



GRENADA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

**First Session of the Tenth Parliament**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

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**SENATE**

Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2018

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**Senate Meeting**  
**Held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's**  
**On Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2018.**

**Attendance**

Senator the Honourable Chester A. A. 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 wrf Disaster Management and Information
Senator the Honourable Kim George	- Member
Senator the Honourable Kerryne James	- Member
Senator the Honourable Ron Livingston Redhead	- Member
Senator the Honourable Glynis Roberts	- Member
Senator the Honourable Dr. Dunstan Campbell	- Member
Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis	- Member

**ABSENT**

Senator the Honourable Cathisha Williams	- Member (Excuse tendered)
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**Prayers**  
**Minutes**

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

**Mr. President:** Good morning, Honourable Members. Senator Garraway.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Honourable Members, let us pray.

**(Senate Prayer was said)**

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Please join me in the Lord's Prayer.

**(Prayers were said)**

**Mr. President:** Good morning to all. Pray be seated.

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 3 - Oath of Allegiance or Affirmative of a new Senator.  
Item 4 - Confirmation of Minutes.

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Ceremonial State Opening of the First Session of the Tenth Parliament held at the Grenada Trade Centre on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 be taken as read.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes taken as read.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

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**Minutes**

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Ceremonial State Opening of the First Session of the Tenth Parliament held at the Grenada Trade Centre, held at the Grenada Trade Centre on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2018, be confirmed.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Roberts.

**Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts:** Mr. President, on page 8, I see there is a minor error, in that after 'Prayers', it says: "The Speaker adjourned the Houses to await the arrival of His Excellency...", it should be 'Her'.

**Mr. President:** Noted.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes Confirmed as amended.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of a Sitting of the Senate held at the Grenada Trade Centre on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2018, be taken as read.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes taken as read.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

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**Minutes**

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of a Sitting of the Senate held at the Grenada Trade Centre on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> of May, 2018, be confirmed.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Roberts.

**Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts:** Yes. Mr. President, my page number is not visible, but I would take it as the second page, under 'Prayers': "Mr. President, made the following announcement..." and on the fourth line, it is not conclusive. "I would have liked to have a more elaborate welcome, but this particular Sitting of the House, some very..." I couldn't get what that meant.

**Mr. President:** Are you offering a correction?

**Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts:** Mr. President, this would have to be coming from the Hansard, because that's what you said.

**Mr. President:** Just draw my attention, again, to the particular page.

**Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts:** It's page 2 of the starting of the Minutes. I mean, it may not be page 2, because, as I am saying from the photocopy, I am not seeing...

**Mr. President:** What line? What is the correction, in terms of what?

**Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts:** One, two, three, four, page 13? Okay, it is page 13. It is the fourth line.

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**Mr. President:** Well, I can't give an explanation. Maybe there has been a bit of incoherence here, and it is impossible for me to recall.

**(The Ag. Clerk consulted with the President)**

**Mr. President:** Yes. The Clerk explains that I was speaking, because, remember, this is recorded speech. It is not written prose, so they have captured it in the way in which I made the point. Unless there is something of a factual matrix here, I would advice that we can take it as it is.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes confirmed.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Joint Sitting of Parliament, to open the New Parliament Building, at Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 2018, be taken as read.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes taken as read.**

**Mr. President:** And, just let me point out, Mt. Wheldale is in the Capital City, so it would be St. George's, I think. The Town of St. George includes Mt. Wheldale. Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Joint Sitting of Parliament to open the New Parliament Building at Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2018, be confirmed.

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**Minutes**

**Announcements**

**Question proposed.**

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes confirmed.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Roberts.

**Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts:** Mr. President, one minor correction on page 29. It should be "Houses adjourned at 12:25 p.m." not "a.m.;".

**Mr. President:** Okay, Clerk note that.

**Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts:** In two (2) places; "12:25" and "12:28".

**Minutes amended.**

**Mr. President:** Okay. Clerk, could we proceed?

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 6 - Announcements by Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Honourable Members, let me, first of all, premise my announcements by extending to you the most profuse and warmest greetings, as we meet in a record of history, for the very first time, at the Parliament in Mt. Wheldale.

Honourable Members, I have to advise that I did receive notices from two (2) Senators. Senator Cathisha Williams has indicated her inability to attend today's Sitting of the Senate, and Senator Norland Cox, who is out of State, on Government's Business, has indicated that he arrived this morning, but would be late. In fact, he would be coming to this Sitting of the Senate straight from the Airport. So, these two (2) other announcements have been made.



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**Announcements**

Let me begin, first of all, by spending a moment in special recognition to the freshmen Senators. I know language now is supposed to be gender neutral, so maybe I should say fresh persons. But, I don't necessarily have to be politically correct.

It is indeed a wonderful opportunity, and I think you would agree with me, to be chosen to serve your Community and your Country, at the level of Parliament, the highest Institutional Body of the State. It is an awesome responsibility, and one which ought not to be taken lightly.

The Constitution clothes us with certain responsibilities and that is, to pass Laws for the good governance and well-being of the citizens and of the State; to ensure that citizens can live in peace and security, pursue their individual aspirations to the fullest, and to make sure that society functions on principles of equity and fairness. This is an awesome responsibility. It is also a privilege to be able to exercise that responsibility on behalf of fellow citizens. And, therefore, I urge you to treat that responsibility with the respect that is due, the seriousness that is required, and the thoroughness that is implied in the execution of your duty and of the opportunity, which has been given to you.

I beseech you to spend time reading the bills, which come before you. I have had the opportunity and privilege of serving in the House of Senate for a combined period of... I am going on now to my twenty-eighth (28<sup>th</sup>) year. Thanks, mainly, to the workers of this Country, who for twenty-three (23) succeeding years, restored the confidence in me to have me represent their interest in the bigger picture of the national interest; and I make reference to that period of time, because I have had the experience, quite often, of Senators not being familiar with the Bills. I trust that you will not fall victim to this, that you would spend the time; and because few of us are trained legal minds, most Lawyers believe I am a Lawyer, but it comes from having to deal with the Laws, which the Lawyers must then help in applying the different situations, as they arise. But, I can tell you that one of the things that I did, consistently, was to read the Bills. In fact, when the late, Great Derrick Knight, QC was alive, we had a standing appointment and we met every Saturday morning, in Derrick's office, once he was in the

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country, and, of course, it was always accompanied by a bottle of Metaxa, a special Greek Brandy, and we would spend the whole morning, looking at Bills, arguing political issues, and this is where I gained my preparation. So, that most Senators can tell you, who served together with me that when I came to the Parliament, I was always very well-prepared, and I think that is what your constituents would expect. I think this is what the citizens anticipate, and I would urge you, therefore, to take this task seriously, because it is, indeed and, in fact, a serious task.

I am happy that this Parliament is populated with young persons, because what it says is that at the highest decision Institution of the Land, youth have a voice. Make use of that voice. Make sure that the youth are properly represented. Make sure that the youth are forcefully represented, and make sure that they are thoroughly represented.

To the Farmer Representative, I can say to you that while Senator Clouden may not have acquired a Doctorial Title, but few can disagree that he came to the Senate with a robust representation of the Farming Community, and, therefore, you have both a tradition and a challenge ahead of you.

I place a lot of emphasis on scholarships, because I think that that is important. But, we must be mindful not to speak above the heads of the people, because this is the people's business. And, if we are conducting the people's business, they must be able to follow you. But, scholarships ought not to be compromised, because the most brilliant of minds always wrote simply. In fact, that is the distinction of a brilliant mind, the fact that you can take complicated concepts, simplify them and convey their meaning that everybody could understand.

So, for the Farmers' Representative, I expect great things from you. I expect lively debates. I am not as strict as I appear, but I am a stickler to the Rules. Parliament has some great Traditions, and I can assure you that I would maintain them.

The Order in Parliament is my responsibility, and I will execute it without fear or favour. And, for those who had a snippet of insight into how I operate, they know that that is exactly so. I have to preserve the order of the Parliament. I know things would

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get heated, and there is nothing wrong in that, but I certainly would not like us to arrive at what I have seen in some Parliaments, particularly in the Pacific area and sometimes in some African Parliaments where things can get pretty out-of-hand. I don't think things would arrive at that stage. I mean, I don't think we have that sort of culture.

But, nonetheless, again, Members and for the old timers, that would include my good Comrade, Senator André Lewis, who has succeeded me, and I feel happily proud that I have laid down enough solid footprints in the sand that the movement of the tide, they are not erased, and as I said before, when he arrived in the Senate, that you can expect serious challenges. And, therefore, that strengthens the whole Parliamentary Democratic process.

So, Honourable Members, I welcome you again. I look forward to your interventions. We, the Presiding Officers are committed to develop the Parliament, and towards to this end, we are planning a Programme for young Parliamentarians. I know some of you have already made one or two external trips to be exposed to things on the outside. You can anticipate more of that to come, because, at the end of the day, we have to make this Parliamentary Democracy work, and each of us has a part to play in that. It is just not the Speaker's part. The Government, of course, has its programmatic platform to execute, and it will execute it. Your responsibility is to oversight what is being done. The Constitution lays out that the Executive is responsible to the Parliament. Let us be clear on that. Many people do not understand that, and see it the other way around. But, this is a separate and distinct arm of Government, in the governance of our country. There are three (3) distinct arms, there is the Judiciary, there is the Executive, which is the Cabinet and there is the Legislature. We pass the Laws. The Constitution, as I said lays out that the Executive is responsible to the Parliament, and, therefore, I would expect, again, robust enquiries, as to matters of State, ideas on how things can be done, and I would give you the necessary guidance, as we go on, from time-to-time, to expand your knowledge on the procedures of Parliament, which can be quite frightening and daunting and very complicated. But, I am certain that we would get there.

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So, Honourable Members, with those few words, Sister Glynis, not that I am overlooking you, but you are not as fresh as the other fresh persons. I think this is your third Session in the Parliament. You served in the Lower House, and now you have been promoted to join the rear breed of Upper House people, notice I didn't say 'upper class'. So, once, again, Senators, I wish to thank you most profusely and most profoundly, and I look forward to a very engaging Session of this Tenth Parliament, and I thank you. **(Applause)**

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 7 - Ministerial Statements.

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Thank you very much, and good morning, again. Mr. President, I listened to you for a while and I said I didn't mind continuing to listen for a little while; you reminded me of those old days.

But, I want to take this opportunity to say how pleased I am to be the first Senator, making Ministerial Statements in this wonderful edifice. **(Applause)** This is, indeed, a historical day for all of us to be present in this atmosphere, in this building, this magnificent building. As one Prime Minister said, it is like a City on the Hill. And, when you look over to the lower parts, into the Capital, it's therapeutic, and I really want to commend the Government for the vision, to working that hard to finding the resources to ensure that we construct. And, today we all can, as proud Grenadians, assemble, discuss the Nation's business in such a wonderful setting. I look forward to this cycle of engagement, and I want to say also a special good morning to my fellow Senators on the 'Other Side'. It is, indeed, a pleasure looking over and seeing all these happy faces.

Mr. President, I know I have fifteen (15) minutes, but I trust that fifteen (15) was not discounted off the time I spent in greeting everybody. It didn't?

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**Mr. President:** Well, Senator, you know I am fairly liberal. This is the business of the State, and if you are giving information, which you are required to do, I would not unnecessarily stop you. So, tread without fear.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Much obliged. Thank you. Mr. President, I have a number of areas, which I have to cover, and I want to move quickly into them, and I want to start off with Disaster Management.

As you know we are presently in the Hurricane Season, a Season, which runs from June 1 to November 30. And, I am pleased to inform this Honourable House and the Nation that NaDMA, through its Inspection Committee would have conducted Shelter inspection between the period of February 4 and April 20. And, as a result of this inspection some one hundred and ten (110) Emergency Shelters have been certified for this Hurricane Season, sixty-seven (67) of which are Primary Shelters, forty-three (43) Secondary, and as we know, Primary Shelters are Shelters that can accommodate persons, prior to and during the passage of an event, hurricane or storm, as the case may be. But, Secondary Shelters can only accommodate persons after the passage of that event.

And, I am pleased also to announce that for the first time, in some time, all Parishes this year, boast of having a Primary Shelter, and I am extremely happy, because this is something we have been working towards, for quite some time. But, I must, indeed, say that our work continues, as it relates to ensuring that Shelters are available, and persons know where they are and they can accommodate them. And, to this end, I would like to remind the House that through the workings of the Canada/Caribbean Disaster Risks Fund, Grenada, through a Grant, was given some two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000.00) to upgrade some ten (10) Emergency Shelters, to facilitate persons with disabilities and the elderly. And, we are seeing this going on, at this point-in-time, because the objective here is to ensure that persons, who have challenges, can be facilitated in those Shelters, by moving through with ramps and the likes.

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Just six (6) weeks ago, we had two (2) Shelter Management training, conducted by the International Organization for Migration. They sponsored and facilitated those trainings. One was held in St. George and the other in St. Patrick, to cover the wide expanse of the country, and we are looking at having some fifteen (15) Districts on the Mainland. We would try to ensure that we position the training close enough, so all stakeholders can be trained.

Also, through IOM, they have done inspection of a number of our Shelters, with the view to assisting in upgrading some of our Shelters. As I said, one hundred and ten (110) Shelters for this season and we are currently upgrading ten (10) to accommodate persons with disabilities, so wheelchair access and the likes and so forth. So IOM is looking to assist in upgrading more. They have done their inspection with our Shelter Inspection Team and we await their Report, as to how much they will be able to afford in assisting us in this upgrade.

Also, we have said to this Honourable House sometime ago that through the United States Humanitarian Assistance Programme of the Southern Command, they have agreed to donate to Grenada and Carriacou new warehouses and offices for Disaster Management. And I must inform this House that on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, we had a final site visit, where the Project Manager, the Contractor and the likes came in and worked with some would-be Contractors on the Island, with our Professional people, Engineers, Physical Planning, looking at the site and the layout of the site for the construction of this new Facility. And, I must say here, beaming with pride, that we're looking to see boots on the ground, late this year, early this year, and I must indeed say this is an extremely important initiative, as it relates to managing disasters in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Also, Mr. President, as a means of ensuring that the stakeholders of NaDMA are on the same page as it relates to preparedness for the season, the Agency hosted the Annual Stakeholders Consultation on July the 12<sup>th</sup>, under the Theme: "Understanding Vulnerabilities, Identifying Gaps and Building Resilience." I am pleased to report that it was a two-day workshop and some forty-five (45) Public and Private Sector

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Organisations attended the Sessions. Of course, I was there and I was very satisfied to listen to the disaster plans that have been developed by our stakeholders and how they will move their Entity in the event that we should be impacted by a monstrous storm. As we realized, 2017 was a wakeup call for some of our fellow States in the Region, as it relates to the passage of Maria and Irma.

What is noteworthy Mr. President, is the part of the plan which speaks to business continuity, and in the case of Government, Government's continuity. What that really means is how quickly we will be able to bounce back after the passage of any storm. And, when I listen to the presentation from the Minister for Finance, that based on the current Mobile Apps that they have, one day after, let us say, a Category Five, or the same as what Ivan did to us, one day after the passage of such an event, if Grenada should be impacted, they would be able to use the Mobile Apps to start business again, being able to collect revenues and the likes and so forth. And, I thought this was a great addition, because after the passage of Ivan, everything went down, and it's like we were fish out of water. But, one of the things that we understood and though we did not say it, then, in 2004, adaptation building resilience, but that's what it meant, when we said building back better, and we enforced the Building Code, to ensure that the hurricane straps are put onto the roofs. Really and truly what we are saying, we may not be able to mitigate against a Category Five hurricane, but we can adapt. We can build resilient homes, resilient businesses, ensuring that we follow the Building Codes and imploring all the techniques that will protect your property. I got to move on.

Mr. President, I want to move onto Social Development and last Thursday under the Ministry of Social Development, SEED payments to senior citizens were done. **(Applause)** That is a historic development. You know, we've been looking for some ways and some means to alleviate some of the stresses that...

**(Time Bell Rings)**

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**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** I heard you, but I will continue, that our senior citizens were carving when they went at the end of the month to collect their Public Assistance and...

**Mr. President:** Senator, I would give you seven (7) minutes more.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Thank you very much. ...school children having to go get their SEED payments intermingling with those who received salaries and it was a very frustrating thing for them. So, what we have done is to move payment to SEED recipients the one before the last Thursday, or the third Thursday in the month, so as to take them away from this hassle, and I think this is very proactive. But it speaks to a very fundamental principle of this Government, finding ways and means to make life easier for our citizens, and I want to say this is a commendable act, and I want to commend the Ministry of Social Development for this. **(Applause)**

As you know, there are issues as it relates to sexual crimes perpetrated among our young people. The Ministry continues to work with the Royal Grenada Police Force and with their support they established the rolling out of the Special Victims Unit, in collaboration of the Royal Grenada Police Force, and this will be done after the Carnival. The new Department will deal with three (3) aspects, intervention at the Community level, with the aim of prevention, intervention and support to victims and general follow-up. This is important, Mr. President, because we are saying no to crime against our young people, no to crime against our senior citizens.

Moving on to the Ministry of Health, Mr. President. It was a promise made to all the qualified nurses in this country of providing them with employment. And, I remember the cry for a number of our trained nurses, who were at home and the space was not available to bring them on permanently and they were given temporary appointments in the General Hospital and other Health Facilities around the country. I am pleased to announce today, Mr. President, that the fiscal space allowed, and we have brought into the system, permanently, all those nurses, who were trained and



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were home, or probably had temporary engagement, they are now fully employed within the State of Grenada. **(Applause)**

Phase (II) of the Hospital Project continues, and we are working assiduously with our Contractors and the Ministry of Infrastructural Development, to ensure that our timeline of November, to fully occupy this building in November is realised and we are working nonstop to ensure it happens. Gone are the days when the steel structure stood as an eye sore and it was like an embarrassment. But, as I have said before, it was a simple remedy. The steel structure was funded by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and it was put together by our brothers and sisters from Cuba. It was a simple issue of Protocols. Within Cuba, they hang the AC units on the outside of the building. Within PAHO, the Protocol is that the AC should be in the ceiling.

The building has five (5) floors and definitely they were too low to follow the Protocol of PAHO. So, all that it took or it had to take was to remove and disassemble the steel frames and make it four (4) floors rather than five (5), and we're doing that. We are able to put the AC in the ceiling. A simple fix, but it appears to have been beyond the imagination of so many before. Today, we are happy that when you drive up on to the compound and looking at this magnificent facility, it will aid in healthcare in the country, because it is not just about providing a facility, it's the service. But, what we do know is when you provide an environment that is conducive for people to relate well with others, it aids in health, in the recovery process. So, I am extremely happy, Mr. President, that we are working towards finalising, fully utilising this new structure in November.

I also want to say, Mr. President, that we continue to work with our auxiliary Hospitals like the Smarting Project in Princess Alice, that should be completed pretty soon. As a matter fact, the Contractor was to hand up the building on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July, but he had his own delays, and we may see some change, as it relates to new Contractors coming on to finalise the sort of works and the building should be handed over to the people of St. Andrew and St. Patrick who are served by Princess Alice Hospital.

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Also, we're looking forward to seeing the commencement of the same Smarting Project in Princess Royal, in Carriacou. What we are trying to ensure, Mr. President, with all the construction of the new building that climate resilience is embedded deeply within those structures. As I have said, you have to adapt to ensuring that your structure is built to withstand what is known as the new normal these days, Category Five Hurricanes.

To move on, Mr. President, I want to quickly run, if I have the time, to look at some aspects of infrastructure development. Mr. President, the new buzz words on the streets these days is: 'the Environmental Warden' or the 'Road Warden'. What is this about? We know, historically, we talk about the Seasonal De-Bushing Programme where we may have some five hundred and thirty (530) odd crews cleaning the country over four (4) fortnights within the year. We are saying they have been basically taking care of the bushes, but the drains, some of the over-hangings, still remain, and one of the issues that NaDMA has been promoting is developing Disaster Risk Strategies, and part of this is ensuring that drains and waterways are cleared, so that in the event of heavy rains, there would not be any blockages, which will cause undue erosions and the likes.

So, these Road or Environmental Wardens, sixty-four (64) crews would be employed year round, and they primarily would be focusing on clearing of drains, cutting of over-hangings and building on the esthetics.

**(Time Bells Rings)**

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** And, I want to say, Mr. President, I appreciate the seven (7) minutes, but to end by saying this Environmental Warden will be the new normal, as it relates to keeping this country clean. I thank you. **(Applause)**

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**Mr. President:** Freshmen, Senators, you do have a right to enquire on a Ministerial Statement. So, if there is something you wish to clarify, this is an opportunity on which you can question the Senator making the Ministerial Statement.

Now, if the question is such that I determine that the Senator will not be in a position to answer the question, I will then so advise and you have the writing opportunity of framing that question, submitting it to the Clerk, to be answered at a subsequent Sitting. So, just that you be aware, because, as I pointed out before... (I am looking for my copy of the Constitution). The Executive is responsible to the Parliament, and on that basis, therefore, you can enquire of what the Minister, in his capacity as Minister, if he makes a statement and you want clarification or something further, you can, at this juncture, do so.

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Ron Redhead.

**Sen. the Hon. Ron Redhead:** Yes, Mr. President...

**Mr. President:** I have to keep angling myself here.

**Sen. the Hon. Ron Redhead:** No problem. Mr. President, I want to say that I am pleased to hear the Minister for Disaster Management speak about the importance of being proactive after the passage of any Hurricane or Tropical Storm.

But, Mr. President, I have a question for the Minister immediately. What I want to point out is the fact that mention was made of a Mobile Application to collect payments, let's say after a Category (5) or (3) Hurricane has passed, and, Mr. President, I would like to know about the security of this Mobile App. We know that cyber crimes are high on the agenda of many, throughout the world, and I have not heard anything in relation to that. Now, it's very interesting, because I want to say the last time we had the passage of Hurricane Ivan, Category (3), we know there were many allegations of massive corruption in ARD, just to name a few, and monies being collected for

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benefiting the people, and it did not reach them. So, I would just like to know the security of that Mobile App, if it is secured from the angle of National standards and International standards.

**Mr. President:** Senator Garraway.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, with the short time, you don't have much time to even go into details, just have to lay what is before us. But, in terms of the security, I just want to take the Member across and probably he will do the research thereafter.

When the Government would have established, through the Port, the ASYCUDA System, very imbedded, very secured, very protected, and the issue here is to ensure that, one, if I understand him, correctly, as persons being able to get into your system, via cyber crime, or being able to hijack your system and do corrupt things, no, it's not possible.

And, secondly, if I think I understand where you are going, you talked about ARD and what happened in 2004; I don't want us to cast aspersions on our honourable Officers within the Inland Revenue Department. I think they have shown, in the last four years, or five years that the development of this country is for all of us, and it's the first time we have seen consistently, every month, that the ARD would have met its target, or, probably, even surpassed the target, in terms of revenue collection. This has been the mantra they have been pushing, and I am pleased to announce that you have a group of men and women within this Department that has demonstrated to this Nation that they are about the development of this country. So, if there was any perception, I want that to be erased, that we have some honourable men and women working within our Inland Revenue Department, and let's continue to commend them for the good work they have been doing for this country. Thank you Mr. President.

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**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Norland Cox. Oh, sorry, Senator the Honourable André Lewis.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Mr. President, thank you very much, and Senator Garraway thanks for the information relative to the status of the Nurses, irregardless of how many. But, my question is to seek clarity. The nurses that have been made permanent, are they the Registered Nurses that were with, I think, it was GRENCASE, and are they all now within the permanent Establishment of the Public Service, so that they would fall under my sister Union, the Public Workers Union? Just, as a means of clarity, because I know that there were some concerns established there.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Mr. President, the information that was given to the general House is that they were temporary, so they were working, through GRENCASE, for three (3) days a week and not established; now they have been regularised.

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Norland Cox.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Mr. President, thank you very much, and my apologies for being late this morning, but I had a tight schedule, but I am happy to be here this morning, at our first Sitting, and also to present on my Ministry and other Portfolios, other Ministries in the Government.

Mr. President, I first want to start off with the Ministry of Youth, the Youth Portfolio, and just to say that the Ministry has engaged the Caribbean Development Bank in a programme called Youth Vybzing Programme. It's a programme where the Ministry is going all out to engage our young people to get firsthand information from them on what are some of the challenges, what are some of the issues that they are facing and we are using that to build that into our programming, into our activities and plans for the Ministry and for our young people in Grenada.

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As most persons would have seen, my colleague Minister, Honourable Kate Lewis together with MPs from the various Constituencies have been engaging our young people over the past three or four weeks and soon we should have some feedback, some formal report, as to what are the common issues that are facing them out there.

Mr. President, we are working on a renewed focus on our young people in the Ministry of Youth Development. We are looking at everything. We are looking at our human resource. We are looking at our whole programming. Currently, we are doing a verification process. They are trying to just double check, to see that every Trainee is where they are supposed to be, and we will complete that very soon, and that will help us in going forward.

As you know, Mr. President, it's a very large programme, and there are a couple thousand trainees, and we have to do verification, every now and then, to ensure that, not just that the Trainees are where they are and doing what they are supposed to, but to ensure that our Supervisors are also doing, that is part of the monitoring process.

Mr. President, we have continued to look at the programme and look at the issue of its sustainability and keeping it lively and keeping it moving and ticking over; and we have engaged our Corporate Businesses who have been partnering with us, with the programme, over the past years, and we are moving to a Cost Sharing Initiative whereby, initially, Government would have been responsible, in terms of the stipend for the trainees, paying the whole 100%; now we are moving forward with a Cost Sharing Initiative.

Mr. President, we are fully aware that some of the partners, some of the Corporate partners may not be able to take on all of those trainees, in terms of the cost sharing, 50/50%, and we are also looking for them to transition into those businesses fulltime; so those discussions are ongoing, and we are very pleased with the feedback and we are moving forward with that initiative, Mr. President.

Mr. President, as it relates to the Ministry of Culture, as you know we are in the heart of the Carnival Season. Carnival is basically our greatest and most significant

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Social and Cultural asset, together with all our stakeholders, Mass Bands, Musicians, everybody, and it plays a significant role in the economic activity of this country on an annual basis. And, so our shows, activities that would have already completed thus far, would have gone well. We are continuing to move forward, to ensure that some of the errors that happened in the past do not happen again, going forward, and I am very confident that the relationship that we have with our stakeholders have improved, and we are on a good wicket, in terms of communication and moving forward with our Carnival.

As with everything else, there are going to be challenges, there are going to be issues, and one of those issues, Mr. President, continues to surface year after year, and it has to do with our Carnival, and how our costumes are displayed, how persons portray themselves on the street, the integrity of our Calypsos, all those are called into question, and it means that we have to do some more work in terms of looking at criterias, and in terms of preparing and addressing those, because if they are public concerns, we have a responsibility to look after them and that we are going to do, Mr. President.

Mr. President, the Ministry of Culture, we are currently preparing and planning to host a Festival of the Arts later on this year. It's a very important activity, Mr. President. We believe that our persons, our young persons, need an avenue for them to display their talent, and so through the Festival of the Arts, we believe that, that can bring out... I understand that even our reigning Groovy Monarch also participate in the Festival of the Arts; so, Mr. President, we see the value of this initiative.

