far, in keeping our people safe and doing our best to keep the economy going. And it's a narrative that is being purported by some because they cannot criticise that, they cannot

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challenge that, so they want to create an alternative narrative. A narrative, Mr. President, that you can speak to, Senator Lewis can speak to, in terms of this Government's track record during times of industrial disputes. Never stifle the right to speak, the right to assembly, the right to strike. This Government historically has not been responsible for that.

Mr. President, Senator Lewis, you know which Administrations in Grenada's history have been responsible for whether it's shutting down Parliament, shutting down our democratic processes, jailing our Union Leaders, Mr. President, harassing Union Leaders, harassing workers, denying workers the right to strike. Which Administrations during our history from the 1990s to the present day is guilty of that? Yet that is what we're accused of. It's a narrative, Mr. President. It's a narrative that's being purported by those who have limited voice in criticising what has been achieved, in terms of keeping our people safe, and keeping the economy going.

So, Mr. President, all I wish to say and when I hear the saber-rattling, employers, employees, Labour, Private Sector, Government, Unions, this is a time for us to come and work together. The challenges we are facing and the challenges that are still ahead of us, the worst is still to come, Mr. President. The worst is still to come, both in terms of our safety and in terms of our economic stability, the worst is still to come. And, it's not just Grenada, it is globally. That pressure will bear down on us as we have never felt before. This is a time for us to be Grenadians, to be proud Grenadians to stand up as one people to address the threats that are in front of us.

This is not a time for pettiness, Mr. President. Whatever politics there is to ring out of this, let's save it. Let's save it when the time is right, and there will be that time. Save it for that time. Let us come together with serious minds, with real focus to protect those that we love the most and to protect this great nation of ours, Mr. President. This is time for us to work together as we have never worked before.

So, I call upon the Member on the "Other Side" to be more considerate in what he brings before us. I cannot dictate, will not dictate, I'm not a dictator. I cannot prescribe what the Member chooses to bring to the House's attention or not, takes advantage of the media that is around us, the audience that is around us. I ask him in

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these extraordinary times to be considerate about what he brings before us. And, let us be constructive and where we need to take responsibility, where we need to take blows, let us take blows. Let us work together and on that note, Mr. President, I beg to move the adjournment.

(Applause)

Mr. President: Thank you. Senator Stiell. Just quickly. I want to just use the opportunity to touch a few points before we completely bring today's Sitting to an end.

There's always a danger Senator Cox in when you draw up a list of persons to receive accolades and recognition that you may miss out one or two. And, if there's not a lot of maturity, people can feel somewhat slighted. So, as I listened to your list, I wish to add to the list and I don't think it was intentional at all, I think you were speaking off on your feet, although with some notes. But, I want to add to the list in respect of the assistance we have received in the fight against COVID-19, I really want us on "All Sides" of the House and may I say to the new Members an applause and appreciation of a point is not necessarily a political partisan matter. If the point requires a recognition, irrespective of the politics, you're free to do so. I'm not asking that you do, but I'm just saying, you're free to do. And, I want to speak of this, of this group that has made this contribution, in the context of the tightening of economic, financial, food and medicinal sanctions against them and I speak about the Government and People in the Communist Party of the Republic of Cuba. **(Applause)**

At a time when they cannot access medicines to save the lives of their own people. At a time when these sanctions are biting, when it is not even possible for them to receive fuel to run their Power Stations to have electricity, Cuba can send contingent of medical personnel to Italy, **(applause)** to Grenada, to Barbados, to Chile. Not just in the struggle against COVID, but they were in the forefront in the struggle in Africa against that deadly disease Ebola. In fact, several Cuban medical personnel died while rendering assistance. There are countries where they imposed this blockade against Cuba and Cuba is giving help. They are blocking medicines and supplies from coming

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to other countries who have done absolutely nothing, who are not in breach of any international principle. But, in the height of the COVID pandemic, they were stopping supplies from leaving their countries to go to other countries. I don't need to call names. So, we must mention, Cuba.

I want to add to that, Senators, our recognition and thanks to the St. George's University. **(Applause)** We have a world class institution here and they have played a critical and vital role. In fact, they have underpinned our testing with their facilities; they have provided us with quarantining facilities; they have provided us with medical knowledge and expertise; they have assisted us in sourcing protective equipment; they have assisted in training some of our personnel in dealing with this disease. The St. George's University belongs to that place alongside Cuba and others that we need to recognise, **(applause)** and I wish to add that Senator's list.

Among the individuals I want to add to Senator Cox's list, Her Excellency, Ambassador David. It was a very difficult job in the People's Republic of China, where this disease first broke out and there was great pressure on the Grenadian Government to repatriate the students. And, that goodly young lady worked inside of China, a vast country and today we can report not a single Grenadian student fell victim to this illness. **(Applause)** In addition to that, of course, she was able to secure a number of supplies, some which she sent home, in terms of masks, but also ensuring that Grenadian students in China were always supplied with a sufficiency of food. She supplied psychological counselling to keep people calm and no one returned of any number of significance and Grenadian students all were safe, continuing their studies in various fields and she should be added to your list of those that we recognise. **(Applause)**

Finally, I want to recognise Alibaba, for in fact, they sent, I think it was a 737 loaded with supplies. And while, some were banning medicines from leaving their country, the People's Republic of China was sending medicines and supplies to every corner of the earth. And, one of their flagship companies Alibaba, at a time when we desperately needed PPEs and couldn't find them any place, a 737 came packed with supplies for the entire region and for other parts of the world and they too, should be added to the list, Senator Cox. **(Applause)**

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Honourable Members, I don't want to get into what I would describe as the COVID virus politics because for some it matters not the consequential effect of their actions, what matters is the momentary realisation of a political score point. So, the COVID virus politics is not what I want to get into, because the very people and the stranger the narrative arrives, because the narrative now is that there's martial law against banning Jab Jab and they have these moments of celebration when there's a focal point in the news and you get a spot amount of coverage. So, I don't want to get in into that. I think I leave that for the political, but it is.