Mr. President, over the weekend, on Saturday, the Grenadian Community, in Montreal, held an inaugural Spice Island Day Cultural Celebration. Mr. President, I think it was an excellent activity. You could see that a lot of planning went into it. I must commend the Consulate in Canada for the work that was done, and the persons in the Canada Diaspora, our Grenadians. We had over three thousand (3000) persons there. Mr. President, I really want to congratulate that Committee, on a job well done in hosting that event. **(Applause)**

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Mr. President, I want to move to Tourism, and as we speak on this activity in Montreal, the GTA was also present there, doing their marketing and they have done an excellent job. They had a media activity, and so this shows, Mr. President, the relationship between the Diaspora and our Tourism product, and, Mr. President, our Tourism product has been doing excellently well, over the past years, and we continue to seeing increased performance, and we really want to commend the Minister and, of course, the GTA for the work that they are doing.

Mr. President, we see increases in every aspect, every significant area of our Tourism product, be it in Stayover Arrivals, or be it in Yachting, Mr. President, be it in flights, Mr. President, we see increases. In terms of raw numbers, January to May, 2017 in comparison to the same period for 2018, Mr. President, we see an increase in over thirty thousand (30,000)... yachts increase. Mr. President, I think that is commendable. **(Applause)**

In Stayover Arrivals, for the same period, Mr. President, an increase in over six thousand persons, Mr. President; I think that is also commendable. **(Applause)** Mr. President, we see increase in flights, even LIAT has increased their flights, and it says that this is something good for Grenada. A lot of economic activities are taking place in Grenada, Mr. President, and we want to commend all those who are partnering with us, to ensure that we move forward, successfully.

Mr. President, as regards to Sports, Mr. President, we are very happy to announce that the Windward Islands Volcanoes or Windward Islands Cricket Franchise have chosen Grenada as their new Headquarters, as their home. They haven't given us any definite period when they are going to end that partnership, but they are here, Mr. President, and we are happy to welcome the Windward Islands Franchise in Grenada. We believe that we have the best facility to accommodate them, **(applause)** and the structure, Mr. President, and so we congratulate them on their move and to let them know that the Ministry of Sports will be working with them to ensure that sports continues to flourish especially cricket, Mr. President.



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As you know, they have indicated that they are going to get some of the players to incorporate in our local Cricket Teams that we are able to help to improve on the skill and the ability for our young cricketers. Mr. President, as you know, this weekend, we have the Under-15 Finals, taking place in Carriacou, which, of course, Carriacou is one of the finals. I must congratulate Carriacou, of course, Mr. President. Please excuse my bias, but I can't help it. **(Applause)** So, we want to commend all those who are working hard to ensure that Sports continue to thrive.

Mr. President, we are looking at a number of initiatives in the Ministry of Sports, in terms of our programming. We recognise that it is an area of weakness, and we recognise that in some of our Sporting disciplines, that there is work to be done, and we continue to work with our Stakeholders, work with our staff, and we are moving in a direction, which we believe that going forward we can see more improvements, Mr. President.

Mr. President, in the area of Agriculture, Mr. President, we know that it has been an area of significant discussion. And for good reason, Mr. President, it should be, because of its significance, because of its history, because of its impact on our Nation, on our development and most importantly, the importance our farmers have played, over the years, in Grenada's development.

Mr. President, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands continue to focus steadfastly, on training. A significant number of training has been done in the area of Pests and Diseases, Soil Food Safety and a number of other areas, Mr. President. We believe that these initiatives are critical, in terms of improving the capacity of our officers and also our farmers to ensure that we continue to prepare ourselves. As the Industry continues to change, continue to move, we also have to keep up with it, if we are want to be successful, Mr. President.

Mr. President, we...

**(Time Bell Rings)**

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**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** I believe, Mr. President, there is a...

**Mr. President:** I'll give you three (3) minutes more.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** I don't believe I need all that, but thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I just want to touch on a very important initiative that the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands have embarked on, and has paid a lot of attention to and is working towards ensuring that we implement it in a successful way, Mr. President, and that activity is the Farm Labour Support Programme. Mr. President, we recognise that the support that some of our farmers need, in terms of preparing, either it's primary tillage, secondary tillage, or even in terms of clearing, giving them that assistance to increase their productivity and to make their initiative as viable as possible. Mr. President, I believe that we, as a Ministry, as a Government have a responsibility to do everything that we can to ensure that our farmers succeed and succeed every time. Mr. President, and through our Farm Labour Support Programme, we believe that this initiative can do that, and can make an impact and so we are working towards implementing that.

Mr. President, we also want to indicate that the SAEP Programme, that is coming on stream, initially, it was called MAREP, and now it is reconfigured. But, I believe that the way that we are rolling it out, it's going to have a similar or more impact, not just for our Farming Community, but most importantly, for our young people, Mr. President.

**(Applause)**

So, Mr. President, this is just a few reports that I want to give, on behalf of my Ministry and other Ministries of fellow colleagues. Mr. President, thank you very much for your time. **(Applause)**

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

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**Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie:** Thank you, Mr. President. I have two questions for the Senator on the 'Other Side'. The first one is to deal with Tourism and flights. I welcome the fact that you have said there are increased flights, but I also note that our Prime Minister recently said that we are going to be helping in the support of LIAT, in terms of financially contributing, and one of the issues that have constantly been raised is the issue of cost of flights and LIAT, in particular, and cost of travel. I want to know if our Government, through your Office, or through GTA, is looking at how Government may assist in reducing the costs, because a large percentage of the cost of a ticket has to do with taxes that are instituted by each Government, whether it's through landing fees or other things, so that is the first question.

And the second one is in relation to Sports; when would we see the lighting of the National Cricket Stadium? Thank you, Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Senator Cox.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Mr. President, thank you. Mr. President, through you, let me take the first question. As regards to LIAT, Mr. President, you know that LIAT is a very important business and initiative for the Region. Without travel, we, as a Region, cannot survive, and while we recognise that there are some inadequacies, we also recognise there have been some recent improvements with LIAT.

We, as a Government, have always advocated that we are willing to apply. The Prime Minister has said on several occasions, he is willing to apply similar measures, or similar approaches that were taken with international Airlines, and our aim is not just to reduce flights, but to make LIAT as viable as possible, because it doesn't make sense, if the flights are cheaper and then the Company is in solvency. So, that is the approach that we are taking, but we believe that, that cannot be achieved unilaterally by Grenada only, because we have our other Member-Countries, who are partners in LIAT. And, so once those other Member-Countries are on board with us, we are ready to roll, and the Prime Minister has indicated that on several occasions. But, this is a critical, critical

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issue for development, a critical issue for economic activity in the Region. As you know, in some cases, Mr. President, it is cheaper to travel to Miami for the weekend, than to go to Trinidad, just a few miles away. So, we recognise that this is an issue, and it's a very important question, Mr. President, and thank you very much for raising it.

Mr. President, the second question, as regards to the lighting of the Stadium. We recognise that the lighting is a critical asset, in terms of giving us an opportunity to access Games, the shorter versions of the Games; 20/20, which are played at nights, and we are basically losing out, in that regard. We are continuing to work closely with our partners, in terms of implementing this project. We had some setback, as regards to a delay and some of it was as a result of the proximity of the Election and as such, we had to kind of reset, in terms of the Bank, go back and do over some of the things, because the agreement that we had with the Bank, the time had expired, so we had to go back and reset. So, that has pushed back the implementation a little bit, but I can tell you, that is one of the initiatives that is priority for the Ministry. Thank you very much, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Senator Ron Redhead.

**Sen. the Hon. Ron Livingston Redhead:** Thank you, again, Mr. President. Mr. President, I have just one question for Mr. Minister, but I am very pleased to hear the benefits that Cricket would be getting shortly, I must say, for our young people. But, on the question of the Youth Programme, the IMANI Programme, to be specific, I heard the Minister made mention that they would be doing, if I am using the correct words, "investigations on the Programme". I would like to know if this is independent, or is it an audit from the Department of Audit that is auditing the Programme, or is it an independent investigation into some of the discrepancies of the Programme?

**Mr. President:** Senator Cox.

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**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank you very much, Mr. President, and thank you very much to my Colleague for that important question. But, I think my utterances had to do with verification and not so much as an investigation.

Mr. President, it is known that the Programme does have challenges. Like every initiative, like every Programme, like everything, you're going to have challenges, especially when you're dealing with young people. Young people are very spirited. They have their own personalities, and that is one of the things that we are motivated by, but also, at times, it can be challenging.

Now, we are working on, and what we are doing is, verification, and I say that to us... in coming into the Ministry in April, I thought that it was fitting, myself and Honourable Kate Lewis, fitting, for us to get an understanding of where we are, where the Programme is at, and so what we have been doing, is more or less an assessment, to see what is taking place, to help us to plan forward. So, it's more of a verification process, than an investigation process. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Senator Roberts.

**Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts:** Thank you, Mr. President. Minister, Senator, my question is on Carnival, Calypso and the integrity of the Product. You noted that you have challenges, but as a Parent, a Grandparent, my question is, are you planning, or the Ministry planning to do a post-mortem after Carnival, so that we can have proper censoring before some of these questionable lyrics come to the public? I think we need to do a lot, in terms of structuring the Product, because what we would have achieved, in terms of Tourism numbers, may be soon eroded, if we do not look at that. And, additionally, we have to look at the crimes related to all these events.

**Mr. President:** Senator Cox.

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**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Mr. President, thank you very much, and my colleague, Senator Roberts, thank you very much for raising that important issue. As I indicated, Mr. President, in my presentation, we recognise that not just the issue of Calypso, but also the issue of how persons conduct themselves, how our costumes are being constructed are also called into question.

**Mr. President:** Not wanting to stop you, Senator, but in the...

*(Partly inaudible comments by the President)*

**Mr. President:** I have some notes that I made, that I wished to address, and I can assure you that uppermost in the issues that I have would be the matters that you are addressing.

**Sen. the Honourable Norland Cox:** Mr. President, I ...

**Mr. President:** And, I don't think we can over-repeat it, or overstate it, but I just found it that Senators on the floor were raising issues, which I had noted and which I intend to raise and speak on and it's a good sign. They say great minds think alike.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Mr. President, duly noted. As you know, Carnival has a way of invoking a lot of things in people; some good, some not so good. But, as it relates to the issue of Calypso, and I have said it publicly, one of the things that we have looked at and discussed, we recognise that there are no actual criteria in place, right now, for addressing that issue, as it comes upon us. I think, initially, they had something and there were some problems, and it was removed; that is the information that met me.

However, what we recognise is that there has been an increase in participation and so that, in itself, is good. So, it means that there is a clear opportunity for us to look

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at the issue of educating and maybe doing some more classes, in terms of working with the young Calypsonians, in terms of constructing their Calypsoes, I think we need to do that. We probably need to do some more awareness, apart from just the rules, because, Mr. President, at the same time, I do not think that we should just do things to demotivate, or remove that surge in participation; that is what we want, but we want it to be constructive. And, so I take your point that that is something that we have to look at, that is something that we are going to look at. It is customary that we do a post-mortem and that would be done. Maybe the issue of the Calypsoes and how we treat with it, we might have to do it separately, in terms of a more general consultative process; go out in the various Communities, get some feedback, meet with our stakeholders, but we recognise that, that is a current issue that really needs looking after, Mr. President. But, as you see, Mr. President, it is right up upon us, and as I said, Calypso is done in such a way, that what gives Calypso its true nature, is because of its creativity and its double meaning. And, sometimes, persons, in striving in to do that, they go too far; and we think that there is a clear opportunity for us to put measures in place to curtail those negative leadings; so, Mr. President, we are going to take some action. Unfortunately, it should have been proactive and not reactive, but this is where we are. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Senator Dunstan Campbell.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Dunstan Campbell:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. And, since this is my first intervention in this Honourable House, I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you to my Constituency for giving me the privilege to be here and to make the interventions that I will make over the years.

With specific reference to Senator Cox's intervention on Agriculture, I will like to state that the Farming Community is extremely pleased with the Farm Labour Support Programme. **(Applause)** We've always been pleased. However, we want that Programme to be targeted to specific programmatic areas in the Ministry of Agriculture;

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for example, if you are pushing soursop, we need to have that Labour Support programme aligned with this.

The question I want to ask, at this particular point in time, is, for the identification of the Farmers who would be receiving support for this Labour Programme, have you been involving the Farmers' Organisation to do the selection, or to help you select the Farmers that are going to be targeted, so that the monies that are being spent for this Programme, which is extremely important, that we have the impact for the areas that we are focusing on; so that's my question, are you involving the Farmers' Organisation?

**Mr. President:** Senator Cox.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank you very much, again, Mr. President, for the opportunity to respond to this very important issue and important Sector. Mr. President, I didn't go in detail as regards to some of the areas that the Farm Labour Programme will be targeting. We'll be targeting avocados, cocoa, nutmeg and soursop; so these are the primary crops that are going to be targeted under that Programme.

As it relates to the issue of identifying the persons who are in need, that process has been done, through our Extension Farmers, in consultation with our Stakeholders. I do know that we have a registration for Farmers, and there is due diligence in that initiative. I can assure you, there is due diligence. If there are any issues that your community, the Farmers' Association may be aware of, please bring it to our attention, and we are going to address it, speedily. Thank you very much.

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I have a lot of ground to cover in my Presentation, so I hope you will be as generous with me as you were with my colleagues.



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I would like to take advantage of this opportunity, as the first time speaking on the new Ministry of Climate Resilience, the Environment, Forestry, Fisheries, Disaster Management and Information, to apprise this House of the rationale for the establishment of this new Ministry. And, in addition to that, I would like to speak on some matters coming out from the Ministry of Finance, with the recently published Fiscal Responsibility Oversight Committee (FROC) Report. So, those are the two areas I would wish to cover.

So, with regards to the Ministry of Climate Resilience, the rationale for the establishment of this critical Ministry is so that we, as a Government, as a country, could take a far more strategic approach to facing the challenges of climate change, whether that is how we adapt, how we build resilience into all that we do, in terms of our national development, in terms of our country, or how do we mitigate against the causes even though, as a Small Island Developing State, our contribution to climate change is negligible. However, we face the dire consequences of those actions, whether it's sea-level rise, whether it's hurricanes, whether it's drought, flood, etcetera.

But, the issue on the area of climate resilience, how we adapt to this changing environment. It enables us to prepare better for extreme climatic shocks; how to withstand those shocks far better and then how we recover. We recover the damage incurred, manage less and our ability to move forward, recover faster. The other area is the better stewardship of our natural resources, having Fisheries, Forestry, Environment under one umbrella. In addition to climate resilience, the information component, in terms of public education allows for a more comprehensive approach to this Ridge to Reef concept. This concept of what we do on land affects what happens in our oceans and what happens in our oceans affects what happens on land.

And, right now, Mr. President, there is significant international attention on the area of Climate Resilience, and there are significant international resources available, through various Funding Agencies, whether it's the Green Climate Fund, the largest of the Climate Financing Entities, or the Adaptation Fund, Global Environment Facility, bilateral arrangements, through Foreign Affairs, or other sources. And, there is a

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narrow window of opportunity, I believe for Small Island Developing States. So, the faster that we can co-list our resources, our efforts in accessing and applying those resources to our National Development Agenda, the better. And, in terms of the progressiveness of our Prime Minister of this Administration, the Ministry of Climate Resilience is the first of its kind within the Region, and we are seeing others; Dominica has established a similar Ministry, others are following also.

So, with regard to the construct of this extremely large, extremely complex Ministry, there are three (3) Ministers responsible; my colleague Senator Garraway with responsibility for Disaster Management and Information and Honourable Alvin Da Breo, who has special responsibility for Forestry and Fisheries, with myself, with overall responsibility.

One of the key mandates of this Ministry is resource mobilisation. So, how do we tap into the resources that are available and the development of a pipeline of bankable projects. And, these are based on our various Policy areas, whether it's the National Adaptation Plan, then that should determine contributions, which speaks to Adaptation speaks to Mitigation, or a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. Whether it is other areas of National Development, climate resilience is a crosscutting function and it speaks to our Infrastructure, it speaks to Tourism, it speaks to Education, it speaks to Health, Housing, etcetera, and my colleague, Senator Garraway spoke to some of those in his Presentation.

Mr. President, there have already been successes within the Ministry. In the leadup to the establishment of the Ministry, there were already a number of projects that were in that pipeline, the most significant of which is a Water Resilience Project with NAWASA. Through the Green Climate Fund, the G-Cruise Project, which is a hundred and twenty-five million EC dollar (EC\$125 m), which will help transform our Water Sector and build resilience, whether it's how we collect water, whether it's how we store it, whether how we distribute it across the country.

A second project is to establish St. George's, as the first Climate Resilient City within the Region, and we have support to prepare the concepts behind that six hundred

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thousand US dollars (US\$600,000.00), to develop key interventions; whether it is with sewerage for the South of the Island; whether it is St. George's University, a key economic pillar, how we build resilience into that Institution; our Airport, our roads and urban plan for the Town, all within the context of building greater resilience.

Mr. President, with those projects, if we did not have a strategy, if we did not perform, in terms of our fiscal responsibility, the International Community, those that are providing us with the grants, or the concessional loans to do these activities, would not be doing that, if we weren't able to make the strides and the progress that we have over the past five (5) years, in terms of our fiscal stability.

There are some other projects that we have recently signed up to; one is a grant funded agreement with the Global Environment Fund. This is a three hundred thousand dollar (\$300,000.00) project, building, again, resilience into our watershed areas, and that's a project with ten (10) other Islands. And, then we recently signed another Agreement, a twenty US million dollar (US\$20 m) Grant Project, together with Antigua and Dominica; Grenada's share from that will be six million US dollars (US\$6 m), and this is to provide us with enhanced direct access to the funds that are available within the Green Climate Fund. There will be a Private Sector Revolving Fund of two million dollars (\$2 m), so for projects within the Private Sector, and its intended... these would be loans to homeowners to build resilience into their properties; a three million dollar (\$3 m) grant to Government for Government projects and a million dollar project to build capacity, so that we can better gain access to the funds that are available.

And, finally, in discussions with UN Environment, for the submission of an eight hundred thousand US dollar (US\$800,000.00) project to upscale an existing Coral Restoration Project that we have ongoing here, in Grenada; and once, again, we would not be getting this level of traction, if our fiscal discipline wasn't intact. **(Applause)**

Mr. President, it is a complex Ministry and work has been ongoing, with the support of the World Bank, to restructure the Ministry. So, the synergies that exist between all of the components, whether it's Information, Disaster Management, Fisheries, Forestry, Environment, Climate Resilience, can be taken advantage of. And,

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the focus of the Ministry, which is resource mobilisation, the focus will be on delivering those.

Mr. President, on the environment front, I just want to touch on the issue of sargassum, and the environmental crisis we face, not just here in Grenada, but throughout the Region, with the influx of sargassum on our shores. This is linked to climate change. We are seeing significant blooms of sargassum offshore and with the changing currents through and the warming of our seas, we're seeing these now coming ashore. And, we have particular issues here in Grenada, right now, in Soubise, in Marquis and in Windward in Carriacou, a serious influx of sargassum. To date, we have spent over four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000.00) in cleaning those beaches, but as soon as we clean, it returns and then we are subject to the variables of variability of the currents, whether it comes to us, whether it misses us.

We have a budget for an additional six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000.00) to continue that cleanup process between now and September. Satellite images show significant blooms are on their way to us and our neighbours. We are working with the OECS, with Member States, who are all suffering from exactly the same challenge; how to come up with longer term solutions; whether it is equipment to help clear our beaches onshore that is sensitive to our beaches, whether it is equipment for offshore to try and collect the Sargassum before it hits our shores, and then the final area is whether there is actually a commercial opportunity in this. There are a couple of entrepreneurs of St. Lucia, who are converting sargassum into liquid fertilizer and have access to the US market. So, we are working with the Member States, through the OECS to see how that project can be up-scaled and how that could be adopted on each of the Islands, so we can determine what is a cost to us to an actual revenue stream. So, Mr. President, I'll now like to move on to the FROC Report.

***(Time Bell Rings)***

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**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** So, the seven (7) minutes, I think, would be appropriate, Mr. President. **(Laughter)**

***(The President made inaudible comments)***

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, I wish to address two (2) issues that have been raised in the recent Fiscal Responsibility Oversight Committee **(FROC)** Report on Grenada's 2017 Fiscal Performance. As a background, the Committee is an independent Committee, established to monitor and report on Grenada's fiscal performance, and there are two areas of non-compliance that were identified within that Report. The first is to do with Public Sector Debt to GDP Ratio; the second is Public/Private/Partnership Contingent Liabilities. The same two (2) issues were flagged in last year's Report under 2016 performance and discussions have taken place between the Ministry of Finance and the FROC Committee members where the same issues have been raised once again.

So, first of all, the Debt to GDP ratio, there is a target that is set as a fiscal rule of 55% Debt to GDP Ratio, but there are no annual intermediate steps associated with that target, so it's a simple target of 55%; are we there, are we not there? The ECCB target is more specific, to get our Debt to GDP ratio down to 60% by 2030, and our current projection is that we will bring our Debt to GDP ratio down to 55% by 2020, so within a two-year period. **(Applause)**

However, Mr. President, the FROC's interpretation of the Law is that without these intermediate steps, you are either at 55%, bearing in mind when we started, when we entered this Home Grown Structural Adjustment Programme, the Debt to GDP ratio was 108%. So, 108%, we brought it down to 65%, and target it to hit 55% by 2020. So, considerable progress has been achieved.

We have also explained to the FROC that there isn't a need for this intermediate target once the Primary Balance Rule, which is the Primary Balance of 3.5% of GDP is

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exceeded. Once we achieve that, greater than 3.5%, then our debt trajectory continues to move in the right downward direction.

The second point, the PPP Contingent Liability Rule; the FROC's position, again, is that we are non-compliant, because of the lack of information. When we started to be monitored from 2016, there had been no Public/Private Partnerships. So, their request for data on PPPs is actually irrelevant. We have none. We are in discussion with a number of State-Owned Enterprises, but there are no Agreements in place. So, not until that point is reached can information on those Entities, be provided. So, the requirement is that the PPP related Contingent Liability cannot exceed 5% of GDP, because there are none in play at the moment. That number is actually zero (0). So, we're actually meeting it. However, there is further discussion to explain to the FROC why we are actually in that position.

So, Mr. President, in closing, a full response to the FROC Report, will be issued to the Committee, it will be available for public consumption, and there is a need for continued engagement with this Committee, so that there is a common understanding of the terms that are laid out within that. I thank you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Senator Stiell. Senator the Honourable André Lewis.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you very much, Mr. President, and thank you, the Leader of Government's Business. Because it should be fresh in your mind, I thought I should ask that question, for the clarity of our members and the general public. I know that you have zeroed in on the Report on the PPP's. Could you tell me where we are with the Gravel and Concrete, and also the Grenada Postal Corporation, because these were spoken about very heavily, in relation to PPPs, so I would like to know where we are.

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

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**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. The information I have is, discussions are ongoing. I do not have anything specific that I can add to that, other than, those discussions are ongoing.

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie.

**Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie:** Thank you, Mr. President. One question for the Leader Government's Business, regarding the FROC Report. There was a concern raised, with regards to the Debt to GDP Ratio, of not all the debt being accounted for, because of the SOEs and Statutory Boards are not included. Has that issue been addressed by the Ministry of Finance?

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Thank you. The Ministry of Finance is working on that, in terms of the existing SOEs. They are working on consolidating the data. Right now, Central Government accounts are separate from those of the SOEs. The task to consolidate and bring those together is actually a significant one, but work has started on it and the intention is to bring those together.

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

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

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

1. The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Grenada Food and Nutrition Council for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2016.

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2. Report of the Director of Audit, Grenada on the Financial Statements of the Grenada National Stadium Authority for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2015.
3. Fiscal Responsibility Oversight Committee (FROC) 2017 Annual Report.
4. Report of the Director of Audit, Grenada on the Financial Statements of the T.A. Marryshow Community College (TAMCC) for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2016.
5. Report of the Director of Audit, Grenada on the Resources Managed for the period from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2017 by the Project Co-ordination Unit within the Ministry of Finance and Energy for the Caribbean Regional Communications Infrastructure Programme (CARCIP) and the Income and Expenditure for the accounting period ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2017.
6. Government of Grenada Compliance Assessment Report Supplementary Budget 2018.
7. Supplementary Estimates for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018.

**Mr. President:** Honourable Members, these Papers are hereby ordered laid on the Table. **(Sound of Gavel)** Senator De Allie.

**Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie:** Mr. President, sorry, through you, I just want to make a brief comment on the Papers that were laid. And, to just say that when we have a Report coming to us from Stadium Authority for 2015, and we're in 2018, and almost coming to the end; and I know the FRA have specific rules now that state a



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Statutory Organisation is supposed to present their accounts within three (3) months after the year end, to the Line Minister to be laid. So, we're breaking the Law and we're here accepting this without comment. I just wanted to make that comment, it's a bit frustrating.

**(Inaudible comments by the President)**

**Mr. President:** It takes a bit of getting used to the new facility. Rule 28, 'Moving of Motion', so let me just say to the new Senators that these documents are exceedingly important and they form part of your responsibility, because these Reports report on the activities of State-Owned Enterprises and other Bodies of the State. It gives the fiscal review of the performance, etcetera, etcetera.

Now, these are laid on the Table, but it gives you an opportunity to study them. You can frame questions arising from your study. You can seek clarifications arising from your study, indeed, you can engage in debating. And, Rule 28, 'Moving of Motion' says: **"Subject to the Constitution and these Standing Orders, it shall be competent for any Senator to propose, by way of Motion, any matter for debate in the Senate."** So, this gives you an opportunity to exercise your responsibility and your due diligence, as you are required to do. And, based on my experience, as a Presiding Officer, too many times these documents are just laid on the Table and not a single word, not a drum beat or funeral note is heard. The documents just go, and again, I am saying this, because I believe failure to examine these documents and to be actively engaged amounts to a dereliction of duty. So, for the Freshmen Senators, and it's a point that Senator De Allie has raised on several occasions in the past. Although I am not minded, Senator, of any occasion in which you did in fact, introduced any of these documents for debate or for clarification. So, I just thought I should, in the process of orienting the new Senators to their responsibilities, their duties and privileges and the rules, what is required of you. Thank you. I think we can move on, Mr. Clerk.

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**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 9 - Petitions.

Item 10 - Government Notices.

Item 11 - Unofficial Notices.

Item 12 - Questions.

Item 13 - Personal Explanations.

Item 14 - Motions.

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

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

**WHEREAS** debate on the Gracious Address delivered by the Governor-General on the occasion of the Ceremonial State Opening of the First Session of the Tenth Parliament on Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 was deferred to a date to be named;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the said Address be now debated.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, I wish to propose an amendment to this Motion. So, it now reads:

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Debate on the Address deferred to a date to be named.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

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

**WHEREAS** it was necessary to provide for the services of the State of Grenada for the year 2018 by means of a Supplementary Appropriation Act;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Supplementary Appropriation (No. 1) Act, 2018 for the period July 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018 be approved.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, as this is a Money Motion, I wish to signal to this Honourable House that I have the Speaker's Seal of Consent to proceed.

Mr. President, the Supplementary Appropriation Act that this Motion speaks to seek Parliamentary approval to bring additional monies, monies not budgeted for in the 2018 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure into the system and provides a breakdown of how those additional funds would be spent. This Supplemental is to appropriate an additional sum of thirty-six million, one hundred and thirty-four thousand, five hundred and twelve dollars and eighty-eight cents (\$36,134,512.88) to the service of Grenada for the period July 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

Mr. President, this sum includes twenty eight million, one hundred and six thousand, three hundred and fifty one dollars and eighty-eight cents (\$28,106,351.88), the capital expenditure funded entirely by external grants, not loans, Mr. President, but by external grants.

In addition, eight million and twenty eight thousand, one hundred and sixty one dollars (\$8,028,161.00) of current expenditure is funded from local sources. These were additional revenues generated through Inland Revenue, through Customs, revenues that have exceeded the targets that were estimated back in December 2018.

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What is significant is that these additional sums are used to fund capital expenses, capital expenses and not recurrent expenses.

Mr. President, every cent is allocated to capital projects, projects that create employment, that expand the economy, expand economic activity, contribute to national development; whether it's the upgrade of our schools, our Education System, infrastructural development; whether it is at a national or a community level; whether it's providing opportunities for our youth, additional support for healthcare, additional support for Fisheries, expanding our Social Safety Nets, but not for recurrent expenses, which means we estimated, accurately, the cost of running Government, when we presented the 2018 Budget back in December last year, and we remain on track, Mr. President. Our ability to do this is a reflection of good fiscal and economic management, a trademark now of this Administration, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Mr. President, some of the specific areas financed include an increase in the payments made to elderly household by one hundred dollars (\$100.00) and Senator Garraway spoke to this. Mr. President, we said that if the fiscal space allowed, we would provide additional support to the elderly households under the SEED Programme. Mr. President, a promise made, a promise kept. **(Applause)** The total cost of this increase to elderly households is one million, eight hundred thousand, four hundred dollars (\$1,800,400.00).

The ongoing regularisation of Teachers, Nurses, payments to our Teachers shall be addressed at a cost, Mr. President, of (\$1.4 m). So, again, meeting our commitment, our obligations, our promises to the Unions, in terms of regularisation of both our Teachers and our Nurses. The allocation of half a million dollar for support for the Needy and Uniform Assistance Programmes, a vital service to those who are more vulnerable and require the assistance.

Regarding capital expenditure, allocations are made for major road works, upgrading of Government buildings, including Schools, Health Centres and the General Hospital, in addition to Special Projects, which address community based infrastructural needs, as well as providing significant opportunities for small, local Contractors.

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And, Mr. President, in keeping with the Fiscal Responsibility Law (FRL), the Ministry of Finance undertook all the necessary assessments to ensure that this Supplementary Estimate conforms with all of the fiscal rules, specifically the Primary Expenditure Rules, which states that the rate of growth, of primary expenditure cannot exceed 2% of that of the previous year. So, as required by the FRL, a Compliance Report also accompanies this Bill.

Mr. President, as I run through those highlights of this Supplementary Appropriation, I have intentionally left out probably the most significant expenditure till last, and that is Pension payments to fifty-six (56) workers affected by the Pensions Disqualification Act of 1983. This is a matter that has frustrated workers for over thirty-five (35) years, an injustice that has been fought out in our Courts for many years and a matter that this Government together with the Unions have sought to find an amicable solution, and I want to underline amicable solution.

Mr. President, to this end, Government has committed to pay those fifty-six (56) workers, eligible workers for the period, the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 1983 to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 1985 of which \$4.4 m is allocated from local revenues in the Supplementary Estimates and \$2.8 m, which constitutes retroactive payments, would be settled by grants, sourced outside of this Appropriation.

Mr. President, payments to these workers will start at the end of this month. This is not only a historic achievement, Mr. President, one, some thought they would never see, but the substantial statement of Government's intent to address wider issues on Pension Restoration for all eligible workers and reform of the Pension System moving forward.

Mr. President, it's also important to point out that based on the Hermilyn Armstrong Court Judgement that established that although Government has a legal obligation for restoring Pensions between the period April 1983 to February 1985, Government does not have a legal obligation from 1985 onwards. I want to repeat that, Mr. President. Government does not have a legal obligation to restore Pensions from

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1985. However, this Government believes it has a moral responsibility, a moral responsibility, Mr. President, to do what is fair and to do what is just. **(Applause)**

It is in this spirit that together with the Unions, with the workers, we've sought to find a reasonable solution to treat with eligible workers from 1985 onwards. And, it is in this spirit, Mr. President, that Government and the Unions have sought to establish guiding principles based on affordability, fairness and fiscal responsibility. We have to be responsible for the actions that we take moving forward. These guiding principles are outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which was signed in February of this year. And, discussions are now taking place to move from guiding principles to the framing parameters of a Pension Scheme, putting flesh on the bones, Mr. President, applying the principles, practically, to come up with a final solution. The MOU is not the final solution. It is guiding principles.

Mr. President, before I continue, it is important to remind ourselves where we came from and how we got to where we are now. Sometimes, Mr. President, our memories are short, things improve and we forget just how bad things were previously.

Mr. President, what came before us, a mismanaged Economy, an Economy and a country in financial ruins; recession, average negative growth of 2%; record high unemployment, over 40%, skyrocketing debt, the Debt to GDP Ratio, 108%; a high fiscal deficit, we were spending more than we were earning. We were unable to pay our bills. We had unpaid Claims, in excess of \$110 m. We had fifty million dollars (\$50 m) outstanding to our Public Workers' backpay. Salaries were paid late. When they were paid, we had to sell Government's assets to pay salaries, Mr. President. And, at a time, oh, no pay increases, no pay increases at that time, lucky to receive salary, and at a time where Governments in the Region were sending workers home. Barbados, Mr. President, sent six thousand (6,000) workers home. It's important for us to set the framing of this, Mr. President.

Mr. President, that was what we met when we came into Office five (5) years ago, but with considerable national sacrifice, with the support of the workers, the Labour Movement, Churches, Private Sector, Civil Society, we embarked on a Home Grown

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Structural Adjustment Programme. Its intent was to bring fiscal stability to the affairs of our nation. Our shared sacrifice, Mr. President, has today helped to transform our Economy. We now, today, have the fastest growing Economy in the Region, **(applause)** average growth rates, 5%, minus 2% back then. Unemployment down from 40%... in excess of 40%, down to 24%, still too high. We still have a lot of work to do, but moving in the right direction; from a deficit, owing money, spending more than we earn, to managing our resources to actually build a surplus. We are one out of Latin America and the Caribbean, a World Bank Economist Report, Grenada is the only country, and I think it's out of thirty-one (31) States that has a fiscal surplus, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

Unpaid Claims, down to zero for Claims over sixty (60) days; a debt, remember 108% Debt to GDP Ratio, now 65%, and within two (2) years we should bring that down to 55%, Mr. President.

Mr. President, not only paying salaries on time, we haven't heard workers being paid late, but not only salaries being paid late, backpay of fifty million dollars (\$50 m) paid to our workers; increments, pay increases. Mr. President, over this period, one hundred and ten million dollars (\$110 m) has been paid to our Public Workers, addressing all that went before. I repeat, one hundred and ten million dollars (\$110 m) in backpay, in increments, in pay increases; **(applause)** and, Mr. President, all without sending a single worker home, not a single worker retrenched. Mr. President, this is an incredible achievement and a reflection, it's a reflection, Mr. President, of that shared sacrifice. So, here we are, Grenada today has turned a corner. We have gotten our financial house in order, from a regional basket case to a shining light of recovery and transformation within the Region.

So, Mr. President, now back to Pension Reform. Today, we seek approval for this Supplementary Appropriation, which includes a payment of \$7.2 m to those fifty-six (56) workers, in the restoration of their pensions from that period '83 – '85. Mr. President, this is another major achievement. I think in today's Sitting, the word

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'historic', whether; well, we would come onto that. But, it is a historic, certainly a very memorable moment, and it is another victory, for workers and for the Unions.

But, Mr. President, instead of recognising these successes and building on them responsibly, what do we hear? That there is a breakdown in Pension Reform. Clearly, Mr. President, the terms laid out in that Memorandum of Understanding certainly, clearly is open to interpretation.

Mr. President, (2) two issues have been raised. First, that after serving twenty-six and two-thirds ( $26 \frac{2}{3}$ ) years, a Public Servant is able to retire and receive their full gratuity and full monthly pension, and that's regardless of whether they reach pensionable age of sixty (60) years. And, secondly, that the minimum Pension replacement rate, at that point of 70%, which is stated in the MOU, is too low.

Mr. President, I wish to build on these two (2) points. But, first, let us take a scenario, the twenty-six and two-thirds year rule. Let us take this reasonable scenario. The Public Servant, entering the Service at the age of twenty; many in the Service, the ripe age to enter the Service. They enter the Service, aged twenty (20), they served twenty-six and two-thirds years. So, at the age of forty-seven (47), the age of forty-seven (47), he or she, according to the presentation from the Unions, would be entitled to a full Gratuity and a full monthly pension. Therefore, an Old-Aged Pension that is intended to sustain us as a form of Social Security in our later years, when we are less able to work and to contribute, but instead would be using what is a Pension for our retirement, our old age, as a supplementary income for a young, able-bodied person, with at least thirteen (13) productive years ahead of them. Is that, Mr. President, what a Pension is supposed to be for? I would have retired a long time ago, Mr. President, if I knew that was the case.

Mr. President, based on this scenario, there will be a massive, massive cost to this, retiring at the age of forty-seven (47), and that is a cost, Mr. President. Everyone thinks it's the Government, it's a cost Government would bear. Mr. President, it's a cost that people would have to bear. It is ordinary taxpayers' money, the hard earned money, Mr. President, that would go to fund this specific scenario. And, Mr. President,



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this is at a time when we actually need to be thinking about raising the retirement age, from sixty (60) to sixty-five (65). If we do not do this, based on all of the Actuarial Reports, Mr. President, our current NIS system would become insolvent. We will not be able to make payouts to the beneficiaries, as they would expect. So, this is not only us, in terms of the fragility of our National Insurance System and the sensitivities associated with a Public Pensions Scheme. But, this is the same throughout the Region, National Insurance Schemes throughout the Region. Barbados, Mr. President, has raised the age of retirement to sixty-seven (67) years, sixty-seven (67) years within the Public Service, and that is to address the imbalance to contributions and payouts. So, if we follow the suggestions that is being put before us, Mr. President, what is being proposed is instead of following what we need to be doing, which is increasing the retirement age, the proposal is effectively lowering it to forty-seven (47), based on that scenario. Mr. President, this makes absolutely no sense, at all. Those bankrupt public funds will not be sustainable.

The second issue raised, the 70% pension replacement rate is too low. Mr. President, the rates agreed must comply with our fiscal rules, and Government's offer was 70.1%; .1% increment. But, Mr. President, that brings the primary expenditure rule, which should be no more than 2%, the offer made by Government, 70.1% brings that threshold to 1.9%, just below the P.E. rule.

Mr. President, what fiscal space does that then leave us? What fiscal space does that leave us after servicing this Pension liability? What does that leave us, in terms of educating our children? The fundamental of the Government is providing healthcare to our sick, supporting our most vulnerable, providing opportunities for our youth, maintaining our roads, supporting our farmers, building our Economy for the benefit of all, the benefit of all, not just a few. Mr. President, Government has a responsibility to serve all of its people the best they can, that's the fundamental responsibility, that's why you are voted into Office, that's why you are voted out of Office, if you do not perform. So, Mr. President, if we were to focus all of our available

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resources, that's the people's money, just to serve a few Public Servants, we will be failing in our fundamental responsibility to service all of our citizens.

Mr. President, for the past five (5) years, one hundred and ten million dollars (\$110 m) of taxpayers' money has gone to increased financial support for our Public Workers. In good faith, Government is committed to addressing this thirty-five year old vexing issue of pension restoration. This good faith is demonstrated through the passing of this Supplementary Appropriation for the \$7.2 m for those fifty-six (56) workers in the restoration of their pensions. And, I want to just reiterate, Mr. President, in terms of those workers, from 1985 onwards; Government has no legal obligation to do so.

However, Government asserts its commitment, through the restoration of Pensions, to all eligible Public Workers, but using a formula that is fair, fiscally responsible and long term sustainable. This is not the time for us to be financially reckless. This is not the time for us to throw away all of the gains achieved, and go back to those dark, old days. To move forward, we must do what is fair and responsible for the entire country.

Mr. President, this debate will continue, as later we present the Pensions (Amendment) Act, which speaks, specifically, to this. So, I will close on those comments. So, Mr. President, the Motion before us brings into the system thirty-six million dollars (\$36 m). These sums are from grants and local resources, not loans, and to fund Capital programmes, not recurrent programmes. And, it touches critical elements of our National Development Agenda, and it touches the citizens of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Mr. President, it is for these reasons that I commend this Motion to this Honourable House. I thank you.

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Senator Stiell. Senator the Honourable André Lewis.

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**On Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2018.**

**Motions**

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andrè Lewis:** Thank you very much, Mr. President, and because I am still a Freshman, may I ask for some guidance, as to what time I may have, in terms of what I may have, in terms of what I may ask or say?

***(Inaudible comments by the President)***

**Sen. the Hon. Andrè Lewis:** Thank you very much. So, you may have to order dinner.

***(Inaudible comments by the President)***

***(Laughter)***

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andrè Lewis:** Okay. The ambience is great. But, it wouldn't take long, because truth and facts does not need to be that long. It is very simple. First of all, let us place the Labour Movement's appreciation to the Government of the day for the current state that we are in, where fifty-six (56) workers would receive their justice that has been held back for quite a while. I want to place that on record.

It is extremely important to mention Comrade Sister Hermilyn Armstrong. I think she must be recognised, as that brave soldier, that brave worker, **(applause)** who, two (2) years before her retirement, who, two (2) years before her retirement, Mr. President, as you would know, said that: "I Hermilyn Armstrong will be the one that would allow my name, or my case to address the disqualification of Pensions."

The Labour Movement could not have done that before unless we got someone, and the Hermilyn Armstrong case had nothing to do with 1985. The Hermilyn Armstrong case for all Public Officers had to do with Established workers. And, if we were to fast-forward, the issue of the legal aspect of the Pensions Disqualification has not been addressed, by the parties, who have established a very good working relationship. And, what is a bit disheartening is that when we sat just before the

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Elections, because we must put things into context, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that we signed was signed by the representatives of the Government's Engagement Team and ourselves, and there is a context and a written word. And, it is clearly understood that both parties would not pursue any legal discussions. That's a fact. It is a fact that what gave rise to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was a clear undertaking of what we consider genuine, and I still believe that we are all genuine people, seeking to find a solution to a national, vexing issue. And, therefore, that is why when we signed that Agreement on the Sunday, in March, for those who condemned us, we responded by saying that there is no bad time to sign a good Agreement. I want to repeat, there is no bad time to sign a good Agreement. But, it can become bad, if there are attempts made to undo it.

We are very hopeful that we can find a solution. Let me explain this here. We are very hopeful that we can find a solution, but we want to repeat that the resolution of the Hermilyn Armstrong matter was on the basis that neither of the parties would enforce or discuss any legal solution, but it would be a negotiated settlement, it will be a negotiated settlement and Government's responsibility to the thousands of Public Officers, who, from 1983 to present, Established Public Officers, who have gone home and who are about to go home without receiving a Pension. And, I am not going to make the link that Parliamentarians, after two (2) terms, receive a Pension, or receive benefits, that's a different discourse; that's a different discourse. But, I am accepting that the thousands of teachers outside there and the thousands of Public Officers are listening to this discourse today. And, in this struggle, there are at least three (3) limbs, there is the legal, which we have all agreed to give up, because the Unions, ourselves, have been contemplating legal action for further clarification on the Hermilyn Armstrong matter and Public Officers, but we didn't, because there was this understanding of the parties; not just understanding, but clearly written.

But, apart from the legal, there is the political, and the political was at play, apparently, leading up to the Elections. So, for instance, as I said, on that bad day, when we used to sign a good Agreement, because there is no bad time to sign a good

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Agreement, but we know where we are now that Elections have passed, and we are really, really looking forward to the demonstration of the goodwill and the understanding of this Administration, that they will listen to the people, who are part of the negotiations, who were in that room with us, when we signed the Agreement and the wording of the Agreement and what was taken out of the original proposals from Government and from the Unions to arrive at where we arrived.

And, then there is the industrial. So, we have the Legal, we have the Political and we have the Industrial. What is our preference? Our preference is to find a settlement around the table. And, in the spirit of which we started, Mr. President, the spirit in which we said the following. One, no legal arguments; so that is why, for instance, the Attorney-General and others have not been present in the discussion. The Attorney-General... the previous Attorney-General were engaged in the initial discussions and then were absent, because what we wanted to find; and that is why also the Chief Personnels from the Ministry of Finance was not involved in any negotiations, not one member. I want to repeat; not one member from the Ministry of Finance that is now apparently directing what needs to be agreed upon were engaged in that room, when we reached the final Agreement on about three (3) or four (4) consecutive discussions.

As a matter of fact, there is a Representative from the Government's Side; I have respect for everyone, but there is this one individual, I call her a lady, a stalwart, who puts everything out, despite how tired she work, despite the fact that she was faced with the issue of the NAWASA struggle that we had, everything that she had and she put everything into it, just to arrive at an agreement. So, there was not one person in that room from the Ministry of Finance. There was not one person in that room from the Legal Affairs Department, but we are now faced with these interpretations.

We have said the following, yes, through you, Mr. President, Senator Stiell, there are three (3) issues that are very much of concern to us, the issue of the 70% being the minimum or the maximum, and that we can find an easy solution to. We have said so. We have demonstrated that. The MOU says that we will continue that discussion and it

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will be influenced, the additional, the more, beyond 70% will be influenced by the affordability of the Government, and that is clear, and we have never said no, but we are continuing discussions. Where we have what appears to be that insurmountable approach, we have confidence that we would find a settlement. I believe in the integrity of the people, who were in that room. I believe in their integrity.

The twenty-six and two-thirds years of service, qualified in our discussion for individuals, once they leave the Service, to receive their Gratuity and their Pension. And, just one correction, through you, Mr. President, anyone, who receives a Gratuity would receive a reduced Pension, so it is not a full Pension. If you receive a full Pension, Mr. President, as you would know, you would not receive any Gratuity. Once you take a Gratuity, because the Gratuity is an upfront payment of that amount, which is due to you.

We have said that from '83 onwards to present, for the persons, who are qualified, those who have been appointed through the Judicial Legal Services Commission, the Officers, from, I think, Inspector down, or Sergeant down, who have been appointed by the Commissioner of Prisons; the Gazetted Officers, who have been appointed by the Public Service Commission; the Public Officers, who have been appointed by the Public Service Commission; the Prison Officers, the Teachers, etcetera, from 1983, we will combine, because the Government was trying to save finances, and that is correct, and we accepted that.

It is our sacrifices that have brought us to where we are today, we the salaried workers, during the Structural Adjustment Programme. As we speak right now, there is a big leakage, in terms of Income Tax collections on the Professionals and the self-employed, etcetera, and the Government has accepted that. We are the ones, who have always been prepared, and will be prepared to make the sacrifice. But, what did we do? Rather than putting our Nation through more problems, we have agreed to combine the NIS benefit and the Government benefit. But, obviously, because the NIS is a National Law and applicable to all workers, the NIS cannot kick in before age sixty (60).

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So, whereas in the past and whereas the argument of the Labour Movement, and, Mr. President, when the matter went to Court, our argument was that all eligible Public Officers are entitled to be treated under the 1958 Pension Act, which would have given them a non-contributory Government Pension until they die. But, we have said, around the Table, we have said around the Table, and we would still agree to this, and we would not fight over this. You have my word on this. Our words are our bond. That is how we operate. We fight hard, we fight fiercely, but we implement fairly that which we have agreed upon. And, we have said, we will drop that argument and we will combine both, and, therefore, at age sixty (60), the hypothetical example used by the good Senator, someone that I have a very good relationship, myself. As a matter of fact, only last night we resolved the Solid Waste matter that we are about to meet with tomorrow, because we are handling different industrial matters. So, we have demonstrated our commitment, because without even getting something in writing we give our word, and we have implemented; that's the way we operate, that's the way we operate. I want, on 'This Side' here, and all of us here to remember this.

We have said that Government's obligation, once that worker turns age sixty (60), based on your hypothetical example, and for a worker, who started to work at age twenty (20) and retiring at age sixty (60); so let us take the other end of the argument. If Public Servants, who start to work at age twenty (20) and retires at age sixty (60), and getting their full Pension, the only commitment that Government has is 10%, whereas in the past Government had 100%. Let us look at the whole context. At age sixty (60), after forty (40) years of continuous service to this country and to the Government of Grenada, Government's liability, in terms of that worker's Pension would only be 10%. We still have the 70%. There ought to be a discussion to go above seventy, but because we have agreed to seventy, as the base, I am using seventy, as an example.

So, Government's liability would only be 10%, and, yes, it follows that if a worker, I am going to give you an example, retires after twenty-six and two-thirds (26 2/3) years of service, at age 47, if that worker takes a Gratuity, Government would have a reduced Pension to pay, it would be reduced, Government alone, so I am agreeing with you, I

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am underlining this, Mr. President, through you; Government would have a reduced Pension to pay, up until age sixty (60). And, at the attainment of age sixty (60), Government, it is quite possible, would have absolutely nothing to pay. It is such that the reduced Pension that Government is bearing, so if a worker goes at age fifty (50), for instance, and takes a Gratuity, based on the Pension formula, that worker would receive a reduced Pension for twelve and a half (12 ½ ) years. So, at age fifty (50) that would take that worker into age sixty-two (62) or sixty-three (63) to receive a reduced Pension, which would be less than what NIS is paying, and, therefore, Government would have absolutely no responsibility to pay. I want to repeat that. I want to repeat that. I don't want it to be taken that the workers, who have made those sacrifices after thirty-five (35) years are making demands that are unreasonable. Workers have retired into abject poverty. What we are addressing here today, and I am very happy about it. I stand proud here. I want to thank the Leaders, my Comrades, Madonna Harford, Lauret Clarkson, Claris Charles, Maria Mc Queen, Mr. President, you, as that Leader, who had the foresight to take that fight.

But, as we speak, right now, after the '85, these workers are still into abject poverty. Do not, for one moment, I am not saying that this is what the Government is doing. It may be possible to interpret what you have said, in that way. I do not want to use this House here to make that implication, but we must not be made to look as though we are greedy. We must not be made to look, as though we want to take from the State and bring us back into mismanagement; that's not what we want to do. What we want to do is, after giving twenty-six and two-thirds (26 2/3) years of service, to be able to retire, if we choose, receive our benefits or at age sixty (60) and receive our benefits. As a matter of fact, given the state of our Economy and given the state of our Small Island Economies, right throughout the Region, it is unthinkable that a mass of people, it is unthinkable that people, after giving twenty-six and two-thirds (26 2/3) years of service, you are going to wake up in mass and leave. I mean, it is hypothetically possible. Everything is hypothetically possible, everything, as we speak right now, but let us bring reason to bear.



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In other places that we have, retirement, after 'X' or 'Y' amount of years of service, what is the history of people getting up and leave and go? Because, even if you go and you take your Gratuity, and let us say that Gratuity is sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000.00), for the average person, the average worker, the average working-class person, the first ten (10) or fifteen (15) years of your life of work is used to help your siblings, your mother, your father, that sort of thing, and then you begin to get involved in looking after yourself, if you have a family, yourself. And, most of us, most Public Officers would retire with a mortgage over their heads, and if you leave, at age forty-six (46) and you don't have a guaranteed income, the Pension that you get, which a reduced income, wouldn't be able to take care of you. You better bring reason to bear to it. Your projections are always based on reason, because in one of your earlier documents, if you recognise, as has being pointed out here, Mr. President, the Government's wage bill is less than what it is projecting. As a matter of fact it is 8%, if I were to look at the document, and the rationale for it is the same point the Labour Movement was making, that the positions that you have noted in the Budget to put monies towards would not materialise. These positions would fall away, or would not be filled. I have seen it, it's accepted here. I couldn't speak on the document, so I don't want to go down there, but I thought I should just raise this.

Our Pension and our discussion is based on the following; we want to repeat. We are interested; as a matter of fact, we met yesterday morning and we agreed to a meeting yesterday at 7:30 with the Government Engagement Team. There were no new proposals, but we have committed and we are due to meet on Friday, so we have not walked away from the Table. But, it is important for us to bring to the attention of our members and bearing in mind that we are almost in August and school starts in September, so it is important to bring that to the attention of Teachers and the Public Officers.

I want to repeat. I want to repeat, that it was important for us to bring to the attention of the Nation and our members and our Teachers, because the interesting thing about teachers is that 98%, or more of teachers are Established or made

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permanent from day one in the system. So, the agreement that we had or still think that we have is that Government will combine the NIS payment together with the Government payment to pay that monthly Pension; so Government would recognise or realise a reduction in its liabilities and that the aspect of the legal arguments were never resolved. Both parties agreed, both parties agreed to drop the legal discussions, because the original proposal from the Unions when we stated our interest, Mr. President, was to do two things, one get the Government pension and get the NIS pension, as two separate income streams, which would have resulted in something that even, as Trade Unionist, and as much as we want to see the best for workers and retirees, would have been unfair.

It was possible, through that argument, as it is possible now for up to the '85 for someone to go home and at your retirement to get over a hundred percent of your salary because they are two (2) separate income streams. But, we, in the Labour Movement agreed and felt that that was not good, in other words we cannot defend and we cannot advance that when you retire you will receive more than you were making when you were actively working, and that is why we agreed and that is why around the Table, I want to stress again. Around the Negotiating Table, Mr. President, our discussion, the representatives of the Government which are not made up of any one from the Ministry of Finance, certainly around the table, there may have been advice received and there was no one from the Ministry of Legal Affairs, there may have been advice received, were present there, but we agreed, but we agreed.

There are two (2) aspects of the Memorandum, Phase (1) and look again at the document and I know that legal minds can take things written by us, the lay people, and find different interpretations. Phase (1) says the following, or words to that effect, the people are being appointed what we call permanent and Phase (2) these same people that is where it is in Phase (2), a new Pension Scheme would be designed. It is the old Pension Scheme that we used for Phase (1), which is up to the end of December 2018, from the first of January 2019 is when a new Pension Scheme will be designed. But, the fundamental difference, the fundamental difference between the post 1983, which is

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now '85, because this is what this Bill seeks to do, this is what this Bill seeks to do. The post '83 and for ease of reference, using the MOU, I will keep repeating, 1983, but we know that 1983 applies to 1985, but because this is the document that I am referencing, yes, I am going to keep saying 1983, because that's where we were.

The only difference between the post '83 and the pre '83, and just remember it's the same as post '85 and post '83, the only difference would be that we are combining, because there is an expectation, Mr. President, through you, over all the years of our legal struggles, over all the years of our industrial battles for the restoration of Pensions, the people who are currently in the Government Service were expected to be treated similar to pre '83. And, therefore, we agreed around the table that what shall be different is the combining of the NIS, therefore, giving Government and the State, let me repeat, giving Government and the State a significant reduction in their liability.

Phase (2) will address those matters that are now being raised to be placed in Phase (1), which had nothing to do with Phase (1). What is our expectation? Our expectation, Mr. President, through you, is that getting back to the table on Friday, we will be able to continue that discussion that will get back the spirit that we had in February; that spirit, which allowed us to sign an Agreement into the night; that spirit that did not allow anyone from the Legal Affairs Department; that spirit, Mr. President, that did not allow anyone from the Ministry of Finance. As a matter of fact, the records will show and it will be interesting to find out why, we know why, but it will be interesting to find out why for the others, as to why the original members of the broad Committee were not present during those final discussions.

The Government representative side was not made up of its full complement, in terms of the representatives from the Ministry of Finance, because what we wanted to find was an agreement, in terms of what would be the minimum age of retirement, etcetera, what will be the quantum and then Finance will come in and work out the details and that is why in the MOU, you will recognise that we gave up, we threw our hands in the air and we said, coming out of the agreement, once we worked out the

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amount that is due, that payment will be based solely on the ability or the inability of Government to pay.