I want to deal with a matter of high irresponsibility and I have to be careful how... well, let me put it to you this way, the sages of old and there's a lot of wisdom amongst our old folks and, their wisdom quite often is expressed in simplistic cultural ways, but don't let that diminish the profound value of their thoughts and thinking. And, one of the saying the old people used to say is, "you can't plant corn and expect yam." So, you can't have a situation where and my main object here for my distaste are the radio stations and media houses, who in the face of a pandemic, is creating the psychological atmosphere of Carnival. Again, as I tell you old people say, "you can't plant corn and expect to repeat yam." So, if you create the mass psychology of Carnival, and somebody sent me a video, do you know that Grenadians was celebrating and playing Jab Jab sometime last week in New York? In a center that was the highest epicenter of this pandemic in the world, in a place in which most Grenadians died than probably all of the death of Grenadians who participated in World War I and World War II. Yet there were people, young black people, and I want to root on Black Lives Matter because it seems not, were playing the Grenadian Jab Jab without face protection, masks, and with no social distancing. So, if you're planting corn by promoting an atmosphere of Jab Jab in the face of a pandemic, where the worst is yet to come, and you're doing so amongst a group of very vulnerable people psychologically, because you have to understand the psychology of young people. I was there once, I'm strong, I'm invincible, I have no fear, that's the psychology amongst young people. So, when you promote this Carnival atmosphere virtually or otherwise, what do you expect in Soubise? What do you expect on Monday? And, then you expect the police to solve that? How does

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the police solve that, when different arms of the State who prize their freedom, uses that freedom irresponsibly? And let me give you a shocker, this morning on a radio station with a particular announcer, and that radio station features itself as the national voice of Grenada, was playing a tune where the central theme was an obscene word, it was an obscene word in the chorus. We've lost all sense of responsibility. So, that's my peeve because the worst is yet to come. And, you know, the unfortunate thing is this that quite often you will see an individual speeding down the highway recklessly, vehicle gets out of control and quite often crashes, kills three pedestrians, but the person operating the vehicle shakes and comes out alive. This is the same thing with the disease. So, many who are playing the Jab Jab and in fact quoting death may not themselves die, may not themselves die.

So, I would wish make a front call, it is not a call sand dancing on the issue, a frontal call, that this is not the time. Five hours, in the traditional sense, Jab Jab is a 5 hour operation; you start at 5 in the morning, by 10 you're finish. In a 5 hour operation, you're quoting death. The implications of all of this too is the following; the largest single chunk of our per capita income, St. George's University is still operating but operating primarily online. So most of the student population is not here in Grenada, what are the implications of that? The implications of that are that all of those facilities which were built to accommodate students, an enormous amount of capital from the banks are tied up in this investment. These places are now closed, the workers who worked in them are now home. If we have a significant outbreak of this disease in Grenada, it pushes further back the opening and resumption of face-to-face learning. There was a hope that we could have had face-to-face learning beginning this semester, that was pushed back because of what's happening in the United States.

Grenada is deemed to be safe so the irresponsible behaviour of 5 hours and St. George's University, Senator Lewis will be able to say because I don't know, guaranteed that they will pay the full salary of all its employees, I think it was 90 days in the first instance or three months, I don't know where it is now and continuing. But as Senator Lewis would know, like I, the longest rope have an end. And if they are not able to function... 5 hours of nonsensical engagement could lead to a significant

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breakout here where if you are not dead you are badly wounded. And for people in the media to be contributing to this by creating an environment, and then when the State attempts to take action, deems this to be martial law.

I don't know whether or not reason is available, so I don't know whether or not my appeal to reason is a reasonable thing to do. But I will end my contribution on the adjournment by making this appeal; that people need to reflect, people need to reflect on what they do. All of us sitting in here, all of us in here including the Police Officers are masked and this is not the first time that mankind has faced a mass epidemic. If you were alive in 1918, you may be going through... and that is the strange thing you know. It was long ago, a hundred and so years ago but the science is basically the same. In these infectious diseases, especially if they are respiratory, protect your breathing system, give yourself a distance away from others, wash your hands and stop congregate. That's what they did in 1918 and that's what we're doing now.

I mean, again I want to thank all those who contributed to Grenada's safety, all the medical personnel and all of those people. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution. And to appeal to those who are hoping to reap from the COVID virus politics, that this is really not... well, political opportunity is a political opportunity and I think Senator Stiell has addressed that, so I don't want to go down that road.

I wish you all of you safety going forward and hopefully when next the Senate sits, as I understand it we may sit on the 19th of August, that all of us are here assembled. The visitation of death has been happening in quite strange ways in recent time, when I think of Jerry George a journalistic friend that I know. He was actually at work on his internet, when the screen went blank and nobody knew what happened. And as I understand it people didn't understand, he was on the screen speaking, screen went blank for a good while and his wife came home and found him deceased. And Senator Lewis spoke about comrade Martin Redhead, fine comrade who...

So I look forward to and hopefully seeing all of you at the next sitting of the Senate and beyond. Honourable Members, I thank you for your indulgence.

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This House now stands adjourned. I will say ***sine die*** because on the 19th, it may change. This House now stands adjourned.

Senate adjourned sine die at 1:49 p.m.

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