So, what is up for discussion would have been the 'more' and what implications it would have, and when we work out what will be the retroactive amount, because whatever agreement that we arrived at, anyone who has retired between '83 and now would be due some form of retroactive pay. We would agree on a plan, influenced by the Ministry of Finance, influenced by the Ministry of Finance, going forward. And, we are sticking to this, as I have said we gave our word, our word is our bond, but as it relates to the retirement, once you retire from the Public Service, once you are appointed before December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018, once you leave, you ought to be allowed to go with your Pension, because that was our discussion, and that was our agreement.

I would like through you, Mr. President, because you see we will be around for a long time. This side and that side and I could clearly recall, apart from the question of the time that we signed the agreement, as to whether or not an MOU could be enforced, or whether or not a MOU is an agreement. We, in the Labour Movement, knows that it is an agreement, but we battle all of these in order to be able to put on the table for our Teachers, our Public Officers, our Nurses, our Doctors, that assurance that the Pensions Disqualification Act will not impact them in the manner, as it did for the past thirty-five (35) years, because remember from '83 to now, apart from Special Pension, because there are people who receive that. There are other aspects there. What we had to work out and where the Ministry of Legal Affairs had to come in, was how do we combine the different Laws, because there were about five or six different Entities, different Bodies that are governed or ruled under, with different benefits and applications. And, we undertook to find a way of harmonising those and this is where the Ministry of Legal Affairs, after we did what we called the basic work, 70, as the minimum and discussion for 'more', twenty six and two thirds as re-established for post '83, which is now '85. We would like to see, because we have engagements going forward, and it is not good for us to develop mistrust with each other. I am not saying that it is there. I want to reassure the Government Side that we have not reached that

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stage, because it is an avenue, or a stage that one should avoid, as much as possible, of going. Once mistrust steps in, it can impact everything going forward. We have a number of engagements. If my recollection is right, I think that the salary negotiations that we have had comes to an end on December 31<sup>st</sup>. And, as was mentioned by the Leader of Government's Business, Mr. President, through you, the fact that we went public to bring attention to the Nation, sitting at the Head Table, were the Leaders of the three main Unions in the Public Service; the Public Workers Union (PWU), the Grenada Union of Teachers (GUT) and the Technical and Allied Workers Union (TAWU). But, out of every challenge comes something positive most times. This has been able to bring us together.

If you recall in the last round of negotiations, because they are all linked, we were separate. We did a Press Conference yesterday, and I am heartened by that, because I know we have discussions upcoming. We all sat together, at the same Table, and we gave one commitment that there will not be two voices, there will not be three voices, there shall be one voice, and it is in all of our interest and we genuinely believe this. We want this, we desire it. We crave for it, and the reason that we crave for it, in those battles, it creates disruptions that impacts us all. It is good for us in the Labour Movement, many times, because we have learnt that unless workers struggle for things, most times they take it for granted and don't hold onto it, and that's all of our history here, whether you sit on 'This Side' or 'That Side'. Almost everything that we have, we have had to struggle for it. But, given the level of social dialogue that we have been enjoying, brought onto us, forced upon us by the Global Financial Crisis, brought on by greedy Capitalists; not we, the workers, you know, because even in Grenada... My brother, no offense, **(chuckles)** Mr. President, through you, I had to... because even in this crisis the most millionaires and billionaires have been created. But, we put our shoulders to the wheel, and we will continue to do it, and we give assurance to this Nation that we will continue to do it. But, we want to ensure that when Public Officers go home, they go home with a decent standard of living, but not at the expense of sinking the State. We are used to taking no increases, we have demonstrated that, we

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have known that, and what we worked out, that the liability that we have saved Government by accepting the NIS, because we didn't fight over it, would be a tremendous saving from Government and, therefore, in closing, Mr. President, I want to thank you. But, not just thanking you, as you preside here, because you must feel proud, if I can address you on this matter, you must feel proud as to where we are with the fifty-six (56) individuals. But, I know that your heart would remain open, because it is not just about the fifty-six (56) workers, because when you led that struggle, Mr. President, forgive me, but I must do this, when you led that struggle, together with Sister Harford, of Sister Clarice Charles and others, it was not about giving people that pension up to '85, let us place that on record.

We have to thank you for the leadership that you demonstrated in the Labour Movement. And, interestingly enough, in my discussion, most recently, with Sister Harford, she mentioned the following: "Public Workers must compliment TAWU, must compliment Senator Humphrey, the then Labour Representative in the Senate, that despite the fact that TAWU had a minuscule amount of workers, who stood to benefit, it was not about TAWU, it was about the working class of this country and all the major Unions, the three major Unions contributed equally." And, as I had mentioned this, there is something I need to clarify, because it came on one of the National Programmes. The Labour Movement carried the Bill for the Hermilyn Armstrong legal battle. I want to repeat, the Labour Movement carried the Bill for the Hermilyn Armstrong legal battle. The Police were involved, that's both the Gazetted Officers and the Welfare Association, the Prisons Service, the Public Workers' Union, Grenada Union of Teachers and the Technical and Allied Workers' Union, and if I were to miss out any, my humble apologies.

But, I call upon the State to let us not just now try to use illegal argument, because the legal matter was not resolved. And, we all may have our hardened legal views and, certainly, the Government being able to have its Legal Affairs Department would feel very strong, because they are legally trained. But, we agreed not to pursue the matter, legally, because we know that we could find a settlement around the table,

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as we have demonstrated in the past, and we are not doing this because we are greedy. We are not doing this because we want to bring problems to this country. We are doing this, because after giving these amounts of years of service, and even in the Private Sector you have two pensions. In some cases in the Private Sector, you have two pensions. In the Private Sector, we represent workers that go home with a very good pension, because the Government is also the workers' employer, let me make that point, because workers are also contributing to NIS.

In the Private Sector, we have a Pensions Scheme, some contributory, some non-contributory, so when the worker goes home, the worker gets the NIS at age sixty (60) and the worker also gets the Private Pension. So, we are not trying anything new, but we gave up on this argument and decided to combine both. And, therefore, as we continue, we look forward to a resolution of this matter, so that the next time we come back to this House, I can stand here, and all of us can stand here and not feel partially happy, because it is only '85 that has been resolved but we can feel wholly happy, and, indeed, make this a historic Red Day, not part red, as some of us may have a little red in our pocket. **(Chuckles)** I have a red shirt. But make this, indeed, a historic 'Red Day' that the workers of this country, the Public Officers of this country can feel justly proud that, at this Phase (1), because Phase (2) would address the rest, because you have Unestablished Workers, so it is not all Government employees, the Unestablished Workers from '83, or even before '83 are now receiving a pension, I want to make that point so we can find a resolution which is Phase II; that will fall in Phase II. So, Mr. President, through you thank you very much, and we, indeed, look forward to a resolution to this matter and that rather than in September with the possibility of one never knows what, we can have a September in which we can all have a rally to praise all the participants, the Government and the Labour Movement, one big celebration that the pension matter has been resolved. Thank you very much, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Norland Cox.

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**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to give my full support to the Motion before this Honourable House and just to point out a few things and not to go as short as my Honourable Colleague, on the 'Other Side', as he indicated when he started, but just to point out some important aspects of this Motion, Mr. President, and, one, to note that this is grant funding. I think this must be noted, and no impact is going to come, in terms of loans, Mr. President. I think this is critical in this Supplementary Bill.

And, what is most important too, Mr. President, this amendment is before us and it is Supplementary amendment and it's done within the confines of our Macro Economic targets and indicators, and I think that is also commendable. We must commend our Finance persons for ensuring that we stay within that and we do not break the Law.

Mr. President, I think most importantly, this Supplementary amendment is to address budgetary requirements for critical initiatives; and while some time would have been spent on the issue of Pensions, I think the issue of the Public Assistance is one that also requires some attention, and I think that is a very important initiative that this Supplementary amendment seeks to address.

Mr. President...

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

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Mr. Deputy President, the issue of the Pension is one that will always be a topic of great concern, not only for Unions, not only for Government, but most importantly, for our workers. I do not know if all the persons within the Union Movement were Public Officers, and I have been a Public Officer, I've worked as a Public Officers for seventeen (17) years, so I understand the situation, as well. So, I really want to commend all parties, who have been engaged in ensuring that we get to this stage.



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But, Mr. Deputy President, the record has shown that this Government, time and time again, and over decades have done more for the people of this Nation than any other Institution. **(Applause)** And, so we must, we have a responsibility to highlight that. And, the record has shown the support they have given us, at the Polls, reflect that, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. Deputy President, through you, the Honourable Member representing the Labour Movement in this Honourable House, indicated the issue of Pensions for Parliamentarians after two terms. Mr. Deputy President, just as how he indicated that he doesn't want that to be a substance of discussion here, the fact of the matter is some Public Servants, Senior Public Servants earn more than Ministers. We don't want that to be a subject of discussion here neither, Mr. Deputy President. The fact of the matter is that Parliamentarians have not received a salary increase in the past twenty-three (23) years, we have not made that the subject of discussion here, Mr. Deputy President. **(Applause)** All that we have done is to work together with our partners/stakeholders and the workers to come to a resolution on this matter. So, I think it's important to note that, we have not been selfish at all in this process.

Mr. Deputy President, the issue of a right time and a wrong time to negotiate seems to be a very interesting one, and I sat here and I couldn't help smile to myself, because to my understanding Government doesn't have no right time at all, because we are always cornered and we have just heard, through you, Mr. Deputy President, that the Member representing the Labour signalled that school would be starting back very soon, so he is putting us on notice that there might be another wrong time for a right agreement again, Mr. Deputy President.

So, we are well aware and we remain committed to the workers of this Nation. We have given them our word that we are going to work tirelessly to resolve this matter. We have started with an initial initiative and we believe with continued dialogue that we are going to get this done. And, so I believe the pivotal matter in this is that we must do it in a responsible way, and that is all that we are saying, Mr. Deputy President. We are not saying that we are going to back out or give any indication of mistrust. All we are

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saying is that it must be done responsibly. So, whenever the discussions are being held, it must be held within the entire context of the country's financial ability and capacity to deal with it.

Mr. Deputy President, we can talk about all the different parameters, all the different analysis on how to approach. All the workers want is their money. They don't want to know how you arrive at it; all they want is you call them and say the Pension is ready, that is all they want, Mr. Deputy President. And, so we must continue to work hard to ensure that we resolve this matter and other matters, because there are plenty other matters that have been discussed, Mr. Deputy President, and I am certain that you are aware of them, but the Pensions take centre stage.

But, Government has always continued to be serious in its negotiations to resolve these matters, and the facts lay before us, Mr. Deputy President. The Leader of Government's Business spoke of a hundred and ten million dollars (\$110 m) was paid to our Public Servants, over the past periods, and I think this is commendable, and it shouldn't be just brushed aside, as if well, 'oh yes, well they got paid'; it shouldn't be brushed aside like that, but should be seen that we are making a serious commitment to ensuring that our workers are treated in the best way possible. Mr. Deputy President, thank you very much for your time on this matter.

**Mr. Deputy President:** Senator Roberts.

**Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. As I sat listening to the arguments, on 'Both Sides', it came to bear the importance of timely submitting of documents to all parties involved in looking at issues like this, because not being privy to being a part of any Negotiating Team, we need to understand what the subject is and it is something that, having been in the House before, we tugged with getting documents two days before you sit. It's not fair to who we represent, because we need to search and get information just like the others, so that we can responsibly sit, as the President said this morning in the Highest Institution in the Land, to form a

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part, so that we can take our responsibility as Senators, so that we can debate on the issues.

But, I am trying to follow the trek, because I was only able to speak to one person once I got this document late last week, and I want to be part of a system where we are more responsible and not just be seen here to rubber stamp things, because we are really representing people with voices. So, at least, when the documents are being sent out to the Lower House, we can get it, as well; if there are changes, we are told so that we can do research into it, so that we'll be more effective. But, having listened to the arguments, I also want to say that we need to have a Contributory Pension, because we would not forever be able to sustain Pensions.

We also have to, when...

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

**Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts:** Mr. President, we also have to look at when we are explaining things, we need to be precise. So, for example, in the beginning of the document, we're saying that these are all grants. My other question is, where are the grants coming from? Is it only from the National Transformation Fund? Am I reading it correctly, that is where it's coming from? But, you know, just saying all the capital things will come from grant funds, we need that explained, as well.

However, based on both arguments, I would say that we need to continue to negotiate in good faith, so that for the benefit of the country and the persons involved in serving the country, that a proper Pension be established, whether it's contributory or not.

I also want to clear the air on the Pensions for Parliamentarians. Parliamentarians get Pension after two terms, but there is a 'but'. We don't hear about the 'but'; you must be fifty-five (55) to get it, **(applause)** because I stopped at the Parliament at age fifty (50) and I had to wait till fifty-five to get the Pension. So, for the young ones who are twenty (20), when you serve two (2) terms, you're getting it at fifty-

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five (55). So, we need a lot of clarity, in terms of Pension and the way we roll it out, because people don't know there is a 'but', and we need to take out the 'but', because if you're serving in the Parliament and you're serving the people, your Pension should be when you're finished. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I stand to give my full, unwavering support to the Motion that is before this Honourable House, and to say, upfront, I want to give commendation where commendation is due. And, I may say it later again, but I want to commend the TUC for their vibrant negotiations with the Government to bring us to this place where we can see benefits being paid to workers. And, I don't know if you were commended before, but let it be said from this Honourable House, we recognise how much you and the team stood up for workers, on a whole. And, let it not be said, well, if it's being said, let us disprove it, that you guys did an exemplary work, for after thirty-five (35) years, nobody was able to achieve what you have achieved in restoring Pensions to qualified workers. I mean this is commendable. So, if you're getting pressure elsewhere, it's not the right pressure, you should be commended.

But, Mr. President, I want to go as far, as to say, I want to commend the Ministry of Finance staff for the work they have been doing, and I want to express my commendation to them, for the prudent stewardship of the country's finances. Not only do they work to conform to our macroeconomic indicators, simply put, they keep the accounts transparent, but most importantly, help the country to live within its means.

Therefore, whenever there are any discussions, as it relates to our financial liability to the State, the Ministry of Finance must be involved; they have to be involved. They are the custodians of the finances of this country. So, if you have someone creating expenses and you don't know how you're going to take care of it, we may find ourselves back in the same boat prior to the Structural Adjustment Programme, the

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Homegrown Structural Adjustment Programme, which we all worked assiduously towards creating this environment we are enjoying today. We don't want to go back there, at all. So, let us look at what is before us, Mr. President.

Prior to the Structural Adjustment Programme, we had an economy that was busted, broke; a fiscal gap of eighteen million dollars (\$18 m), meaning, we were spending monthly, eighteen million dollars (\$18 m) more than we were collecting in revenues; totally unsustainable. To pay salaries, you know that, we had to sell State assets to do that. These examples that I've just cited is to remind us of a place where we came from and we do not want to get back there. So, we ought to ensure that we do it right, going forward. We all contributed towards to what we consider to be better times now. The Government said very early that the financial plan that was followed is not sustainable, so we had to restructure it, work with our creditors, work with everybody. We got cursing on all this stuff and so on, but we had a plan, and the plan is to bring this economy back to a place where we all would be proud of, and to ensure that not only the workers get Pension, the Senior Citizens get some benefits from it, but also our school children, school uniforms, school books, those who are sick, just name it, can benefit from the successes. So, we have been able to do that and bring us to this place.

Mr. President, I remember when the Government said, if the fiscal space allows, we would do a number of things; yes. We talked about rebate to persons paying Income Tax. We talked about an increase for the Senior citizens, because they pay too, you know. When they purchase goods, VAT is on those goods; they pay something off the two hundred dollars (\$200.00). So, it's that if the fiscal space allows, we would give them a hundred dollars more. Today, we are happy, because the fiscal space has allowed us to give them that hundred dollars, and over three thousand, four hundred and four (3,404) families benefitted from this hundred dollar increase. I remember I heard one Senior Citizen on the radio saying: ***"I am asking the Prime Minister to give a fifty dollar (\$50.00) increase"***, before it was said. And, the Prime Minister came in the Parliament and said a hundred dollars and I said, you get a double. But, what is

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important here, Mr. President, everything, in terms of spending at this point in time is governed by Laws we have passed in this Honourable House, to ensure that we steer the course. So, the Fiscal Responsibility Legislation (FRL) speaks to how we go forward, in terms of spending. And, the Leader of Government's Business said, very early, if we have to spend monies, as it relates to salaries, or the case may be, it must fall between 2% of your last GDP; it can't go beyond that. But, what does that mean, really? We're saying, yes, we want to make sure that the people of this country benefit from everything, but it must fall within the legal parameters. We cannot go back where we came from. We cannot abandon the hard work that we have done to bring us to this place, that we can ask for more, more Pension, more everything. A few years ago we couldn't say that, you know. My dear brother, we couldn't ask for nothing. We were not even sure we were going to get what was legitimately ours. But, now we are in a better place and we are saying, we want more. Of course, I agree with 'more'. I put on my red today, because I want to say, I support 'more', but within the Laws.

It is important, Mr. President, also, for us to recognise that with the increases that have been paid, everybody either contribute to it, or will benefit from it, but it didn't come just by somebody saying, I want this. It was totally calculated, with prudent management and to bring us to this place. I remember the question was asked, what is the National Debt? And, we were saying, the National Debt, that's not the question. The real question is, what is the GDP? Because, when your Debt to GDP Ratio, when you bring this down, it frees up, if you want to call it this way, more money, in layman's terms, it frees up more money, gives you more space, so you could do more things.

So, I remember all this confusion, we can't see the National Debt and we say the GDP. Why we have the space that we talk about and the space that would have brought in those temporary Nurses now on to the Establishment, the space that would have given us the ability to pump \$2.6 m more into buying new School Books, the million dollars into getting the uniform for our needy students, the over million dollars that is being pumped into the Senior Citizens and just name it, the hundred and ten million that was paid to employees, be it through backpay, increments, increases, all

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this came about, because of the fiscal space we created. So, right now, we want to make sure that we continue to remain within the rules, but there is another key important point. And, the key important point, Mr. President, is this; we have worked with our International Partners, and they helped us along the way to bring us to this place where we are at today. And, the successes we are gaining today, be it by haircut with our debts, be it by concessionary or grant funding that we're getting, all stem from a very important principle; Grenada has started to live within its means and it conformed to the rules and regulations that it has established.

So, when the World Bank promotes this country, as a posted child to the rest of the world, saying that's where they came from and now look at where they are at, in terms of prudent fiscal management, we don't want to lose that rating. So, everything that we do today is consistent with those rules. And, to ensure that we talk about a hundred and twenty-five million dollars that we got from the GCF, grant funding; you know why, because they've seen Grenada making strides to help itself. So, the taxpayers money from elsewhere, they are free to give us, they feel obliged, they feel compelled to do it, because why, Grenadians are making the sacrifice for themselves. We cannot go back there, Mr. President.

So, with all that has been said, I agree, for the 'more' but the 'more' must be given within the Laws and the rules that are established. And, I look forward to continuing, as we go along, because there's much more to be said. But, I am going to say, Mr. President, we are at... as the Prime Minister always says it, 'on a good wicket', so let's score runs, let's bat and continue to promote this country, because what we do today is not just for this present crop of people, but for future generations. So, we must ensure that we lay a proper foundation that the entire country will be happy with, and I am going to tell you, Mr. President, from all indications, they are happy. Thank you.

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Kim George.

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**Sen. the Hon. Kim George:** May it please you, Mr. President. I rise, Mr. President, in support of the Motion advanced by the Honourable Leader of Government's Business. Mr. President, I have listened with interest, to the comments on 'Both Sides' of the House and the word which came to me most readily was the word, 'balance', Mr. President. And, while I empathise with my colleague Senator Lewis on the 'Other Side', it strikes me, Mr. President, that it is critically important for 'Both Sides' to balance their respective interests, but to recall, as Senator Garraway has just made the point, that there are certain Statutory limitations put in place to ensure that whatever we do, at this stage, as he said, is sustainable; that it serves us, not just in the present, but that it serves future generations, as well.

And, I was heartened, as I listened, as well, to note the tone on 'Both Sides' and the commitment of 'Both Sides' to continue to engage, to continue to speak and being a new Senator myself, I must say, it was encouraging, as well. So, I have every expectation that the conversation would continue and that 'Both Sides' would maintain and hopefully be able to achieve a balance that serves the interest of us all.

I wanted to make a comment, as well in relation to, and this is wearing my other hat now, as a Lawyer, as an Attorney-at-Law, to the additional allocations I noticed in the Bill, for the Supreme Court and for the Ministry of Legal Affairs; because, Mr. President, it is no secret that in recent times, the infrastructure of the Court has come under strain and it is no secret that it has caused Lawyers and it has caused Litigants, considerable challenges. It is no secret that there are persons, who have had the hearing of their matters delayed and, of course, bear the consequences that come with that.

But, having said that, Mr. President, I am heartened to see that these additional monies would be allocated, because I am satisfied that they would meet at least certain immediate needs. And, I think it bears stating here that this Administration is committed to ensuring that justice is administered in Grenada, not just in a fair and in a balanced way, but in a timely manner as well. There has been a Committee appointed, chaired by the Honourable Peter David to address those issues. I am happy to report that as



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recently as last week, Thursday, I believe, this Committee met with the President of the Bar Association and it is the expectation that certainly, in relation to the Criminal Court, there will be a functioning Court at the beginning of the new Law term and attempts are being made, feverishly, to address the issues in relation to the Civil Court, with the expectation and the hope, as well that at the beginning of the new Law term, we will have, not yet permanent facilities, but certainly temporary facilities, that would meet the needs of Litigants and of Lawyers.

And, I am heartened, as well, Mr. President, because I am satisfied that this Administration understands the crucial role that the Justice System plays. Almost as a sort of temperature gauge in regulating the needs of the wider community and to ensure, that, as we say amongst Attorneys, the learned Attorney-General, who is here will be able to back me up, when I say this, but to ensure that justice is not only done, but that justice is also seen to be done. And, so, I rise as I said, to give this Bill my full support and to commend it for, not only the inclusion of the additional areas, but also for its compliance with the fiscal management, codified in the Public Finance Management Act. May it please you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

***(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)***

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, well, I will take the cue, in terms of closing the debate. I see no further lights on here, just commenting on some of the feedback received. I think the discussion has actually been very healthy and I actually like the tone of the discussion on 'Both Sides'.

So, Mr. President, notwithstanding the one or two barbs that were felt, as I said, the tone, I think, was a positive one, and what I would like to reflect on, in closing, the terms... well certainly it's the fundamental need for the numbers to be crunched. It is that activity and the involvement of the Ministry of Finance at this stage in the

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discussions, that I think will provide us with the quantifiable specifics that are needed for us to make informed decisions, as to what is fair, what is affordable and what is sustainable. And, that forms the essence, Mr. President, of the MOU that was signed earlier in the year. And, I believe that resonates with the Member on the 'Other Side' representing Labour, in terms of, again, the fairness and the affordability.

And, in fact, on Friday, the discussion will continue, the negotiation will continue and what I heard from the Member on the 'Other Side' is that he hopes that the spirit of the earlier discussions will be what drives the discussion forward. And, I think it is that spirit that has gotten us through many difficult times over the past five (5) years, and it is a credit to all of those involved, whether it's Government Side, whether it's on Labour Side, in terms of always reaching a conclusion that is in the best interest of all parties, and I think it is that principle that once again, needs to drive us forward.

And, the comment that I really want to grab hold of is the desire not to sink the State. We can't go there, through you, Mr. President. So, I see and I sense a language that is seeking resolution and is seeking what is in the best interest of both parties and I think that that is a very appropriate note for us to close this discussion. It will open up again as we go down the Order Paper, but I think the scene has been set for, I think a constructive dialogue between parties.

Just reflecting on the comments from Senator Roberts; just to answer your question, regarding the sources of the grant funding. It is detailed in the Appendix, but it's more than just the National Transformation Fund. There's the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the UNEP, GIZ, UNICEF, the Government of Canada, Government of Turkey, Government of Venezuela and St. George's University; they all make up the grant funding that supports the Supplemental.

So, on that note, Mr. President, what is before us, is a Motion that is bringing additional funding into the system that will be used to touch the lives of the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and it's for those reasons, Mr. President, that I commend this Motion to the House.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Motion approved.**

***(The Acting Clerk converses with the President)***

***Senate adjourned for lunch at 12:22 p.m.***

***House resumed at 1:30 p.m.***

**Mr. President:** Members should be minded to read Standing Order 43 of the Standing Orders, and just be mindful of that. I would have thought that the debate, which we had, would have come up, when we were dealing with the actual Pension Amendment, but be that as it may, I mean you know. So, Senator Stiell the floor is yours.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Supplementary Appropriation (No. 1) Bill, 2018.

**Ag. Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to appropriate an additional sum of thirty-six million, one hundred and thirty-four thousand, five hundred and twelve dollars and eighty-eight cents (\$36,134,512.88) to the service of the State of Grenada for the period July 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018, shortly entitled, Supplementary Appropriation (No. 1) Act, 2018.

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

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**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 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.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, I wish to inform this Honourable House that because this is a Money Bill that I have the seal of the Speaker of the House of Representatives to enable me to proceed with this Bill.

Mr. President, the debate on the Motion, basically covered... it's the Motion that this Bill effectively enacts. And, we discussed, quite extensively, the different elements of that Motion pertaining to this Bill, the bringing in of some thirty-six million dollars (\$36 m) from both grants and local revenues, monies that were previously unbudgeted, but based on the Public Finance Management Rules, we are able to bring into the system at this time.

So, Mr. President, we have gone through each of the different areas that are covered, the different Ministries that these allocations apply to whether it is for Pensions and Gratuity, whether it's the Ministry of Finance, Youth and Sports, Infrastructure

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Development, Social Development, Education, Health, the specific allocations for each of the sums of money that has been appropriated are listed in this Schedule.

Mr. President, as part of that formality of formalising the Motion, those are the reasons, Mr. President, that I commend this Bill for its second reading.

**Question put.**

**Mr. President:** Sorry, I didn't see your light. Senator Redhead.

**Sen. the Hon. Ron Livingston Redhead:** Yes, Mr. President. Mr. President, I am just seeking some clarification. Would now it be an opportune time? Is the Bill in its second stage for myself to make a contribution?

**Mr. President:** Absolutely, this is a stage where you respond to the Mover of the Bill.

**Sen. the Hon. Ron Livingston Redhead:** Okay. Mr. President, once again thank you very much. I rise to give my comments on the Bill, the Supplementary Estimates for approval, Mr. President. Now, before I begin, Mr. President, I would like to say we are very concerned with the amount of budgets that we see passing through in the last ten (10) months. This is from my constituents office. I do hope that it is well received, in good spirits. We are concerned that large sums of monies are going through, but, Mr. President, the problems largely remain unsolved. We do not support this Bill, Mr. President, and for several areas. The first area we have concern with is Vote 10, on the proposed Supplementary Estimates for approval.

Now, Mr. President, again, we see large sums of monies being allocated to the Office of the Prime Minister, five million dollars (\$5 m), Special Projects. We do not know, who stands to benefit from these projects. What are these projects for? Is the country going to benefit in any real way, or is it just for a selected few, Mr. President?

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That is our question here today. Mr. President, how are these monies going to be accounted for? We hear a lot of talk about it's the people's money. But, we would like to know how would these monies be accounted for in Vote 10, Office of the Prime Minister, five million dollars (\$5 m).

The last time a budget was read, if you would permit me to just quote the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure 2018, \$6.6 m was allocated, I believe, for the same area. And, now, we're coming back with a supplementary budget to ask for five million (\$5 m). Mr. President, we need to know who is accounting for this money? And, again, this was lamented, this belongs to the people and the people, I am certain, Mr. President, do not really know what these Special Projects are about.

Mr. President, the area of Needy Assistance, under the same Vote 10; again, we see two hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000.00) being allocated. Now, I would like to make it clear that we believe that any assistance to the needy is important. We have no problems there. But, the question we have, Mr. President, why is there two (2) areas for Needy Assistance? Because in same Vote 35, we have an area, Ministry of Social Development, in the fourth row, one million, eight hundred and two thousand and four hundred dollars (\$1,802,400.00), and it says for the purpose of Senior Citizens and needy persons and it talks about the elderly. And, Mr. President, that in itself, again, is not clear, because who is this money really intended for? Is it Senior Citizens, Elderly? I don't know that you can categorize elderly and Senior Citizens apart; and I still says here that it is for needy persons. So, Mr. President, what we really would like clarity on is what is the Office of the Prime Minister receiving two hundred and fifty thousand (\$250,000.00) for Needy Assistance, when there is a Ministry of Social Development? We believe that, that is double spending, in our view, and some sort of clarity should be made clear, as to why this is allocated there. We do not believe that poor people must go to two different lines to access assistance from the State. We believe that it must come from one central point and the Ministry of Social Development is the best place to do that.

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Mr. President, just briefly, on the issue of Pensions and Gratuities. Now, we want to welcome this move. We support it. We believe it's a good move, but we want to also say to the Unions that they must never fear to negotiate with Government, but they must never negotiate out of fear.

Mr. President, this is long overdue, the question of Pensions. I know that many Governments have made contributions and steps towards bringing it to fruition. And, we do not shy away from congratulating all the parties involved, including the Government on this move. We think it's a move in the right direction. As it was said, many of our citizens, who work in the Public Service, they have to retire in poverty and that is not acceptable. So, we don't believe in that at all.

Mr. President, the other area is Vote 20, the Ministry of Finance, one million dollars (\$1 m) for Contracts and Allowances. Now, we are seeing here that, you're saying that this one million dollars (\$1 m) was for payments made, which was not seen in keeping with objectives of the Government, which was not budgeted. Mr. President, what's that? We don't know what that is. We need some clarity on that. You're asking us to support this Bill in its present form; while we can't stop it, we know it's a Money Bill, but Mr. President, these are serious concerns. Again, the fact was lamented that these are the people's monies and the people are asking, what are these things for? That is our question, in relation to that.

Mr. President, one million dollars (\$1 m) is a lot of money to overspend, because we need to know if it is a case where Government has overspent, or some sort of thing of misappropriated funds was done, so now Government is coming to this Honourable House to ask for that one million dollars (\$1 m) to feed into get what they need done, to be done. Mr. President, so this needs to be cleared up. And, again, we want to make it absolutely clear that this is a question on the basis of accountability.

We are in difficult financial times and we are asking these questions, because we know that we are undergoing a Structural Adjustment Programme, Mr. President, and, by the way, we don't know when it will end. We know that it was promised to be a three-year programme, we're now going on over five. So, we would just like to know

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where are we in relation to that. We heard that Government has embarked on very progressive measures, and we would want to support, but we need to know where the country is going after, or are we still going through a Structural Adjustment Programme?

Mr. President, Vote 30, Ministry of Infrastructure Development, Implementation, Public Utilities and Energy, and Mr. President, the Breakwater Project, we are seeing \$1.6 m being allocated for that.

Mr. President, we are seeing six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000.00) being set aside for Victoria and St. Mark, and that's good. It will benefit the Community, among other things, that's important. But, Mr. President, what we can't seem to understand is what is the account of the Project, the first Breakwater Project in Sauteurs. We are seeing here to continue the Project. As far as I am aware that Project should have been completed, and we know that there was talk that an EPA was not conducted; nobody knows if this was done. In fact, one of the problems and challenges in being able to investigate, Mr. President, and I want to take this time to raise this, and join with Senator Roberts, we are getting this information on short notices. It is not sufficient time. We need to prepare, and most importantly, we need to investigate, so that we can have meaningful dialogue on the people's business. So, I want to take this time to register that concern.

But, Mr. President, that Project in Sauteurs, we need an update on that Project, because here you are asking this House to approve another one million dollars (\$1 m). The funny thing is, I did look, and I can't seem to find the first allocation for the Project in the Budget, Estimates of Revenue for 2018. So, I don't know, really and truly, how many of the people's monies were spent in that area. So, Mr. President, to come and ask for an additional one million (\$1 m) to continue the Project that is a bit suspicious and we are concerned with that area.

Mr. President, the final area is Vote 50, Ministry of Health. I wouldn't get into the additional extra today, but Vote 50, Mr. President, just one area in Vote 50, that we are concerned with, please permit me to find that, and it's the final row, the column, which says, Mr. President, "approved Budget Estimates of six hundred and seventy thousand



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dollars (\$670,000.00), actual funds received dollar sign seven, five, five, nine, six, four, eight dot eight-five (\$7 5 5 9 6 4 8.85). What is that sum supposed to be?

Mr. President, if we we're getting these things on short notices, and we are being told that we're getting it, because it has to pass through Legal Affairs, Finance, Timbuktu. If it has to pass through all these areas and we're still getting it late, and they are still coming with mistakes, Mr. President, we are very concerned that we cannot contribute, meaningfully, to this thing, because we would like to give the Government some level of support on the side of Opposition. And, let me explain what I mean by that. We know that we are in difficult financial times, right, and, in some countries when the thing gets so bad, Opposition and Government would, in a sense, unite its forces to fight the economic, social, among other challenges. But, Mr. President, if the Government is not meeting its end of the bargain, because when we raise concerns it's often viewed, as just opposition, but, if the Government is not meeting its end of the bargain by ensuring that it puts forward credible information and precise, clean enough for us to give genuine contributions, Mr. President, we will not be willing to support anything of that nature.

Mr. President, just to bring back to your attention and we're going to go back on Vote; that would be in the area with the Breakwater Project, just below that, same sort of mistake, Road Improvement and Maintenance Programme. We are happy, by the way, that the road works have begun. We look forward to the June to September and October to December. People must benefit. But, Mr. President, in the fifth column, currently there is a balance of six million three hundred and forty seven thousand, five hundred and seventy-nine dollars (\$6,347,579.00) and as such the cut off was four zero zero zero, zero zero zero (4000,000) was done. Mr. President, again, what is that? This is not good enough. This is the level of the Senate, and I am saying that for us to be able to approve these things, we cannot be approving things like that. This is unacceptable, Mr. President, and these are some of our concerns, as it relates to the Supplementary Estimates for approval.

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So, Mr. President, again, we would not support this in its present form. We think a serious level of correction needs to be done and introspection to the question of how the people's money is being spent, particularly, in the Office of the Prime Minister. We are very concerned about that. We have no reason to doubt him, but we believe if you're giving needy assistance, Social Development is the best Ministry equipped to handle something like that. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Senator Redhead. Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Thank you, Mr. President, well, it's the first intervention we've heard from the Member on the 'Other Side', so I'll like to congratulate you on your brave effort. For a minute, there, he took me back, he took me back in time to your former Leader, you actually sounded very, very familiar. I am not sure, Mr. President, what the Member is actually not supporting and objecting to. This isn't bringing monies in or trying to find monies, Mr. President, to fill holes that the original Budget was unable to fill. These are additional monies above and beyond the one billion plus dollars of the original Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. So, this is all intended to bring additional benefit. It's bolstering programmes that already exist, providing assistance to more persons in a more comprehensive way.

So, for example, Mr. President, he commented about the allocation to the Prime Minister's Office, that is a very familiar argument. These, Mr. President, are for Special Projects, projects that addressed the needs of communities up and down the country. It tends to be small projects, small interventions that actually make a significant difference in the communities that they are applied. And, whether it is fixing a piece of road, a drain, a culvert, a retaining wall, projects to resolve specific issues at that local level. So, it not only improves the lives of those within the Community, Mr. President, but it also provides economic opportunities for our Tradesmen, our small Contractors. So, these are actually highly beneficial, highly effective ways of bringing value, at a

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Community level, and projects that would be too small than some of our larger Contractors.

***The Needy Assistance***

I am glad the Member was able to distinguish between the \$1.8 m that is there under the Ministry of Social Development, that is within the SEED Programme, and it is the additional one hundred dollars (\$100.00) that is being paid to elderly households. The SEED Programme is highly monitored. There are checks and balances in place. Actually, when we reviewed the criteria that was used and the systems that are being put in place, to ensure that it is the most needy that are identified, it was actually quite controversial, because there were certain members of our society, who were able to double dip, and were able to exploit those programmes. They were then removed off those programmes, because they were receiving other benefits and they made a lot of public noise.

So, this level of scrutiny, in identifying those that are most needy, and I believe it's the World Bank, or one of the International Organizations. Is it the World Bank; that has provided the capacity to make sure that the resources that are available are channeled to the right persons. The Needy Assistance that exists within the Prime Minister's Ministry actually helps a lot of students. It is a lot of persons, who require additional support, whether it's to go to TAMCC, whether it's St. George's University, whether it's persons, who are struggling with the scholarships that they have received, if all their needs are not met; so, again, interventions that touched the lives and enhance the lives, especially of our young persons and enabling them to fulfill their ambitions.

So, if the controversy is why should the Prime Minister, the most senior elected Member within Government, we can't trust the Prime Minister, we can't trust Ministers, I would ask you, Mr. President, well, who can we trust? The people entrusted us, in terms of the democratic electoral process, that is the mandate that we have been afforded and it is a privilege and it is a serious responsibility. But, my understanding is that we have been empowered with all of the checks and balances, with all of the accountability, with all of the transparency, and the good governance that is required to

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meet the needs of our people, and that is across the population, not Party supporters, it's all of our people in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. So, it's not about overspending, it's not about misappropriation of funds, I just wanted to make that clear. I know the language is politically inflammatory, and its intended to be. But, I'll urge the Member, through you, Mr. President, as we proceed, that it is good to have a little bit of measure, in terms of some of that rhetoric.

The Structural Adjustment Programme ended in 2017. It was a three-year Programme and it was successfully completed. But, what we have done and what we have promised to do, as we went through that Programme is ensure that the gains that were made would be institutionalised. We did not want this to be a '*flash-in-the-pan*' that the gains made evaporate, as we come out of restrictions of that Programme. So, in terms of the fiscal management, in terms of the fiscal responsibility and all of those things that go with it, is to ensure that those gains are locked in and benefits continue to be provided to the country within those constraints.

I am unaware of any mistakes that are in it. I have gone through it. I can see one or two typos, but there is nothing materially, at fault, with what is before us.

So, Mr. President, what is before us is an additional thirty-six million dollars (\$36 m) of which the majority of that twenty plus million dollars is from grants, sources from external funds and the balance from additional revenues that Government has generated, and speaks to our youth, it speaks to our vulnerable, it speaks to infrastructural development, it speaks to educational development, it speaks to social development. And, it is for those reasons, Mr. President, that I commend this Bill for its second reading.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

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

**Mr. President:** Honourable Members, because this is a Money Bill, it does not have to go into Committee, so we can move straight to the third reading of the Bill.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Mr. President:** Just let me make another comment again, it's a learning process for some of us, but again, I would urge all Members to refer to Standing Order 36, which speaks to the conduct of a Senator in respect of his speech in this House.

Pay particular attention to Standing Order 36 (v): **"No Senator shall impute improper motive to any Member of either House."** So, it will be improper and a breach of the Rules to suggest that if there is something that one does not understand that it may very well be because of some misappropriation. It's just improper. There is a place for that sort of language and style, such a place is the political platform. But, in this House, the title 'Honourable' connotes a certain something. And, I just thought I would bring this to the attention of all Members of the House, and be guided accordingly. Thank you.

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell, you have the floor.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading, a bill for an Act shortly entitled, Non-Biodegradable Waste Control Bill, 2018.

**Mr. President:** One minute let me .... (**searching through his papers**) my papers seemed to be... okay, yeah, I got it.

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**Ag. Clerk:** An Act to regulate the use of Non-Biodegradable Products, shortly entitled, Non-Biodegradable Waste Control Act, 2018.

**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 put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Mr. President:** Before we proceed, Senator Stiell, I am inquiring, can some of these Bills be sort of circulated, and could we have some Committee sittings on these Bills? I mean, we now have the space, we now have the resources and the time, so that, you know, the reoccurring complaint that effectively the Senators are being ambushed with Bills that come up; because I think this Environmental thing has been on the cards now for a long time. And, I would rather suspect that the draft of this Bill has been sitting there for some time. I mean, it could have been circulated.

I mean, I could see, if the Government has to give consideration to a Tax amendment, and you don't want to announce that way ahead of time, as it may defeat the purpose for which you want to put the amendment. But, a pretty mundane Bill like this, we could circulate these Bills. We could have a Joint Committee, or we could have a Senate Committee to study the Bills, or it could be published in a White Paper. There are lots of Environmentalists outside there, who would like to know what the Government is doing. So, I really want to urge us to depart from the trodden path, as it were, and in the freshness of the ambience that we now enjoy, we take a slightly different approach to sort of enlighten the thing, you know.

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So, let us make it happen, because, I mean, this Bill could have been circulated. There is a gentleman, who is on the television now, a very active Environmentalist, makes a lot of sense, to me, in fact, I support a lot of what he is saying. If we have this, and, Clerk, the website is fairly advanced. We could publish these things long before. There is absolutely no reason why we should retain this and it shouldn't be given out; make it known, give Members on 'This Side', so they have it. Senator Roberts, herself, is an Environmentalist of sorts and certainly would have liked to study this Bill. So, I really just want to urge that this would be done, you know. And, then we have two (2) Attorneys, who are always locked down in Court. Now, if they have this weeks ahead a time, they can read it, gracefully, while looking at their Soaps, if they do. **(Chuckles)** So, the floor is yours, Senator.

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

**Question proposed.**

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, today is a historic day. Today, Grenada joins its brothers and sisters, up and down the Caribbean, in Antigua, Barbuda, Guyana, who led the charge on plastic pollution. We join them in this global fight against plastic pollution.

Mr. President, the Bill before us, the Non-Biodegradable Waste Control Bill, 2018, seeks to ban polystyrene, also known as styrofoam, single used plastics, which includes plastic plates, plastic cutlery, cups, glasses, straws, etcetera, and single use shopping bags. All of these items, Mr. President, litter our streets, they litter our communities, they litter our beaches, our waters; truly a scourge of our environment.

So, in Grenada, our natural environment is the backbone of our economy, supporting Tourism, Fisheries, Agriculture and other related services. We are known as Pure Grenada, the Spice of the Caribbean.

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However, Mr. President, plastic pollution threatens this beautiful, but delicate environment that we all enjoy. Plastic pollution remains one of the major challenges for Small Island Developing States, such as ours, while many larger countries, they have the resources to recycle, to treat with their waste on a different scale to us. But, we do not have the resources in order to take some of the same initiatives, as they are able to.

It is estimated that 12.7 million tons of plastic from plastic bottles down to micro beads, end up in our world's oceans every single year, choking, strangling, poisoning our Marine life. Globally, huge floating mats of plastic waste are formed in areas of the Atlantic and the Pacific, materials such as old fishing nets, plastic bags, even larger amounts are actually collected on the seabed. And, recently, plastic bags have even been found in the deepest recesses, the deepest ravines of our oceans.

It is estimated, Mr. President, that by 2050, our oceans would have more plastic in them than fish, by weight; that's a crisis, Mr. President, that we are facing globally, ringlets that can affect sea turtles, seabirds and affect the natural beauty of our beaches and our coastal areas that we hold so close to us, plastic packaging, especially plastic bags are a significant source of landfill waste, again, regularly eaten by marine and other land animals.

It is estimated that around five thousand tons of plastic alone enters our Perseverance Dump Landfill site, each year. We have some serious challenges on our hand with our Landfill sites at Perseverance and Dumfries in Carriacou, and if we continue, as we are, we are going to have some serious problems in the not too distant future. So, what we are doing and how we are treating with our plastic waste is not sustainable.

Mr. President, plastics do not biodegrade, they sit in our environment for up to a thousand years before they start to break down, and when they do break down, they simply disintegrate into micro plastics, micro particles that enter our waterways, enter our marine spaces and shore areas. Plastic bags alone take anything between ten (10) years and a thousand (1,000) years to break down, plastic bottles, four hundred and fifty (450) years; so these things become a permanent feature within our environment.



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Mr. President, the concern is not just about the many animals including birds and fish that knowingly ingest these particles of plastic. These animals, these fish are also part of our own food chain, so they affect us, as humans also. Chemicals such as benzene and styrene, that's contained within styrofoam, are hazardous, and we use these to contain and package our food. It is a threat to our health, Mr. President.

We also need to recognise the impacts of plastic and especially micro-plastics may have on the health of our water systems. Global studies show that micro-plastics have been found in drinking water and even in bottled water. This is one reason why we have to remember that, as an Island, all of our eco-systems are interconnected. We have to be far more sensitive to this very fragile eco-system, and what we put in our rivers, ends up in our oceans, what ends up in our oceans, ends up on our plates, what ends up on our plates, ends up in our stomachs, Mr. President. So, in order to tackle this daunting challenge, we need to have a new approach to how we use and reuse plastic and look to alternatives, wherever possible. The global slogan is: **"If you cannot reuse plastics, then you should refuse it."** Mr. President, that's exactly what we are doing with this Bill.

By beating plastic pollution, Mr. President, will take a collective effort from all players; it will take a collective effort from all players in Grenada and not just the Government, but also non-Government and private businesses and local persons of all ages. It requires a natural, cultural shift and this Bill is the first starting point of taking this collective responsibility, as to how we tackle this challenge.

This Bill will be a new page in our history, as we start to take matters in our own hands regarding the global challenge of plastic pollution. So, as we start to push the envelope of recycling, waste production, diversion, awareness and education to encourage a more innovative approach to our waste management.

Mr. President, sixteen (16) Representatives from the Business Community who are importers of these products, participated in the Consultations in the development of this Bill, and the approach that will be taken in order to implement this Bill. They have shown considerable goodwill and many of them are actually leading the charge, in

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terms of actually sourcing the alternatives that are needed for the replacement of these plastic products. The timelines of implementation has been discussed with them and the incentive packages for the potential recycling of some of the waste products have been involved in those discussions. And, we have also been engaged with the Customs and Excise Department to establish the different Tariff breakpoints, both for the items that now will be prohibited after the passing of this Bill, but also, in terms of the new products that we will be using as our alternatives.

So, running through the Bill, itself, Mr. President, the prohibition of plastics will be on three (3) levels. The first is the importation of the styrofoam plastics that we seek to ban. So, the prohibition will start at the source.

The second is on the offer of sale of those products, so the wholesalers of those plastic products, and then the third level of the prohibition is on the sale of those products with food. So, Mr. President, the Bill contains seven (7) Clauses. I will just quickly run through some of the key areas; Clause 2 provides for the Act for which this is the bill to apply in respect of items prescribed as non-biodegradable products.

Mr. President, there will be three (3) Orders that are associated with this Bill. The first defines and speaks to styrofoam. It defines the specific styrofoam constituted products that will be banned. The second is for single use plastics, which will include the plates, the cutlery, the cups, etcetera; and then the third is the handled shopping bags, single use shopping bags. So, as we move forward, Mr. President, items can be added to this list, as the banning of additional products comes into effect. So, Mr. President, with regards to production and importations, and Clause 4 speaks to this, there will be a fine imposed of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00), upon summary convictions for those persons importing banned products after the deadline for that ban is imposed, and that is in keeping; it's higher than the other fines that were applied, but that is in keeping with the ban such as the prohibited substances fine within the Customs Act.

Clause 5 speaks to the sale of the product... the wholesaling of those products after the ban is imposed will carry a fine of four thousand, five hundred dollars

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(\$4,500.00). Clause 6 speaks to the retail and sale of the plastic styrofoam products with food, and, again a fine of four thousand, five hundred dollars (\$4,500.00).

Clause 7 speaks to those persons, who are convicted of selling these materials will have to bear the cost of storage and disposal, the correct disposal of those non-biodegradable products.

So, speaking to the three (3) areas, so, first of all styrofoam containers, the prohibition of styrofoam containers is anticipated to take effect, by Order, made by the Minister with responsibility for the environment, which would designate expanded polystyrene food containers, as non-biodegradable products for the purposes of the Bill when enacted. The first level of prohibition will take effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, 2018. The second prohibition period would take effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2019, and then the third level from the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, 2019. So, Mr. President, what this means is by the 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2019, we would have eliminated styrofoam from this country.

Plastics, excluding plastic bags, the three (3) levels of prohibition, the first level will take effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, 2019; the second from the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, 2019, and then the complete elimination will be from the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, 2019. And, again, the date that has been determined here have been in consultation with the wholesalers, with the importers and take into account either product that they have that is on order, that is being shipped in, that is currently an inventory and the time it would take to deplete, all the way along the value chain, from Importer right through to the Retailer in order to eliminate. So, we try to balance the desire to eliminate these products, as quickly and as efficiently, as possible, but also taking into account the financial sensitivities of some of these Importers, ensuring that what they have in stock can naturally expire with the time periods that are given.

So, the final area of the plastic bags and the first level of prohibition will take effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2019, the second, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, 2019, and the third level, the final, the 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2020.

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Mr. President, taking this bold, but necessary move is the first step, but a very important step in ridding our country of these plastic and styrofoam pollutants. There is more that will need to be done. There are other products that litter our streets, that pollute our environment that we will need to consider in time, but this is a first in a number of steps, but a very progressive move in the global battle against plastic pollution. It is for those reasons, Mr. President, that I commend this Bill for its second reading.

**Mr. President:** Senator André Lewis.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you, very much, Mr. President. This is a useful Bill and a significant direction to go. In keeping with the observations made by yourself, Mr. President, and Senator Roberts, I just want to lend our voice to the need for getting documents early and on time, because myself and within the Labour Movement, as you would know, there is a Parliamentary Committee that I am obligated to share those documents with, so that we can meet to discuss, so I am not coming here just to express my personal view.

Having said that, there is some information that the Leader of Government's Business was reading out; I am not sure, if those information were meant for us, I would think so, but we have not seen this in our documents, in terms of the effective date and the schedule and what are the different issues. So, we would like to make a request for that, but just to point out that we have not seen these. I have looked through my documents.

As a further concern, in relation to the effective date, just a minor question, does that apply to individuals coming into the country, for instance, as an example, I'm coming in from one of the countries, and I am walking in with something in my hand, in a plastic bag that is not biodegradable, would I be subject to the possibility? I am just asking. How does that apply down to the individual level?

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***(Inaudible comment by Mr. President)***

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Yes, because we would be asked those questions. So, I need to know what is the intention, because this is extremely important, it is good, I want to compliment, but it would require a lot of education. It will require a lot of education, and, therefore, it is absolutely important to be able to be armed with such information. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Senator Ron Redhead.

**Sen. the Hon. Ron Livingston Redhead:** Yes, Mr. President, just to quickly go back earlier to what you said, I want to say that in the spirit of young youth and learning, I am forever learning, at my age, and I would continue to improve, in terms of my presentation, in this Honourable House.

***(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)***

**Sen. the Hon. Ron Livingston Redhead:** No, no, I am not. I understand, and I thank you. I fully understand. Well, I hope this contribution is a bit more correct language.

But, Mr. President, this Bill, I want to say, personally, that I rise to give support to it. As many may or may not know, I am a Consumer-Right Advocate and Activist and...

***(Inaudible Comment by Mr. President)***

***(Laughter)***

**Sen. the Hon. Ron Livingston Redhead:** Well, maybe that is why. I am just kidding, Mr. President. But, Mr. President, I support this Bill. And, Mr. President, I want

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to say, though, I have just three (3) areas of concern, maybe to strengthen the Bill in its current form. The first, Mr. President, is on a consumer level. I do not believe that the alternative should be at a higher cost for the consumer. I don't really believe that, because I believe if we are going to introduce this in phases, there must be some sort of, let us say, Government intervention to the Importers, who would be bringing in the alternative, to give some measure of short-term decrease, whether it is, in terms of how much they would be paying for it, so as to also allow any additional costs to phase in to the consumer; that's my first area of concern, and I believe that it would help to strengthen this Bill.

Mr. President, the second area is Section 2 of the Bill; and it says: **"The Minister may, by Order, published in the Gazette, subject to Affirmative Resolution, prescribe anything as a non-biodegradable product, for the purpose of this Act."**

Now, Mr. President, in my view, and I have seen these types of Acts being put forward and enacted, Mr. President, but they do not clearly define what is non-biodegradable. I think, for the purpose of this Act, we should define what is non-biodegradable and not...

***(Inaudible comment by Mr. President)***

**Sen. the Hon. Ron Redhead:** Right. And, it made mention to a number of other items. But, I think it should be now... again, I didn't get the entire time to browse through, fully and thoroughly. But, if it is, Mr. President, then that is good, that is good news, Mr. President, but that was one area. So, I don't think that it should be left up to the Minister to determine what is a non-biodegradable product; that is just the basis of the question, so if it is defined, then this is lovely. So, Mr. President, because it also says: "Affirmative Resolution," which means after it is Gazetted, it would have to come to the Parliament to seek votes on it.

Mr. President, the third and final area has to do with the prohibition of production, among other things. So, all the areas are dealing with prohibition. Now, Mr. President,

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in Grenada's history, the nature of Acts like these, when they are passed, they are not really enforced. I believe that if Government is seriously enforcing this, it should not only talk about imposing a mega fine, but it should find a way, Mr. President, to seize the goods. This must be clearly stated, so that whenever Importers bring in Styrofoam, plastic, whatever it is we are banning, it must be seized, if they do not have the permission or authority to bring that in, Mr. President. Because, Mr. President, we would not like a situation where, if I have a friend and I am a Minister and a friend or family member is bringing in these goods, Mr. President, I would ease them up, if I find out about that. We are not trying to impute anything here, but, Mr. President, we just want to strengthen this Bill, and we suggest this, that this part of the Bill be changed, at least, or included to add seizures.

Mr. President, the fourth and final comment I want to make on the Bill, I believe that there is a need for education on a Bill, such as this. Mr. President, I want to encourage and commend the Government for its progressive step towards implementing, or, at least trying to push this Bill forward. I believe that there is a place for it, and we, in the Opposition, have no issues with supporting something like that. But, Mr. President, the wider public, the education for the ordinary man, this needs to be well laid out, and this needs to be well put out, so that everybody can apprise themselves of these things, and in the end, Mr. President, in the nature of Law and following the good spirit of our country, we can follow the Law and abide by it. Mr. President, thank you very much.

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Glynis Roberts.

**Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts:** Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to support this Bill, which is timely. It should have been here before, being an advocate and a member of the Grenada Green Group, and we have been trying, for years, to, not only have the banning of plastics and styrofoam, but also the Litter (Amendment) Act, which was passed since 2016, that we have systems in place, so that people can be prosecuted

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for littering. And, littering is not only; we claim that it's the children, but it's the adults, because they are the ones purchasing the styrofoam and just throwing out the windows of the vehicle, as they pass.

I want to, before I go to the substantives of the Bill, speak to all the efforts that are being done, in terms of helping us control the same plastics that Senator Stiell is talking about, because we have the SGU students, who do snorkeling every year, as they clear Grand Anse area, the Beach. Carnival is coming up. Carnival is a big contributor to pollution in the sea, because when we finish our Jab-Jab and we jump in the seawater, we drop all the clothes there, and they are all in the Ocean. It is complex, in terms of all that we do.

I also want to say that we have the Cadets, who, couple years ago went over to the Fall Edge with the Grenada Green Group, and we did a Clean-Up and not only plastic bags, but plastic chairs and all of those things that we continue to import and pollute the atmosphere, as well.

We also have to look at creative ways now of utilising what we have in this country to use as eating utensils or items. So, we have bamboo, we have calabash, so we are going right back to roots. And, I say all of that to say it's also linked with education, because I know, every year, a number of people go to China for a lot of short courses. I am in this House advocating with the Government, that we get some people coming from different countries, who have the know-it-all, how to use things like bamboo, so that we can get it to use locally, so that as we ban one supply the small people that are there trying to do a living can so do by serving in those utensils.

Added to that, in the Bill, I am not seeing anywhere for the Bureau of Standards to be apart of; I see you have the Commissioner of Police, Customs, but I believe the Bureau have a part to play, in terms of identifying even the plastics that's coming in with food that is processed, the Bureau needs to have some part with that, as well. And, with the advent of the Internet, we also have to think how do we control, because I can go order myself, pay for myself and import myself. So, that's my contribution, but I support this Bill, and I want to also say that we have lots of people on board with the



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Grenada Green Group in that of Dr. Marryshow. He holds a TV Programme every first Wednesday, dealing with litter and all of that and as the President said we should use all means necessary, so that we can sensitise and get people involved because this is our little rock and we need to do all in our powers to keep it the way it should. So, that's my contribution.

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Senator Roberts. Senator the Honourable Dunstan Campbell.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Dunstan Campbell:** Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to support the Bill; and for us, in Agriculture, it is extremely important, because we are a culprit in that, some of our practices we do at this point in time use plastic. Most of us, who drive around the country, would see the banana fields and the banana is all covered up with blue plastic, so when it's gone through its life, they end up in the rivers, in the land and they contaminate the environment.

I'll speak on this a little bit, because the use of the plastic in the banana cultivation is driven by the consumers. The consumers do not want a banana that is marked, or scratched, or bruised, so our response is to cover it up so that when the birds land on the banana they would not scratch it, so in order to get rid of the plastic we have to educate the consumers that the banana is not really affected, if it has as little scratch, it is still good...

***(Inaudible remarks by the President)***

**Sen. the Hon. Dunstan Campbell:** The what?

***(Laughter)***

**Sen. the Hon. Andre Lewis:** We have to educate birds, too.

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**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Dunstan Campbell:** Educate the birds, too? Well, we can try that, but, at least, first we want to educate the consumers, because the scratch on that banana is not really affecting the quality of the banana, so we can start from there, one area of plastic.

The other area is our response, Agriculture's response to climate change. We know that the rainfall pattern has changed, the drought has increased, so in order to respond to the those changes, one, in the case of the rain we use the plastic to cover the soil, so that the heavy droplets would not break up the soil and cause erosion, so we have to find an alternative for mulching our fields that does not include plastic and that can be done. I am sure we can find some grant, somewhere, to help us mulch, increase our mulching, using biodegradable mulch. For example, earlier on today, we talked about these road cleaning gangs that would go and cut the overhangings and so on, we can mulch all of that, and it can replace the plastic in Agriculture, so we can think about these mechanisms, so we counteract these plastics, and we will no longer be the culprit.

So, Mr. President, I am supporting this Bill for the Sector that I represent, and I am saying that if we work together, we can find solutions that are right in our hands. For example, we are now faced with, I think earlier on we talked about this sargassum seaweed. Now, we can gather this and use it for mulch. This is, for example, a resource that should never be wasted, you know. We use the sargassum for mulch to replace plastic, and, in this case, you will not be only protecting the soil, but you will be adding nutrients to the soil, so it's like a double whammy here, that you are addressing two (2) evils and you're getting the benefits out of it.

So, Mr. President, again, I rise to support the Bill and, as I said, I will like to work... we, not I, we would like to work with you in finding solutions to Agriculture being a culprit. Thank you, Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

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**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to give my full support to the passage of the Non-Biodegradable Waste Control Bill, 2018, and to say that with the passage of this Bill, Grenada is making a quantum leap in protecting the environment for this and future generations.

This decision to bring this Bill to Parliament is consistent with Government's pledge to the Nation and to the International Community to reducing our carbon footprint. I could remember in 2015, at the Paris COP, when the world took notice of the peculiarities of Small Island Developing States and the importance we placed on reducing Green House Gases, ensuring that we provide some form of protection for Small States, as it relates to the issues relating with Climate Change. What we have seen from then and Grenada has been seen as one of the leaders in combating and promoting the need for us to look at Climate Change, this Bill today signals that we are serious about protecting our environment.

It is important to note, Mr. President, that the banning of plastic and styrofoam must be lauded, it's a laudable Act, and I listened to my fellow Senators on the 'Other Side', and I think we share the same sentiments, that this is about protecting our environment. This is about safeguarding our future and the future of our generations to come.

It is important to note that this policy that the Government is pushing forward, at this point in time is not just resident with this Administration, it has to be a cultural change and shift throughout the entire country. We have to recognise that if we don't do it, we all will face the consequences that we are seeing in Climate Change that has been impacting upon the entire world. This ban, obviously, will contribute to our health ecosystem, a well functioning ecosystem, which will enhance our resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change.

2017 has been a year of many parts for Small Island Developing States, and it is the first time we have seen multi-State impact from hurricanes, and it is the first time we have seen two Category 5 hurricanes impacting States within the Region to the point where we all felt the pain. This, what we're doing today, will contribute towards our

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mitigation efforts. Not only will it help to create a cleaner environment, but it will also continue to promote Grenada, as the pure destination that we say we are when we promote to the world, Pure Grenada. We have pure fun, pure beaches, pure ecosystems, but it starts with us. For it to happen, we have to make a conscious decision that we want to fix this and make the change. And, I agree with my colleague Senator from Agriculture. Yes, I remember, as a young boy growing up in St. Andrew, Birch Grove, to be exact, proud of Green Valley, yea man.

Yes, Mr. President, through you, I am happy with what my colleague Senator would have said. Yes, we understand the importance of putting the sleeveings on the bananas, the blue sleeveings, as we call them, because we want to protect the texture, protect the skin, and, yes, it is influenced by consumer demand. So the need has come, we have to find alternatives, because we could make a light moment of it and say probably train the birds, teach the birds, or probably try to educate our consumers, but I wouldn't spend my money on something that doesn't appear to be pure, I just won't buy it. So, we have to find alternatives, and that's where I think we have to start looking, because it's a good move, but we've got to protect everything we have. Because we don't want, at the end of the day, our bananas would not be sold, because this is going to be devastating to our farmers, so we have to find a way to make things differently.

But, come to think about it, Mr. President, it is difficult to get rid of plastic. This has become ingrained in the culture. I mean, some of us have gold pens and so forth, but some of us is plastic pens we use, that is something we have to get to move, has to change, as my colleague was saying to me, even the mics, plastic, the chairs and so forth. But, one important thing that is going to come about with this shift and this change is a lot of our local produce and products are likely to go back into business. The straw chairs, the fiber brooms, those things that we have gone away from, because we've become so modern that the plastic brooms seem to take over. Probably we will see more of the bamboo brooms coming back now and all these stuff and so forth. It is bio-degradable, so when it's done, it goes back into the soil and the whole nutrient cycle continues, but the important thing is we have to find ways to make things better.

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And, then, when you look at our surroundings, I mean it's an unsightly experience. We had a National Clean-Up, spearheaded by NaDMA, and we went behind the Port and the Bus Terminus area, and I was appalled at the level of contamination. And, I mean, I coined the phrase and said, you can just imagine the level of pollution you will find behind in those beautiful rocks. With this ban and enforcing it, I will see a cleaner environment, so we can go on the stones and sit down in the back there and enjoy the pristine nature of our shoreline, not having to compete with all those plastics, bottles and bags and the likes and so forth.

Mr. President, this is, indeed, a great day for us. There is one other thing that I want to point out, because quite a lot have been said already on this. Malibu, in California, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, this year, banned single use plastics; forks and cutleries and the likes and so forth. But, the State had to create awareness among the Business Community and they gave them a box of disposable forks and the likes and so on to get them into this business. I am making this point, because I want to take this opportunity to commend the Business Sector of Grenada. They championed this Bill, they spearheaded the fight, and they have been pushing and saying to Government we have to pass this in Parliament. **(Applause)** They championed it, so we didn't have to create the incentive for them and the awareness for them to want to do it. They say, no, we have to do it, we have to protect this economy for our young people for our future generations and this is a sure way to start it, banning the plastics, because remember, plastic is made out of the same oil, and you know this thing is not biodegradable at all. The problem that we face at this point in time that even though you say you recycle it, the micro particles as the Leader of Government's Business spoke to earlier, find itself into our waterways, into the ocean. It gets into our food chain. We have to protect ourselves. We have to do better and I am happy today that we are doing it. But, I want to say that with the passage of this Bill, we have to ensure that the policing mechanism that has been established is rigid and is maintained.

We have timelines, as to when we will eradicate the plastic, that must be adhered to and it doesn't matter who you are, we give you time, and as a matter of fact, during

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the consultation the Business Community suggested timelines, and I am going to say when the time comes, we have to ensure that we fulfil the obligation to this Nation.

Finally, it's not rocket science. One of the problems I think we have in this country is enforcing Laws; we have to make an example with this one. So, the question that was asked, if someone should be coming from the plane with a plastic bag during the time of landing, they just can't land with it. So we have to create a big educational awareness campaign, and that's what the push is, to ensure that every person on the Mainland and in the Diaspora understand and knows the expectations, as it relates to plastic in this country. And, I look forward to us creating, probably, Jingles and having Programmes at the Primary School level and the Secondary Schools, so that our young people know about it. This must be done, if we have to see the success of this historic Bill, which we are passing today. So, Mr. President, I want to continue to give my full support for the passage of this Bill. Thank you.

**Mr. President:** Just before we continue, let me just say that on my way back from participating in the anniversary celebrations in Nicaragua, I bought a fragrance and I was told the only how I can carry that fragrance, it must be put in a visible plastic bag. At the International Airport, which was a quarantined area, they are now requiring that anything you buy, over a certain amount of millilitres, has to be made visible. Having said what you said, that if I came in on the Airport with a bag, which the international security insist that I must have, that I will be deemed an importer of the plastic, I just thought you should re-examine that again.

And, while you have a responsibility for educating people here, we are now, substantially, a Tourism economy. So, tourists are told, well, look, you can't come with your sun block, you can't come with your lipstick and your rouge, unless you put it in a plastic bag, what will be the implications when they arrive at boarder control? I'm only just suggesting this in light of what you have said. I mean, am sorry to have to; I am not participating in the debate, but I am just making an observation, contextually, in terms of what you said. I mean, I know that the intention is great and grand, and I think we all

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support it; in fact in Antigua, what we are doing now was done in Antigua almost three years ago; supermarkets no longer carry plastic bags, you have to buy a paper bag. I want to commend Hubbards, because for quite a period of time now more than, probably about five (5) years, Hubbards had a programme, reducing plastic, by saying if you came with the plastic bag, which you bought the last time they would pay you, I think, it's ten cents for each plastic bag, and that's a commendable effort. I just thought I should say this, Senator De Allie. I mean, I am praising the Business Sector, so you know you should feel really good about that, but the floor is yours. I just thought I should just make that brief intervention.

**Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie:** Thank you, Mr. President, and, of course, we take any praise we could get, because we normally are signaled as the devil at times. As my friend here said, the Capitalists take all of our money out of the system. **(Chuckles)** But, just to say, Mr. President, that, of course, the Private Sector supports the introduction of this Bill, and, as you can well imagine, as my colleague, Senator, Minister Garraway indicated a little earlier, yes, we were one of the players on the forefront of this, but it comes to us at great costs, as well, as you could well imagine; and my young Senator friend alluded to the issue of costs. Think about the Bottle Water business, think about the Soft Drink business, it's highly predicated on plastic, containerising of the stuff in plastic and the alternative for them, obviously, is to move to cans, metal cans, because glass is extremely expensive, glass is heavy, glass is dangerous, glass is hard to carry and move, because of the possibility of breakage and for children the issue with glass. So, the Industry moved to plastic, it is light, easy to carry, cheap, but we understand the environmental impact, and then so the next alternative is a can that is fully biodegradable and can disappear in our landfills, but there is a cost to it. And, I linked that back to the issue of what the President just said. We are constantly bombarded with the technology whereby he has to carry it in a clear plastic for security means and others. If we declare our country a non plastic State and

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when they land the aircraft has to go back with it, or they don't land with it, so we have to work out how that is going to work and how that is going to play.

But, I say that to say that there is technology available, and I hear my colleague Senator from Agriculture that spoke about the use of plastic sleeveings for the bananas and so on. I know there is bio degradable sleeving, that is matter of cost again. I mean, he came up with an excellent idea with the sargassum seaweed to deal with the beds and so on. So, if we put our minds to it, I am just saying that we can come up with the alternatives and there is enough Science and Technology that can move us in that direction. The issue for small countries, like us, is costs and the cost transferred and here comes the issue of education and how much time we have to put and effort we ought to put into the educational aspect.

The more our people are accepting to what is it we want to do, the necessity for why we are doing it, I think it will be easier to come across. The average man and the average man on the street who is seeing and have difficulty in meeting his expenses and goes to buy something in a Fast Food Restaurant and they serve him in a styrofoam and the price is twelve dollars (\$12.00) for a lunch in a styrofoam container, and then you tell him it's now going to cost him fifteen dollars (\$15.00), because it's coming in a cardboard container, might have difficulty understanding why I have to pay three dollars (\$3.00) more for this thing, and not seeing the bigger picture.

So, I say that to say the education is going to be critical, at that very grassroots level, and I hope the Government has a budget attached to this for the education, and if we don't, I am suggesting to the Leader of Government's Business that we look very much into this and having a budget.

As it relates to the issue of, I want to also support Senator Roberts when she spoke about the litter. And, you know, Mr. President, I said in this Senate probably a year or so ago that I was struck when I went to Mt. St. Catherine and about a hundred feet from the top you were walking on pure rubbish, made up 90% of plastic and that came about, because people would go to the Summit, they go up with all their plastic stuff and dumped it and leave it there.



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And, I always say, we are a nasty people in Grenada, and I say that with no apologies, Mr. President, **(applause)** absolutely no apologies. Because you drive everyday and you see us throwing things outside of vehicles and plastic and the various fast food containers, and we just expect that somebody would pick it up and deal with it. Sometimes it goes to the seas, as we know, and then it goes to our places, the wetlands where we need to get things done and we just do it without no care. Again, the issue of education; and Senator Roberts is right, it's not the children that are doing this, it's the adults, and then the children follow the adults. So, we really have some work to do there, and we have a Litter Abatement Act, but we have no enforcement, and that is the other issue, and we must link the two (2). And, I know we talk about prevention at different levels, of course, when we say at Customs level, it can't come in, Customs will stop it there. But, you know, we're porous borders, and that is the issue, how we deal with the porosity at the borders. We can't patrol the entire Coast and these things will come in.

So, then there is the other level where we take them at the selling level and enforce there, and enforce the wholesale level, but we must have enforcement, and I am suggesting that we link enforcement to the Litter Abatement. If we're doing it, do it both ways, so we could get a double impact on the whole issue.

And, finally, Mr. President, I just want to go to the Bill itself. The Bill speaks about the definition of biodegradable and my colleague Senator is very correct, there is not really a definition for biodegradable in the Act. It really says in the definition that, let me just pull it up: **"a non biodegradable product means anything designated, as a non-bio degradable product"**; that is not a definition, we know that. And Section 2, it talks about the Minister could put anything there. It's the first time we are hearing, if you read this Bill, first time I am hearing that part of the issues is single use plastics and so on and how we deal with that and even the dates of implementation February, September and February 2020. Again, we weren't privy to that, so I am assuming that some sort of SR&O would attach itself to this Bill that will give us the details of the implementation of the various dates and the various things that are going to be

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categorised, initially, as non biodegradable. I mean, of course, we didn't get that here, so we didn't know. But, when you get that information after, it's a little bit disconcerting, but, again that is going to help. When the public hear us talk about that, a lot of them are going to be surprised, that we are coming with this Act, that is going to ban things from February 2019, and we have to start using... some of us in the Private Sector have already started bringing in biodegradable containers and plates and straws and all of that, so we are well ahead. But, I say this for the other ordinary people, the business people who sell on the streets and go specifically with their plastic and styrofoam to keep their costs down, that is where the education has to reach.

So, Mr. President, we fully support this. We fully understand the impact and the greater impact it will have on our ecosystems and our country, but it even has a more significant impact on our people and them understanding why. So, I hope the Leader of Government's Business has a budget, somewhere in the Supplementary Budget that we just passed (**laughter**) that could help with the education. That should qualify as a Special Project under the Prime Minister's Ministry (**laughter**), for the five million dollars (\$5 m). So, I am supporting my brother here, so that we could get some education and really talk to our people, because I think our people would understand. We underestimate the intelligence of our people all the time, especially by you, politicians. So, I know, I know that when we go to talk to them, they will understand. Thank you, Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Senator De Allie. Senator the Honourable Judd Cadet.

**Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I sat there and I was realising that everyone was giving a contribution on this very important Bill, and I asked myself, should I really give a contribution on that and then this song played in my mind, '**I Can't Sit Down**', because this Bill is a very important Bill. I see this Bill as one that is serious about our future. I see this bill as one that is consistent with other

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Government initiatives, as it relates to protecting our future and ensuring that we make significant plans now. I mean, we always talk about the future, but the real action really starts today, and that is why I want to commend the Government for taking the time to put this together and having us here to present on it.

Mr. President, polystyrene or plastics, as you know, have a lot of benefits, but when you look at it, the cons outweighs the pros. And, it is well noted that the million tons of plastic is released in our ocean, and it is very hazardous to our Marine species. And, Mr. President, as we continue to push that pure brand, it is very important that we take a very firm stand in protecting our environment and our marine, as well as terrestrial species.

Mr. President, polystyrene, as you know, of its nature, its properties, is light, is easy to crumble and travel long distances by wind and by water, and through that, Mr. President, this makes this very hazardous.

My young people in the Organisation that I am currently a part of, have been involved in a number of environmental activities, and as mentioned earlier, we are part of the environmental clean-up and the theme for that environmental clean-up was **'Beat Plastic Pollution.'** And, Mr. President, when we were engaged, we collected lots of plastics and it was unbelievable. I won't be as brash, as the Senator on the 'Other Side', but we need to educate our people, let them be more conscious about their environment and how their actions can have serious repercussions on the environment and our species.

So, Mr. President, I give full support to this Bill. As a young person, I am very happy to see this Bill here today, because I am very concerned, if we weren't going to take this sort of action, as a Small Island Developing State, and as I mentioned before that plastics are very dangerous to our marine space. So, we need to have this sort of Bills in this House, so that we could debate on it, and that it could fully send a strong signal that this Administration cares about the future.

So, Mr. President, I give my full support to this Bill, and I want to say that I know that the young people, as well, will truly appreciate such a Bill. Thank you. **(Applause)**

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***(Inaudible comments by the President)***

**Sen. the Hon. Kim George:** The thought never occurred to me, Mr. President, that you would... **(Chuckles)**

***(Inaudible comments by the President)***

**Sen. the Hon. Kim George:** I am saying, the thought never occurred to me that you would discriminate against me. **(Chuckles)**

I rise, Mr. President, with your leave, in support of the Bill, and wearing, again, my other hat as an Attorney-at-Law, in defence of the Bill, to a certain extent, and through you to address the concerns raised by Senator De Allie and by Senator Redhead, in terms of the definition of non-biodegradable product and the construct of Section 2, subsection (2). And, it seems to me that the Bill is structured, as, it is, by necessity, because if you look at subsection (2), you would see that the Minister's right to publish his, whatever he prescribes as a non-biodegradable product, is subject to Affirmative Resolution. So, it means that the Schedule needs to come back to Parliament for approval, the Statutory Instrument needs to come back to Parliament for approval before it can take effect. So, the Legislation provides the safeguard that my colleague Senators were looking for. So he does not have the liberty to sit in his office, in isolation, and prescribe items as non-biodegradable items without the approval of the Parliament.

And, my second observation is that there is a further legislative safeguard in the Bill, in that he is required in determining or in prescribing what is a non-biodegradable product, to make sure that; and also, in terms of determining what is to be prohibited, in terms of production and importation, to make sure that those prohibitions are in the public interest. So, again, he is not permitted to make those decisions in isolation, but must consciously address his mind to what is in the public interest. So, I just thought it

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will be fitting and proper for me to make those observations, through you, Mr. President.  
Thank you. **(Applause)**

**(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)**

**Mr. President:** I have to be excused, but I thought with your legal hat, which you were temporarily wearing, that you would look at Section 4, because Section 4 says: **“Pleading of ignorance is no defence”**, and it links back to the earlier observation I made of an outsider coming in, because an outsider coming in, according to this Act, can't plead, well, look, I didn't know; that's not a defence. So,...

**Sen. the Hon. Kim George:** I beg your pardon. For the sake of clarity, am I required to stand when you're addressing me, as well?

**Mr. President:** Yes.

**Senator the Honourable Kim George:** Yes...

**Mr. President:** Except when we are in Committee...

**Sen. the Hon. Kim George:** I see.

**Mr. President:** And, we're not in Committee, at the moment.

**Senator the Honourable Kim George:** I see. Okay. I am guided. Thank you. I did make the observation myself. It is what is considered in Law **‘a strict liability offence’**, so in order to be convicted, there is no need to consider the intention, or the mental state of the person who would have done the thing; doing a thing in and of itself is an offence. I can only comment to say that Section 4 would have been structured, as

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it is in recognition of the seriousness of the mischief that the Bill is trying to prevent, so that there really is no room, once the offence is committed, for persons to escape responsibility. And, I suppose it ties in to the point, made, very correctly, by Senator De Allie and by so many other of my colleague Ministers, that education is important. Because I think I see where you're going, Mr. President, that there has to be an element of fairness to the unsuspecting members of the public, who may not be aware that, not only is this thing illegal, but once they've committed the offence, there's really no scope for them to avoid responsibility. So, I suppose the two things go hand in hand. It is, indeed, a very progressive step, necessary, in the circumstances, and I imagine that steps would be taken to make sure that members of the public are educated and are well aware that it is coming; that when it is here, they will know and that these will be the consequences. Thank you, Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Senator George. Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Thank you, Mr. President. So, in closing, and there were some very important points raised, and I think if it is one common thread that's run through many of the points, is education. And, what we are trying to achieve with this Bill is a cultural shift, and it's a cultural shift that needs to be driven at a National level; it's a cultural shift that needs to happen internationally, everywhere. It doesn't matter if you're a landlocked country, a Small Island Developing State, I mean the challenges that we face with plastics and plastic pollution are the same, from the top of Mt. Everest to the bottom of our deepest ocean. So, we have to start somewhere and this is one of those positive starts. And, one of the things that inspires me, as a citizen of a Small Island Developing State, is how we can take all of those negatives that are associated with our small size, but how we can actually turn that to our advantage, to be able to demonstrate to much bigger, far more developed countries, just how progressive we can be and actually lead the charge.

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So, I think there will be challenges, as we go through the implementation of this, but it's all part of that cultural shift, with education making that transition far easier. I was in Antigua, just a couple of weeks ago, I was with the Minister of the Environment there, who had pioneered and led the charge for the banning of plastics there. And, they took a very interesting approach, but they did not actually start with the Legislation, and it was through consultation with their stakeholders. It was a voluntary move, and the Legislation followed, simply to enforce what people were already doing. And, I think what they have done there, I think, will influence how we approach, how we move forward, over these coming months, coming year, as we transition to reducing the amount of plastics that we have.

The other comment, Senator Roberts, the Litter Abatement Act, again, this was raised a couple of times, and Senator De Allie, enforcement. We have the Act. We have this on paper, but we need to enforce. We can ban all of the non-biodegradable products in our environment and we can substitute them with biodegradable products, but unless we change our attitude to how we litter, that problem doesn't go away. So, I see this as an opportunity, or we see this as an opportunity to link, not only the banning of these products, but also enforcing and implementing that Litter Abatement Act. And, I know through some of the discussions we've been having with some of your colleagues, Senator Roberts, through you, Mr. President, and a number of the stakeholders, there is an appetite for us, at the National level, to start tackling this. And, I think this and from today, it would be a springboard for further action.

And, the comment about the lack of definition of non-biodegradable, it's actually a very complex and a very ambiguous term. So, it is not as straightforward, as it seems, on the surface, which is why we took the approach, instead of giving a scientific definition, it's simply a case of through the SRO, through Affirmative Resolution, through consultation with stakeholders, it's identifying product by product. So, it's not whether it is, technically, it is biodegradable or non-biodegradable, it isn't and getting to the science of it. As I said, there are ambiguities, there are nuances to it, but it is specific to

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specific products. So, it's whatever products are identified on that list, that is approved through the Lower House will be categorised as biodegradable, non-biodegradable.

So, Mr. President, in closing, this is a very progressive step. We were one of the first to announce the Policy decision that we were going to ban styrofoam and single use plastics. We are not the first to actually pass the Legislation, but from today it does signal the start of that proactive move to address this real issue that we face nationally and we face at a global level and Grenada is taking its part and its lead in the reduction of plastic pollution. And, it is 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.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Senate in Committee.**

**Senate resumes.**

**Mr. President:** Honourable Members, I should report that the Senate considered the entire Bill, Clause by Clause and passed without amendment.

***(Acting Clerk conversed with President in private)***



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**Mr. President:** Yes, because that was just a reordering; I don't consider this constitutes an amendment.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

**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 put and agreed to.**

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

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Norland Cox.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading, the Bill for an Act, shortly entitled, Customs (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

**Ag. Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to amend the Customs Act No. 9 of 2015, shortly entitled Customs (Amendment) Act, 2018.

**Mr. President:** Senator Cox.

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

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**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Cox.

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

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Cox.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Mr. President, the Bill before this Honourable House, the Customs (Amendment) Bill, 2018, is a very important Bill, Mr. President. While the amendments today may not seem that extensive, this Bill bears a lot of significant importance in the operations of our Customs Department.

Mr. President, the purpose of this Bill, in essence, is to improve the efficiency, the security and the general operations of our Customs Department. It also serves, Mr. President, to confirm that our Customs Department conform to regional and international standards based on some of the Treaties that we have signed, some of the agreements and also the working relationship that we have with other Customs Department around the world.

Mr. President, the world has become a very small place, a very small village and more and more, everything is done within a single framework. As such, the Customs have been moving in that direction, over the past years. As the Parliament may recall, Mr. President, sometime in the past, we would have made some amendment to this said Customs Bill, whereby we would have amended it for, what you call, the Advanced Passenger Information. It was a Bill that was done, so that Customs can have information for passengers arriving at our shores before they do and likewise, when

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persons have to leave here and go to another country, that information will be shared with that country.

Mr. President, this Bill seeks to do the same with cargo. What are the benefits of this, Mr. President? We believe that this amendment will improve the security profile, not only of the Customs Department, but also of the State. As you know, a lot of our assessment from the international community is based on how well we treat with our measures regarding safety, now that we have the issue of Terrorism as another critical aspect in society to deal with. And, added, we do have persons who continue to conduct themselves with the intention of moving illegal goods and even provide illegal services, Mr. President. So, we believe that making this amendment will treat with that, in terms of improving the security profile of the Customs Department.

Mr. President, in looking directly at the Bill, the Bill seeks to facilitate sharing information; that is what this Bill seeks to do; sharing information under the Advanced Cargo Information Regime. As the word 'advanced' implies, our Customs Department, if any cargo will have to be shipped to any country, will have to forward that information, in most cases, sometimes, forty-eight (48) hours before, that cargo gets to that country, they would have information in front of them that a ship is to arrive with 'x' amount of cargo, the type, the quantity. So, in preparing for those cargo, they will know how to treat with it, like for example, they will need to contact, be it the necessary Agency, like say Pest Management, Quarantine and even persons from the Medical Office, the Chief Medical Officer to come, to look at such cargo. Also, persons who might be specialised, if it's something with explosives, persons from the Police or Fire Department, they will be contacted and say, "look, we have this type of cargo coming in". So, it's within that context, Mr. President, that this advance information helps with improving the efficiency and the turnaround time of Customs and operations at the Port.

Mr. President, this Advance Cargo Information Regime is really and truly monitored by a Regional Agency called the Implementing Agency for Crime and Security, (IMPACS). This is a CARICOM organisation, as such it is our leaders who, through our measures, through our dialogue with international community, put this

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organisation together to build this security regime for us to ensure that we do not have anybody breaking our borders, coming through our borders with illegal stuff. So, as such, Mr. President, this amendment is necessary for us to meet those requirements as set out by IMPACS.

In looking at the Bill, directly, Mr. President, the Bill has four (4) Clauses; Clause 1 just basically deals with the title itself, but most importantly, Clauses 2 and 3 sets out the essence of the amendment.

Clause 2 seeks to amend section 20 (a) of the principal Act and to make provision for the words '**Advanced Cargo Information System**' throughout that subsection. So, by inputting that word, of course, constructing the Bill, so that it would speak to what the amendment is seeking to do.

Clause 2 inserts new subsections (3) (a) and (3) (d) in the principal Act to allow IMPACS to screen information collected through the Advanced Cargo Information System. So, this is giving IMPACS the authority to view that information beforehand, before that cargo arrives at any Port. And, Clause 4 seeks to repeal the current Schedule 1 (a) and substitute it with a new Schedule and this Schedule sets out clear information as required by Electronic Manifest and Management System in the ASYCUDA system that we had passed a Bill for some time a couple years ago.

So, Mr. President, this amendment is a very important one for us and, one, in looking at the amendment, makes mention in the Bill, under Clause 1 of a 'Watchlist', and I think it is very important just to pay attention to that. And, it is saying that a: ***'Watchlist means a list that is used to watch or track current activity of movements of criminals suspicious or prohibited cargo including terrorists, other persons and cargo of interest in the Caribbean community'***.

So, Mr. President, this is really serious stuff and this hinges a lot on how we operate, as a country and how we operate, in terms of trade, hence this amendment is very important. I believe that other CARICOM countries have already gone ahead of us and made this amendment. I believe that we are somewhat late in doing so, but we are

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here doing that today. As such, Mr. President, with these contributions, I want to commend this Bill for its second reading.

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Senator Cox. Honourable Members, the question proposed is that the Bill be read a second time. All those who are of that opinion... (no, sorry). There doesn't seem to be any other contribution, so Senator Cox, you can probably take it through its other stages.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. I think that Members clearly see the importance of this amendment. Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate resolves itself into a Committee of the Whole Senate to consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

**Question put and agreed for the second reading of the Bill.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Mr. President:** Now, Senator Cox, you will seek to have us resolved into a Committee of the Whole House. The floor is yours.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Sorry for that. I think I'm hastening my step to move forward. I think probably after flying for six (6) or seven (7) hours or so, I kind of got clouded. So, Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate resolve itself into a Committee of the whole Senate to consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Senate in Committee.**

**Senate Resumes.**

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

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Mr. Speaker, I beg that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Cox

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

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

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

**Ag. Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to amend the Proceeds of Crime Act, No. 6 of 2012, shortly entitled, Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Act, 2018.

**Mr. President:** Senator Garraway.

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**Sen. the Hon. Dr. 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 put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Garraway.

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

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Garraway.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Mr. President, before us today is a simple, but very important amendment to the Proceeds of Crime Bill, and when I looked at the time I realized that we just about four (4), we have two more to go. It reminded me of 2013, when we came to this House every fortnight to pass a slew of Legislations that was hinged upon same principles, combatting crimes, financial crimes, that is. And, while most of those Bills originated outside of Grenada, it was very significant that we passed them and in a hurry as to protect the State from what was staring us in the face, being blacklisted by the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force, (CFATF), because, at that time, prior to 2013, Grenada refused, or for some reason, well, Parliament was not in Session, or was closed, suspended and the Legislation that was necessary to be passed to keep Grenada in the light with the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF), we were not passing those Legislations, and we had to come here, almost every other week, and to ensure that we protected the State.

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And, I remember in those days, when we talked about Grenada was under expedited review, because we failed to pass those Legislations. Today, what is before us, Mr. President, is a piece of Legislation that, if we do not pass, could put us in the same state or same place that we found ourselves in 2013. But, more than that, it also speaks to ensuring that the Nation continues to respect International Treaties that we have signed, international Treaties that we have agreed to in fighting... **(Cell phone started playing a song)** I beg my innocence. I don't know. I really don't know, Mr. President, what has happened, but keep this far from me. I don't know what has happened. **(Senator Garraway gave the Orderly his Cell Phone).**

Yes, but, at that time... with this Legislation before us, is bringing the State into ensuring that we combat anti-money laundering and combating terrorism financing. And, it is important to note, Mr. President, that the Commission, that is the Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Terrorist Financing (AMLCTF), the Commission, and the FIU are the Regulatory Bodies that are responsible for the supervision of the regime for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and the proliferation of drugs in Grenada. And, consistent with internationally established standards of the Financial Action Task Force for the prevention and protection of money laundering and terrorist financing, every Entity and professional referred to in the Proceeds of Crime Act No. 6 of 2012 is subject to compliance with the provisions of the Act, its regulations and all the AMLCTF guidelines.

Mr. President, as I have said before, most of the Legislation, as it relates to combating financial crimes originates outside of Grenada, and, at times, you say, well, you don't have a choice, but you just have to implement, to enforce and every time when you have to enforce the attendant cost associated with implementing those Legislations, we hold the bag. But, if you fail to do it, the consequences, they are dire. So, sometime you don't really have a choice, but to do it. And, in this regard, what is before us here today is a question where the Commission and the FIU, the Regulatory Authorities do not have sufficient data as it is, knowing exactly all the Entities they are to



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regulate. So, if they were asked to report on Entity, 'x' or 'z' and not having the information, it is not an excuse, Grenada will have to face the consequences.

So, the amendment before us here today is set out towards ensuring that there is a registration of all those Entities that ought to be supervised by the Commission and the FIU. So, the objective here is to fulfill that obligation. It said currently, with the present construct, the Commission is unable to determine the number of regulated entities, so that the Commission can adequately conduct the business of compliance, which it is mandated to do under the Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Terrorism Financing.

The Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2018, Mr. President, seeks to amend the principal Act by inserting a new Part V (a) to provide for the registration of regulating Entities.

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

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** This new part, Mr. Deputy President, inserts eight (8) new Clauses, Clauses 39 (a) to 39 (h). And, 39 (a) provides for the insertion of two (2) new definitions that of 'Competent Authority' and 'Regulated Authority'. And, the 'competent authority', which we speak to here, refers to the Grenada Authority for the Regulatory and Financial Institutions, which we know as GARFIN, the Registrar of Companies.

The point is, Mr. President, the 'Competent Authority', who regulates financial institutions in this country, as GARFIN, they have a responsibility to assist in the Commission and FIU in carrying out its duties, or its functions to the State. So, where there is an issue of non-compliance, in terms of registration, the Commission would obviously have dialogue with the 'Competent Authority' to either get that satisfied, or if we're talking about suspension or denial of licences, as the case may be that will be done. But, the objective here is to ensure that all regulated Entities comply with the rules.

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Clause 39 (b) provides for the Commission to establish and maintain a register of regulated entities for which it exercises regulatory control, in matters relating to anti-money laundering and combatting terrorist financing. 39 (c) sets out the requirements to register with the Commission and stipulates regulated entities to pay the yearly registration fee specified. Registration under this section is valid for twelve (12) months, from the date of initial registration.

So, Mr. President, all entities will be required to get registered, but they will be a registration fee. And, one may say, well, there would be administrative responsibilities in ensuring that, yes, the paperwork is done and somebody would be there to do the registration, and obviously there would be a small fee for that. But, in determining the quantum, in terms of registration, it's based on the assets, the size of the assets of the various Entities. So, where you have Companies with assets in excess of twenty-five million (\$25 m), the registration fee is a small five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for the twelve (12) months.

Large Credit Unions and less than twenty five million (\$25 m), the registration fee is three hundred dollars (\$300.00). And, where you have Credit Union with assets over fifty million, (\$50 m), five hundred dollars (\$500.00), as the registration fee, and it comes down to Real Estate businesses. And, the one that really strikes me is the not for profit businesses. So, you're talking about Churches and the likes would have to be registered and you're wondering, a Church. It may not be an issue in these parts, but it has become an issue elsewhere where some religious sects use the Church that supposed to be sacred and holy and the likes and so forth, but use the Church, as a means of laundering money through, either for terrorist financing. It doesn't happen in our parts, in the Pacific areas and the likes and so forth. So, let's look at it. It is not an experience that we have had in these parts, but, because the international community says this is what is required in order to be compliant, you don't have a choice but follow through. So, the Churches will have to be registered, and will have to pay the attendant fee, which is three hundred dollars (\$300.00). So, non-profit Organizations, one hundred dollars (\$100.00), car dealers, one hundred dollars (\$100.00), and you have

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professional people who would also pay. So, Lawyers and the likes and so forth will have to pay the three hundred dollars (\$300.00) as their registration fee.

But, one may say, why? As I said, in this case, some of the times we don't have to ask why, we just have to comply, Mr. Deputy President. And, I remember when we were looking at the FATCAL Bill, and all the banks would have to invest in new machines to do the necessary work and so forth; and you ask, would that become an expense, a business expense to the banks, the institutions? And, ultimately, we all pay for it, but that's how the nature of the cookie crumbles these days. The bigger international Firms pass legislation and we just have to comply with it. I am saying all of this, because the bigger picture here is protecting this Economy. The bigger picture here is protecting the State. The bigger picture is ensuring that, yes, we comply, but we can carry out business and enjoy the benefits that we have in this State, at this point in time. We can refuse and pay the consequences.

Clause 39 (d) speaks to changes of address of regulated Entities and mandates that a regulated Entity, notify the Commission, in writing, within fourteen (14) days of such change. An Entity that fails to notify the Commission commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) and a further fine of three hundred dollars (\$300.00) for each day the offence continues. So, if you're going to change address as a business entity, you have to notify the Commission, you have to notify the Authorities. And, just a while ago we passed a legislation, the Non-Biodegradable Bill; we said that ignorance of the Law is no excuse. So, if you want to hide behind and say, you didn't know and you move your address to elsewhere, that is not an excuse. You have fourteen (14) days, if you have to move, to inform the Authorities and failure to do so, five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) as the initial sum and as we said, three hundred dollars (\$300.00) every day the offence continues.

39 (e) provides for the cancellation or suspension of registration of a Regulated Entity at any time after registration. And, Mr. President, as I have said before, if an Entity fails to comply, if an Entity engages in activities that are contrary to the regulations, this Entity could lose its licence. 39 (h), Mr. President, speaks to the

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competent Authority providing information to the Commission on its licensees. As I spoke before as to the relationship between the Commission and the Competent Authority to ensure that information dissemination, or sharing is consistent to ensuring that the Rules, the Laws are being followed...

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

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** So, Mr. President, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that we do what is necessary to continue to protect the State. And, while, as I have said before if we fail to honour, or to enforce those legislations that come down through the Region, the consequences are dire. And, for these reasons, Mr. President, I want to commend this Bill to its second reading.

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie.

**Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie:** Thank you, Mr. President. I have a few comments on this Bill and some questions, probably that I want to ask the mover of the Bill.

Mr. President, this Bill covers a wide cross-section, although it deals with registration of the Entities, but we have moved from Insurance Companies down to small Credit Unions, down to Car Dealers, that have to register, and when you look at the profile, it tends to send the indication that this Bill is for people who deal in large transactions and a lot of money business.

The question that I have here is that, when you look at the various parts that deals with registration, I think it's Form 1 of the Bill, it speaks about Directors and owners and then it talks about a Compliance Officer. Now, the question is, how does small Credit Unions that don't have a Compliance Department register under that Section. And, if they don't have a Compliance Officer would they be registered, and that is part of the concern.

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Now, we have a concern in the Sector with these small Units that don't have Compliance Officers, and under AMTL rules they're basically not conforming. This is going to further introduce a complication to getting this done where we are looking to register these. I mean, if we're registering a Car Dealer and it doesn't have compliance, or it doesn't meet the compliance requirement, is he going to get a certificate or not and if he doesn't, is he going to be breaking the Law and be fined five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00), plus three hundred dollars (\$300.00) a day? And, that is one of the concerns I have here, in terms of the registration, and if that aspect of it would be waived based on the nature of the business. So, that is one concern.

And, then as highlighted by the mover of the Bill, the issue of non profits, as well, because we have a lot of non profits. Take for example the St. John's Ambulance Council, or St. John's Council that deals in First Aid and so on that have to now register here as a not for profit, and when we're fulling out that, they don't have a Compliance section. They have Directors, but the main person for St. John's Council is the Governor-General, as the Patron of the Organisation. I am just trying to understand the complications and the exceptions that we meet and whether this Bill offers exceptions to some sort of Organisations that fall under these categories, which I don't see. So, I raised it as a concern for that. I understand the intent of the Bill and what we're trying to do with the amendment, and I have no issues with that. But, the issue here is, are we providing for exceptions where there may be exceptions, which I don't see? Mr. President, thank you very much.

***(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)***

**Mr. President:** I was wondering whether or not you would have taken that when...

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Mr. President, well, the guidelines from the Bill are very clear, and I share the concern of the Member on the 'Other side'. And, I

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remember in the 'Other Place', when this was presented this was an issue. Not for profit Organisations, yes, but the world that we are in today, my only advice and defence, the world that we're in today, things have totally changed. While, we have not for profit organisations doing charitable and meaningful work, there are those who establish such organisations to do dirty work. So, as I have said in the presentation, a lot of the things may not be occasioned here, in our parts of the world, in Grenada, but because we are a part of a global community we have to comply. And, while this is hard to bear, at the moment, there is no exception at this point. Until there is, we just have to comply to the rules. So, then we will have to probably ensure those small Entities have Compliance Departments. **(Inaudible Comments / Chuckles)**

But, the point is, it's difficult, Mr. President, but that's the reality we face today. So, it's the reality that we face today, Mr. President. And, as I said, the world is not as it used to be when we were growing up, Andre. Things were so easy, you could have left your door open all night, Mr. President, through you, and we just enjoyed the beauty of our surroundings, but today things have changed. So, each entity that is expected to register must have a Compliance Officer. They must follow the rules. And, it's unfortunate, if it's going to be difficult, but it's something that we have to move on. Mr. President, with these words, I want to commend the Bill for its second reading.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Mr. President, I move that the Senate resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole Senate to consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Senate in Committee.**

**Senate resumes.**

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

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Garraway.

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

**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 Citizenship by Investment (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

**Ag. Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to amend the Grenada Citizenship by Investment Act, No. 15 of 2013, shortly entitled, Grenada Citizenship by Investment (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

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**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 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.

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, the approach Grenada has taken towards its Citizenship by Investment Programme can best be described as conservative, its focus on integrity, its focus on due diligence is always at the forefront of the approach, the strategy that has been taken with that programme. Of all of the programmes within the Region, Grenada's CBI Programme is considered to be the gold standard and that conservative approach is central to maintaining this.

Mr. President, since the launch of the programme in 2013, we brought many amendments to this House, all to strengthen the programme and to keep it current with regards to market changes. The proposed amendment today, Mr. President, speaks to a very simple, but important change, to change the procedure for how CBI applicants' financial contributions are paid, specifically to an approved project, as opposed to the National Transformation Fund.



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The amendment proposed specifies that contributions payable to approved projects are deposited in an irrevocable Escrow account, controlled and managed by a local Agent, selected by the Marketing Agent.

Mr. President, those contributions would be released from that Escrow account to the approved project in accordance with guidelines that would be issued by the CBI Committee. So, this provides an additional layer of protection to applicants, that's preserving the integrity, or strengthening the integrity of the programme. This amendment is applied to section 8, subsection (4) of the principal Act, and clearly sets out the procedure from investors to following relation to contributions, to approved projects and ensures the efficient and secure operation of the programme. And, it is for these reasons, Mr. President, that I commend this Bill for its second reading.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** So, in closing, Mr. President, I have outlined the simple, but substantial change to the way payments are made, and payments into an Escrow account to help protect the applicant's investments. So, as I have said, Mr. President, it secures the integrity of the programme, and for those reasons I commend it for its second reading.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Senate in Committee**

**Senate resumes.**

**Mr. President:** I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House, Clause by Clause, without amendment.

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

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

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

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**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Mr. President, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Amendments to Pensions Acts Bill, 2018.

**Ag. Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to amend the Pensions Act, Cap. 233, the Pensions, Prisons Officers Act Cap. 235, the Pensions School Teachers Act, Cap. 236, and the Police Pensions Act Cap. 245, shortly entitled Amendments to Pensions Acts Bill, 2018.

**Mr. President:** Senator Garraway.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. 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 put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Garraway.

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

**Mr. President:** Senator Garraway.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Mr. President, today would be considered, as a very historic day for the workers and the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, altogether, as we seek to finally address an issue that has been long outstanding since 1,983, let us say thirty-five (35) years ago, when it was intended for the disqualification of Pensions.

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But, just by way of context or background, Mr. President, in 1983, the People's Revolutionary Government, recognising the plight of a certain section of workers of this country, after having toiled for many years, in the building of this economy, and when in their golden days of retirement, had nothing to go by, decided, once and for all, to fix this problem. And, in their deliberate judgment, they introduced what is now known as the National Insurance Scheme, then, and in introducing the National Insurance Scheme, they introduced what is termed, the Pensions Disqualification Act. And, Mr. President, in introducing this Act, it was the intent of the Government at the time, to replace the single Pensions, which was paid by the State to only, and, as we have seen four (4) categories of workers, it was the intention to now pay pension to all workers in the country through the NIS.

It is important to note, as well, Mr. President, that the Pensions Disqualification Act, which should have come into effect on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April, in 1983, the intention then was to ensure that after that date every worker entering into the Public Service, or as a Teacher, or a Gazetted Officer, or Prison Officer, his or her Pension will be paid by the NIS.

Also, with this piece of legislation, while we had a non-contributory Pension Plan prior to that April 4<sup>th</sup>, '83, going forward from then on, the Pension would now be a contributory plan. So, employees were required to pay a percentage of the salary, 4%, and the State contributed 5% towards them; and at age sixty (60) they were entitled to a Pension, as was obtained prior to the establishment of the NIS, but in this case, all workers of the country were to benefit, and I thought it was a noble Act, an extremely noble Act, seeking to fix what was a vexing problem.

But, it is important to note, as well, Mr. President, that in as much as the Revolutionary Government suspended the Constitution, what they intended to get into Law, did not make it, because there was not the Constitutional Law authority to bring it into Law. So, in 1985, the Administration, at the time, went into Parliament to seek and to address this issue, and to make what should have been legal the 4<sup>th</sup> of April become legal, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1985.

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What this Bill seeks to do, Mr. President, in the first place, is to take all the categories of workers, between April 4<sup>th</sup>, '83 and February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1985, those categories of workers, who were denied their Pension, because of the Disqualification Act were brought in to the force, into a pensionable place. This is what this Act is doing. It is to ensure that you give them legal status, because the Constitution now gives them that status by validating that piece of Legislation that was passed by the PRG in April, 1983.

As a result of this piece of Legislation today, some fifty-six (56) employees, either from... we talk about the Pensions (Prison Officers) Act, Cap. 233, the Act Cap. 235, the (School Teachers) Act, Cap. 236 and the Police Pensions Act, Cap. 245. These pieces of Legislations, all that we are seeking to do with this piece of Legislation, firstly, is to give them that official date. So, it comes into effect, as of 1985, February the 22<sup>nd</sup>. So, what is important here to note, Mr. President, all these fifty-six (56) workers I am talking about, between that period of April 4<sup>th</sup>, '83 and February 22<sup>nd</sup>, '85, these fifty-six (56) workers are now entitled to one, their Pension, Gratuity and Retroactive Pay. And, the amount that is to be disbursed to them is some \$7.2 m. This is a big bonanza, and I want to commend, firstly, the Government for one, when Sister Hermilyn Armstrong championed the cause for workers, because within that period there was no Constitutionality to deny them, or deny her and the others the right of their Pension. She championed the cause in saying, we are entitled to this benefit of the State, and she championed this and the Court agreed with her and we all agreed. The Government had a choice. Looking at the magnanimous amounts that the State would have to find to pay and could have probably give itself some more room by, probably, appealing the case, decided, no, thirty-five (35) years is a long enough time for maturity and for sense to prevail to fix this problem, once and for all, and the Government decided no, we would not appeal this case, let us fix it, again knowing the finance and having an idea, as to financial liability the State would be under.

And, throughout the period, we articulated that we must find a solution to this problem, and invited our stakeholders to come to the table. And, I, again, take this opportunity to commend the Trade Union Movement, for amicably sitting around the

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table to find a solution. And, the agreement that they would have forged with the Government Negotiating Team was wrought in a spirit of openness, fairness, goodwill and a desire to doing what is right, and I want to commend the team for working with the Government Negotiating Team.

So, today, Mr. President, what is before us is to ensure that these persons receive their payments. We must pass this Bill to give the Government the authority to pay these persons, that's what we seek to do today. And, as I have said, it is a bonanza for these fifty-six (56) workers, because, frankly, I remember one gentleman, in 2013, coming to me, and he was upset that after all these years of employment for the State and now he is an old man and things were looking downhill, and he wanted some sort of help. Here is the help. This is how you help people. When you say about you care for people, when you say that you love people, you would go all out to find a way towards assisting them, in their golden years, to enjoy life.

But, mind you, Mr. President, being mindful of wanting to do this, we must remember we have to do it within the prescribed rules, the Financial Rules that have been established, to ensure that we do this. And, today, there is the space, there is the opportunity to make good on a promise that was made to the workers of this country, and I am happy that we are able to do that.

Mr. President, the Bill has five (5) Clauses. Clause 1 sets out the Title; 2 provides for amendment to section 18 (2) (a) (i) of the Pensions Act, Cap. 233 and for the amendment to apply to the appropriate persons, who commence employment on or after the 4<sup>th</sup> April, 1983, but before the 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 1985.

Clause 2 provides for amendment to section 20 of the Pensions (Prison Officers) Act, Cap. 235, and for the amendment to apply to the appropriate persons, their payments for those who enter into the Service after April 4<sup>th</sup>, '83, but before 22<sup>nd</sup> February, '85. And, it is the same that we have for the School Teachers, so we are amending all these pieces of Legislation towards giving Government the authority to pay these persons.

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Mr. President, I know there is a concern, as it relates to what happens after '85. But, it is important to note that the Legislation, as I have said, everything that we do must be guided by Law, because we are Law-abiding citizens. But, at this point-in-time, there is no Legislation that mandates Government to continue to pay a Pension after '85, for those who have entered the Service after the 22<sup>nd</sup> February, '85.

While it was a moral decision in 1983, by the People's Revolutionary Government, to address Pensions for all workers, today, Government has decided, though there is not a legal responsibility for workers entering into the Service after 1985, but feel obliged to address this, and has committed, making a moral decision, to finding a formula to addressing those workers. I know there are expectations out there, and as an Administration, you want to fulfill expectations within the Law; so the discussion now is to ensure that we find the right formula after '85, to address this. But, we must never lose sight of the intention of the Pensions Act, when it was first established. It was established to ensure that in our golden years, when we are no longer within the Employment Scheme, we are able to get resources from the hard work that we have done to take care of ourselves.

We should never lose sight of the fact that it was a single Pension that was established by the Pensions Act, way back then, in 1958. And, in '83, when the People's Revolutionary Government decided to transition into the NIS, it was also to pay a single Pension. We must never lose sight of this.

The intention today of this Administration is to ensure that workers, who are duly qualify, would receive the benefit that they deserve. But, we must remember that at this point-in-time, we cannot, in any way, create a liability to this Government, or to the State, I should not say just Government, to the State, that would bring us back in the same situation we have found ourselves in 2013, when we were unable to meet our basic commitment to the people of this State. We should not, again, create any sins, or do anything that will create the perception that this Administration, or this people would bound away again.

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One of the thing that is important here, Mr. President, to remember, that the International Community, who gives support to what we have done in restructuring this Economy are constantly monitoring and looking, to ensure that we follow the fiscal rules, following the PMF rules, follow the FRL rules, they are constantly monitoring, because, you see, in as much as they promote us, for, not just being resilient, but respecting the Rule of Law and complying to it, I am going to tell you, if we violate those Rules, or if there is any perception that we are going to violate those Rules, they could be hard on us. So, in short, we have to continue to behave ourselves and live within our means, and to ensure that the benefits of the State at this point-in-time, is spread throughout the country, so everybody benefits from it. Just as how the Revolution back then, recognised the problem and wanted to ensure that all workers, those who may have worked on the Estates and so forth, they would receive something as a Pension, so, too, today we have to ensure that every cent in the State spread throughout the entire country, and everybody benefits from it. If we fail to do that, we will be disappointing a vast majority.

And, I want to end by saying, Mr. President, this, I know, will be a big thing in the State, because I know folks have started calculating, fifty-six (56) divided into \$7.2 m, how much money persons will be getting; so I know it is a big payday for them, but they deserve it. And, as a Government, we didn't see it as being too much for them, but we worked towards ensuring that they have it. And, with this, Mr. President, I want to commend this Bill for its second reading.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Cox, Norland Cox.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Mr. President, thank you very much. Mr. President, I rise to give my full support to the amendment, the Pensions Act Bill, 2018.



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Mr. President, as we know we had some extensive discussion on this important and historic matter sometime earlier on in our deliberations.

Mr. President, I think this initiative sometimes because of the length of time in which we have been pursuing it sometimes I think the whole impact of this achievement is sometimes understated. This is a significant initiative, this is a significant step and we must recognise this and not just in the context of what is achieved but how it was done, it was done with all hands on board. Mr. President, I think we must recognise that, that is very critical. And because of that coalition of the principal parties, I believe that we can achieve the next step that which we all are so eager to address. I believe that we can achieve it.

Mr. President, this Bill, I don't think it just doesn't say that we are addressing Pensions, I think it says much more than that. It says that the people, Government and stakeholders can work together. It says that when the people and Government and stakeholders work together, great things can happen, and I think, most importantly, it shows leadership, on our part, as Government, to deal with the difficult task of today.

**(Applause)**

Mr. President, it is no strange news, or new news that this is one of the most has been one of the most lingering issues on the books that has plagued our society, and for good reason, because of the nature of it. It deals with the livelihood of people. It deals with the issue of what people would have worked for and they should earn it, and I am certain that the Labour Unions do echo the same sentiment.

And, I think sometimes we really not only just as Government, but sometimes I don't think we really digest the nature of what we do, or what we have to do, our responsibilities. And, sometimes I think we let other issues get in the way of what is really important for us, as citizens of this country, and I think this is clear demonstration, the work that we have done on this initiative, thus far, must continue.

But, Mr. President, there is always this danger wherever you have success and there is a saying that success has many fathers, but failure is an orphan. So, while we continue to go forward with our successes, thus far, we have to be mindful that many

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fathers may evolve, but ownership; but I say this, because I want us to be guarded and managed that, as we go forward, because we have more to be done. This is an initial step, it's a critical step, and I believe this sets the stage for us to be successful, going forward.

So, I really want to commend the workers for being patient and to commend our dear lady for taking the initiative to go forward to take that legal step to create this discourse, this dialogue on this important matter; for the Unions, for being resilient in their efforts to ensure that this matter comes to some resolve; and for Government for taking the leadership in doing what it has to do, in terms of the mandate, looking after the needs of all its people and that is what we have done in this process.

So, Mr. President, I want to say I believe that this is a significant initiative and should not be understated in any way, at any point in time. We should remember this day, as a very significant day in Grenada's history. Thank you very much, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable André Lewis.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you, Mr. President. I want to, in the interest and the principle in which I normally handle matters, identify what I have said this morning with this evening's discussion, so we wouldn't have to go all back there, but it is extremely important, in my view, in terms of representing the Labour Movement to just repeat one of two things, but make three (3) additional points.

The Hermilyn Armstrong case was not as Hermilyn Armstrong going there, as an individual. The Hermilyn Armstrong matter that went to the Court, was Hermilyn Armstrong, because of the disqualification of Public Officers and was not for the period '83 to '85. It was from '83 to present for which she went there. Let me make that point. It is important to establish this. This is what the Labour Movement took.

Secondly, it is important to note that, and I have heard my good Senator here, through you, Mr. President, speak about the PRG and the NIS, but what has been left

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out is that from all examinations the PRG has passed, in the shortest period of time, four and a half years the most progressive Laws, as it relates to workers, that is a fact, Maternity Leave Act, Trade Union Recognition, and a number of others. And, the PRG, although this Disqualification Act goes back to April, I think it actually went to the Parliament in September or October, or thereabout, of '83.

The PRG, obviously, did not have the time on its hands to address the issue of trying to ensure that the workers, post '83 would not have been worse off. Obviously, it was designed to reduce the liability on the State. And, section 47 of the NIS Act has never been addressed, but that's where the leeway is to address this matter. I just thought I should bear this out, because my colleague on the 'Other Side' addressed the issue relative to the context of just the Pensions Act of '83, without addressing further, the most likely intention of the PRG. But, yes, it was designed to reduce the overall expenditure on the State.

But, you know, in the context of the Revolution and for those who have, for many years, blamed the Revolution, and I myself couldn't understand, well, why would the Revolution, such a progressive Revolution, such a working-class Revolution, such a Revolution that sought to change and address the social issues of the country, the economics of the country, in terms of the working-class, disqualify workers. And, I've always been of the view that some connections were not made, and that is where, when one start to examine the matter, begins to understand section 47 of the NIS Act.

But, what today has done, and I know sometimes it's difficult to change history, but I think I have an obligation and a duty to the Revolutionary period, to the period that has given us the most progress in this country, because all of our Governments have been judged by the Revolution, by what we have been able to achieve. I know it would still be said that the PRG disqualified Pensions. But, the interesting question is, if the PRG was no longer in office in 1985, as this argument now is making, is it the PRG? And, I know, Mr. President, through you, that many people, including your goodself, who would have always had this as hanging over our necks, this is an important connection to make. And, it came to me, over the last period of this discussion, as I said, in relation

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to the MOU, when I know, and there is no need to go over this, I said it this morning, because the discussions will continue. The discussions would continue on Friday, and I know what we had agreed. But, I guess it could no longer be said, as of today, the Pensions Disqualifications Act of 1983. And, for the present Administration that we are working together with, that's the Labour Movement, I am absolutely confident, based on my interaction and my observations of the action of the PRG; remember the PRG, Grenada was invaded in 1983 and it brought an end to the PRG, and because the NIS came in, in 1983, and there was enough time, on the PRG's hand, to do whatever was needed to remodel the Pensions, and that is what we have agreed to.

We dropped the argument of restoration, its restoration and reform, yes, but it would not have been the intention of the PRG to make Public Officers worse off than their counterparts. It would have been the objective of the PRG to reduce the burden on the State and that's where the NIS came in. But, the NIS, by itself, and in its current form, because the NIS has not changed, more or less. I know the quantum has increased and most people can tell you that it is almost impossible to survive on the Pension income from the NIS. Let me repeat this. I didn't say this this morning. It is almost impossible to survive on the income of the NIS. No Government has addressed this matter. It's not just a matter of age. And, it would not have been the PRG's intention, and that is where section 47 comes in; and that is where the importance of the MOU, because all of these information influenced our discussions around the table. All of these discussions influenced our decisions around the table, and that is why it was agreed that the people, post '83, which is now post '85, will not be made worse off, but we will reduce the burden on the State. I really want to make that point, really, really want to make that point, that this is the vexing matter, Mr. President; this is a vexing matter. The vexing matter is what happens now, in this case, post '85, which in the discussion around the MOU, because the '83/'85 was put on the table. We signed that in February, the Government came and put this on the table and no one would refuse people getting money. As a matter of fact, we cancelled a number of our meetings to allow the Ministry of Finance and to allow the Government Engagement Team, who was

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the one that was involved with us, to be able to work, take night and make day, so as to ensure that our fifty six (56) colleagues can get paid at the end of this month. And, when we were asked, by our members, why are you not meeting on Fridays, because the decision was to meet every Friday; remember there is the original deadline of June 30<sup>th</sup>, the original deadline was June 30<sup>th</sup>; we couldn't make June 30<sup>th</sup>, and for different reasons, and I wouldn't go into it. I would not go into it, because it may just make things a bit more contentious, that's not our objective.

We agreed, and before I go further I really want to join in complimenting our colleagues in the Ministry of Finance, the Public Officers in the Ministry of Finance and the Pensions Secretariat for the work that they have done in making today a reality and making the end of month payment for these workers a reality. We really, really want to compliment them. I want to place this on record from the Labour Movement. But, that was not in exchange for making the post '83 and now post '85 workers worse off.

So, we are very, and I want to use this opportunity, again, to speak to the recipients of these monies. I know we are all adults, but spend the money wisely, use it wisely. For many of us monies coming in to our hands in a lump sum, appears as though it could never finish, but it will go much faster than you think, if it is not managed properly. It will go much faster than you think, if it is not managed properly. And, therefore, I want to use this forum here, to call upon our members, and the Labour Movement has a responsibility to make those calls, to ask our colleagues, who are receiving these payments to use the money wisely, and to give the commitment to the Teachers and Public Officers and Police Officers and Prison Officers,, that we shall continue pushing to ensure that you are not made worse, without sinking the State, because it's a question of allocation.

The FRL, the FRA, as a matter fact, you know we have always been the ones who have been pushed under the bus, the only element in the FRA that demands or puts a restriction on how you can spend what, is in relation to our salary, Public Officers salary, which says your Wage Bill should not be more than 9%.

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Government has the freedom to allocate resources and take from one end and pay to the other in all the other aspects. But when it comes to our salaries, workers, again, the FRA says that the Wage Bill shall not exceed 9% of GDP, which is all meant to curtail negotiations. But, that will be a different matter, which will be dealt with. But, we want to, once again, express our happiness that our fifty-six (56) workers will be paid, and we have, therefore, done everything to ensure that this day could come, and we look forward to resolving the outstanding matters for what will now be the post '85, by not making them worse off, taking into the account the inadequacy of the NIS benefit. Thank you very much, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I thank those who have spoken on this extremely important piece of amendment. And, I just wanted to say that in response to my esteemed colleague on the 'Other Side', the PRG, and no one will accuse the PRG for disqualifying Pensions, because the PRG didn't really disqualify Pensions, the PRG, in 1983, broadened the scope of paying Pensions, that's what it did. Remember, there was only one Pension paid, and just to four (4) categories of workers in the country. We had so many others, who were wallowing in poverty. And, you could see why the PRG would have done that, because the PRG was very concerned about the working-class. The PRG was concerned about the man down there, who, seemingly, had nobody to take care of him.

So, the Public Officers were the four (4) categories that were covered, and the PRG didn't disqualify the Pension. As I said, the PRG just broadened the scope, and said, rather than just taking care of one class of workers, you know, back then, the house slaves had better privileges and more rights than the field slaves. The PRG said, no, we are not doing that, all workers in this country are contributing to the development of this country, and all of them should benefit from the resources of the country and broadened the scope of Pensions and said, we are going to do it through the NIS, and

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this is what has happened. And, I want the workers out there to remember, as a Nation, a God-fearing Nation, a Nation that always look toward promoting righteousness and ensuring that people benefit, this is something that we all will laud, something that we all will promote, that what was done back then in '83, did not put you in a worse-off position, but spread the bread around, so that everybody would benefit. That's what we are doing today. So, when we spend more towards Healthcare, of our scholarships in Education, or for the farmers, it's spreading the bread around, so that everybody would benefit from it. And, we will continue to do this, because this is the right thing to do, Mr. President. This is the right thing to do. So, with these few words, I want to commend this Bill for its second reading.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**House in Committee.**

**House resumes.**

**Mr. President:** Honourable Members, it is my pleasure to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House, Clause by Clause and approved without amendment. Senator Winston Garraway.

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

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**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Mr. President, I beg for the third reading of the Bill.

**Question put and agreed to.**

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

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 17 - Adjournment.

**Mr. President:** Honourable Members, if I may inform, for purposes of the freshman Senators, that on the Adjournment, you can use this opportunity to raise any matter of urgent public business, but there is a limitation of ten (10) minutes. It is my wish that the Chair would not intervene, to ensure compliance with this, because I think, bodily, we are all of the view that the Session should come to an end, having been here since 9:00 o'clock. So, I would allow your feelings to impose the discipline rather than the Chair exerts his authority to ensure that you comply with the Rule. Senator Lewis, I saw your light first. Senator Redhead, you would be next.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy Andre Lewis:** Thank you, very much, Mr. President; and I just wanted to use this occasion to say a hearty welcome to all the new Senators, myself, I was just a few months ahead of you. But, Senator Kim George and someone, who I've known before. I have always been impressed by her level of commitment and meticulousness and scholarliness, and my experience with you in another area, in terms of... as a Trade Unionist, negotiating with you, I find you to be very balanced, yes, and to be very conscious of workers, and even before that I knew of your involvement, in terms of the wider societies.



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I have started on the left side here, Senator Judd Cadet. I almost said my Brother, someone who I have gotten to know, over the past few years, thereabout, and I am extremely impressed with his commitment to the youth. I think the youth are in safe hands. His involvement in technology, his engagement with us in Plan 2030, I look forward to your continued intervention. I just wanted to welcome you.

I come to Senator Kerryne James, who I would have heard a little bit about during the campaign, as a very good speaker. And, what is good is that Grenada is known for its firsts, and forgive me, if I repeat this, but because we just spoke about Pensions and all of us seemed to agree, and more than seemed to agree of the objective of the Revolution has been interested in the development of the country. The Revolution has been known for its hallmark, in terms of having youth involvement. As a matter of fact the leadership of the Revolution, the brave hearts that lead the attack on the Gairy Barracks, some were in their ninetees and twenties, and, therefore, I think, you're about twenty?

***(Senator James nodded in the affirmative)***

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** I want to welcome you. Senator Doctor Dunston, who I have worked with, also, in Plan 2030, I have learnt a lot from, and I am looking forward to learning a lot from him. He is very detailed, and he brings the best out, so I want to welcome him from the Labour Movement.

I saved Senator Ron Livingston-Redhead; I know Ron, but I want to make sure that I remember Livingston; and I deliberately saved, if I would say, Ron for last. I know Ron for quite a while, and when he was much younger, and it is my opportunity to pay homage to Ron, but in doing this, I am actually doing this to his father too, his father Martin Redhead, an outstanding human being; an outstanding human being, as it relates to workers, when it comes to commitment. And, Senator Ron, I can tell you, if you want to find anyone, who will not allow material promises and gains, even at your expense and probably at your family's expense, your dad would have refused, and

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these are things that are important, his commitment, he would not sell his commitment. And, I know you are aware of it, he and I are very close. So, I'm happy that you are here. I've listened to your interventions, I've listened to you on the political platform, and I can see in this House, given your youthfulness, you and Judd, and choose you and Judd, because you would sit on different sides of the House, but I do know that you all are committed to Grenada, and I recognise the friendship that you all have. Do not allow Party politics to get in your all way. I want to make that point. Do not allow it.

**(Applause)**

And, if the President, would permit me to make a light moment, the new technology that we have here, when someone else light is on and another Senator tries to get on, a green light comes on; and I am like, wow, Ron. And, I am saying should we make a request that there is an amber light?

**(Laughter)**

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** Green means progress.

**(Laughter)**

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** But, I thought, when you are trying to get on, amber would mean wait.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway:** We are not waiting. Keep moving.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** You're not waiting. Keep moving. Okay. But, anyhow I really, really want to compliment all the new Senators. Ron, keep doing your due diligence. Keep speaking out for people. I've listened to you, in terms of consumer rights, which is something that is lacking in this country. Yes. we need to take on the Cable and Wirelasses. We need to take on the GRENLEC. We need to

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take on the quality and the substandard goods and services that they have in our Supermarkets. We are a dumping ground. So, with these few words, I really want to; oh my apologies, Senator Roberts.

I mean, I am so used to you in 'This Place' by listening to you, because this is your third term, but let me welcome you, as a Senator. I know you are my Senior, in terms of experience in the Houses of Parliament. I want to welcome you, but, at the same time, recognising you, as my elder, as it relates to Parliamentary issues. But, in the Senate, I just have this little thing in front of you, but you are my elder, and I want to welcome everyone, as we continue to work together in the interest of Grenada. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Kim George.

**(Inaudible comments by the President)**

**Sen. the Hon. Kim George:** I beg your pardon, Mr. President?

**(Inaudible comments by the President)**

**Sen. the Hon. Kim George:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President I want to take this opportunity to give, what I am told is referred to as a Maiden Speech. I am aware of the prescription against reading a prepared speech, but I am told that I will have that liberty, in respect of this speech, and so, Mr. President, with your leave I will begin by saying, Mr. President, that it is indeed my great honour and an even greater privilege to rise in this Senate and to be able to address you, my colleague Senators, and the citizens of this great Nation of ours on this occasion.

Mr. President, in preparation for this speech, I considered for some time, what would be an appropriate metaphor for this occasion, such as to convey the depth of my feelings, the humility, which it has engendered in me and the sense of duty that it has

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evoked. And, eventually, Mr. President, I came upon the idea of likening this to standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before me, and who have paved the way for me to be here. And, so I must pause at this juncture, with your leave, to recognise the contributions of our Ancestors. In the broader sense of those transatlantic forefathers and foremothers who endured the ultimate indignities and who persevered, generation after generation, to produce in the generations immediately before me, persons such as my parents, Carl Rouse and Lorna George, who, although of limited means, gave me all that they had to give, and the best of themselves and who continue to do so, to date. And, in the generations before them, such as my maternal grandmother and paternal great-grandmother, who, likewise, were of limited means, but took the time and with the greatest love, taught me, in large part, to be the woman that I am today.

Indeed, I say that my grandmother, Mavis George or 'Ya Ya', as she was commonly and very widely known, without her perhaps understanding the meaning of the word, was the first feminist that I knew. She insisted, both in word and deed, that I carry myself with an uncompromising dignity, independent of anyone else, that I put God first and that I be brave enough and resolute enough, every single day, to be true to myself and also that despite whatever came my way, I was to be resilient without fail. I was to hold my head high, and I was to be brave enough to love my neighbor, as I loved myself. And, I am sure, Mr. President, that as I speak, there are those amongst us, who can tell a similar story to mine.

And it is for this reason and no other that I intend, as a Member of this Honourable Senate, as and when the opportunity arises, to highlight the role of our Nation's women, not in isolation of the several other issues, which must arise in the course of doing this Nation's business, but so as to root the debate in inclusion and awareness, and to attempt to ensure that, as a people, we continue to move forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, into a Grenada that has taken the time to reflect on the situation of its mothers, its daughters, its grandmothers, its aunts and its great-aunts and to ensure that our Laws reflect their needs and their aspirations, and unleashes their potential.

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And, because so much of life is providential and about timing and good fortune, I must pause at this juncture, Mr. President, to mention with my sincerest thanks, the role of our Prime Minister, Dr. Keith Mitchell, in my appointment and in so doing, for giving me the chance, as a woman and as a self-employed, self-made mother of two (2) young boys, to participate in this journey of inclusion and awareness. And, his vision is further reflected in the insistence that our Parliament must have an equal composition of men and women. I am told and have no reason to doubt, that we are the trailblazers in this regard; not just in the Caribbean, but in the wider world, as well. And, I pause, as well, to observe, lest we forget, as it is often easy to do in the heat of the debate, whether political or otherwise, the objective, undisputed fact, that Dr. Mitchell is ours and this Region's longest serving Politician and that he has been instrumental in bringing us to this national crossroad. And, this crossroad, Mr. President, is a place where, having made significant economic strides in the past six (6) years, we must seek to consolidate those gains, to reflect on what makes us unique, as Grenadians. We must ask ourselves, how have we been able to consistently produce sons and daughters of the soil, who excel on the world's stage? How have we been able to maintain our sense of cohesion, so that we are in relative terms able to continue to enjoy a low violent crime rate? What can we do, as individuals, every day, to remain our brothers' keeper, so as to preserve this State of affairs for future generations to come?

And, as we move into the Carnival Season, there is, perhaps, no better time for those amongst us, as Broadcasters, DJs, Musicians, Performers and members of the listening public, to ask ourselves and to answer to each other, when asked, am I in word and in song lifting my brothers and my sisters up, or am I wantonly pulling them down? In the next ten (10) or fifteen (15) years, when I reflect on the state of this country, for better or for worse, will I have paid a proud role by using my voice and my talents to teach and to encourage those, who I was lucky and blessed enough to influence? Or would I have taken the easier route of sensationalism or vulgarity?

For we must make no mistake, Mr. President, the dignity of our women is under threat, in song and in deed; not by design, in my view, but rather, by neglect and by our

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carelessly taking for granted the liberties that we enjoy in a democratic society. And, we are all complicit, so long as we continue either to actively participate, or to remain silent and chastened, when it occurs. And, in choosing how we react, we must remember that none of us lives in isolation of the other, and since nothing good or progressive has ever come of denigration, we must take steps to avoid it.

I wish to say, as well, to our young women, that it is entirely possible to have fun and to revel in the street, as I would do, come carnival time, while maintaining your dignity. And, if there is any doubt, they should look at their male counterparts, who remain fully clothed at that time, and are able to enjoy the event just, as well.

And, so I close, Mr. President, humbled, as I have said before, but excited, as well, to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of my fellow Grenadians, and to be a part of this era of political and economic inclusion and awareness, where collectively and individually, we are able to reflect on our achievements and work together to build a Grenada, which will make those, who have gone before us and who have sacrificed so much, proud of what we have done with the legacy that they have left us. We are, afterall, the survivors of the survivors. Thank you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Senator, the most Honourable Kim George. Well said; capturing all of the sentiments that I am conjuring up while I wait, as we close this Session. Thank you very much, well thought out, well presented. I thank you. Senator Kerryne James, the floor is yours.

**Sen. the Hon. Kerryne James:** Thank you, Mr. President. I, too, in joining with Senator Kim George, I would like to share my Maiden Speech, as well with this Honourable House.

***(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)***

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**Sen. the Hon. Kerryne James:** Thank you. Mr. President, I am extremely proud and honoured to stand in this House today. Maiden Speeches are like a bit of words spoken in a heated argument; like it or not, they will come back to haunt you. And, so, today, I stand here, not as a polished Politician, but I want to share with you the words that I wish to haunt me, integrity, self-respect and patriotism. My beliefs and values are the things that brought me here, and so, if ever I fall short of living up to such standards, I hope I would have the good grace to leave.

Mr. President, I express gratitude to my Party, the National Democratic Congress for allowing me such privilege to serve at this level. Most notably, I say thank you to our Head of State, Her Excellency, Dame Cécile La Grenade, for this appointment.

There are many reasons why I joined the National Democratic Congress. But, it was the Caretaker for St. John, Dr. George Vincent, his team and the support from the people in St. John that gave me the drive to push forward and realise my passion. I have no doubt, with such continued support, a legacy would be built beyond my future generation.

Mr. President, on this 24<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2018, I am boldly setting the goal of not only being the youngest Senator, ever, in the history of Grenada and the Commonwealth, but to persist and advocate for my positions and my Party's objectives. I cannot pinpoint when exactly my interest in politics began, but I know it began young. I was born in Gouyave, sometimes referred to as the 'Fishing Capital' of Grenada. As a young adult, I have seen, first-hand, the problems and challenges which the youth face daily, from unemployment, child sexual abuse, school dropouts to teenage pregnancy and substance abuse, both legal and illegal, not forgetting the associated Mental Health issues.

After earning my Associates Degree from the T.A. Marryshow Community College in Law, Geography and Sociology, exposure to these problems drove me, personally, to equip myself to help tackle these issues; hence the reason, Mr. President, I am currently enrolled at the St. George's University pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. At the end of this journey, I hope to contribute to the solutions in whatever

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capacity I can; maybe one day, as an MP or a Minister, who knows. As for now, my objective **(chuckles)**, is to be the best Senator I can be.

Mr. President, for too long, our very democracy has been undermined. Too many of our rights, our economic and social rights have been slowly eroded. I want to reverse this. And, so, I stand here as a child of Revolutionaries, as a voice for a lost generation to contribute to the creation of a brighter future for all Grenadians, not only those who are living in a certain house, or connected to a certain house.

So, there it is, Mr. President, the reason why I am here. It is the things I have seen and the lessons I have learnt. I promise to give true representation for as long as I have the privilege of serving in this Honourable House.

In summation, Mr. President, through you, I would like to communicate to the other Senators, Maiden Speeches should be relatively uncontroversial. However, I hope to be more controversial, when we get down to the people's business. Thank you, Mr. President.

***(Inaudible comments by the President)***

**Mr. President:** As you spoke, I reflected on my younger days, when I was just your age, and at that time I was the youngest Member of the Political Bureau of the New Jewel Movement, working with the likes of Maurice Bishop, Kenrick Radix and others. And, as I listened to you, I am confident that the future of this country is in good hands. I am confident that the path that we are carving, in which we put country first, country first doesn't necessarily mean we have to agree on all things, but that we put country first. And, as I listened to the quality of the contributions, both of yourself and Senator George, I am even more confident that the path you have chosen of building a Grenada, on a commitment to Grenada, is the correct and enlightened path and it is warming to my heart. And, I am sorry that the former President is out, because the former President, I am certain can track what I am saying, because he used to be my Teacher at the, then, GBSS, and the now Attorney General used to be my Teacher. So, we



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have three (3) Generations sitting in here, all connected through one thing, and that one thing is the patriotic love that we have for this country.

I really want to thank you, and an idea has struck that we should put all of these Maiden Speeches together in a booklet and publish it, so that the society can read it. It's just an idea that struck me, because what you would have is different component parts, of different perspectives of what your duties are, and how you're going to carry them out. I want to thank you for your contribution. Senator Redhead.

**Sen. the Hon. Ron Livingston Redhead:** Mr. President, thank you. I also would like the opportunity to give my maiden comments, as a newly appointed Senator of the Upper House. And, I would like for your permission to state two (2) reasons why both my colleague and myself, as young people are here representing, of course, the National Democratic Congress and the Grenadian people, at large.

The first, Mr. President, is having participated in the last General Elections, as officers of our Party, serving at Senior levels, at the leadership of the Youth Movement, among other Party organs; and also, Mr. President, being involved with National Organisations representing the people's interest. The Party has seen it fit, not just to reward our efforts, but to make good on its campaign promise, to promote, at the level of the Senate, young people, and I stand here today proud and humbled to be a part of this historical moment and ready, Mr. President, to make use of this difficult, but important opportunity. And, Mr. President, through you, I would certainly like to congratulate the young Senators on the 'Other Side', as well and I wish them all the very best.

Secondly, Mr. President, and possibly the most important reason why we are here, is not to complain to the Nation that we have no official Opposition in the Lower House, although we don't and that could never be good for our democracy. But, Mr. President, we are here to speak the truth and to inform the Grenadian people about policies, Bills and programmes that will either affect or transform their lives. And, Mr. President, that is a responsibility that should transcend Party politics, and it is a

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responsibility that the National Democratic Congress is willing to accept, despite all of our concerns, but it is being led, Mr. President, by our young people.

And, as Senator James has said, too many of our young people are falling victims to the traps of society, Mr. President, and we pledge our full commitment to this Honourable House in fighting that cause, and we sincerely ask for the cooperation and support of the Grenadian people.

Mr. President, what type of Grenada do I see? I believe that it is possible to achieve a Grenada that is free and fair, democratic, in a real sense, and gives assistance to all its people, with the understanding, Mr. President, that we will always as a Nation be faced with challenges, manmade or natural. But, as every citizen may expect to have the leaders with the ability to overcome these challenges, using research and development, new technology, enhancing health care and education and promoting jobs and food security assurance. They must also be willing to accept support and opposition from the people, because, Mr. President, both are necessary to lead; without the use of intimidation and oppression against any class of our people, so that, in the end, all of us can strive to achieve that ancient goal of what mankind was born to be; alive and well, but free and independent.

Mr. President, that is the Grenada that I seek, not just green or yellow, but it's all of our people genuinely united and committed to building our country and our economy despite our differences.

Now, Mr. President, I have some very brief remarks on the Economy. I do hope that you would permit me. Mr. President, according to the IMF, Tourism and Construction continues to drive the economic growth for Grenada in the period 2017 to 2018, and while that may be ok, these are two volatile Sectors, very prone to external shocks and threats, and, Mr. President, Hurricane Maria, Irma and the Sargassum Seaweed comes to mind. That is why we believe in the development, Mr. President, of six (6) pillars of our Economy instead of just two (2) and these are as follows, if you will permit me to read: Agriculture and Agribusiness; Education, Health and Wellness

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Services; Tourism and Hospitality Services; Information Communication Technology (ICT); Energy Development, Sports, Culture and the Entertainment Industries.

Mr. President, the truth is, what we have been experiencing in the last five (5) years, was a fiscal adjustment programme and not particularly a change in the structure of the Grenadian Economy. So, Mr. President, there is no need, in my view, for complacency, but creativity with new and different Sectors. In my view, there must not simply be an overwhelming joy just to meet the IMF benchmarks, but we must ensure that the policies we develop are right for the times and are actually solving our real concerns.

Today, Mr. President, we might be trying to solve the fiscal space problem, but tomorrow, we may create the social one. And, I want to take this opportunity to register our concerns with the amount of crime and violence plaguing our Nation at this time. I am against pseudo improvement and while the GDP may remain positive, the people's lives are never the same during a Structural Adjustment Programme.

So, Mr. President, as I conclude, in the decision of which programmes should we evaluate or revamp, sometimes for the first second and third time, we must remember for the poor and for the youths, five (5) days without assistance can feel as a year. But, Mr. President, people who commit serious crimes, such as the CBI Programme, they have a choice with what they are doing with our passports and in our name, but for the poor man, they do not. Mr. President, in fact, they are bound by circumstances and should not be subjected to any temporary stoppage, or prevention of their services.

Mr. President, we believe that the CBI is the programme that should be revamped and not the training programmes for the youths. I want to say, Mr. President, through you to the Minister of Youth, that we need to remove the politics from the programmes and then we will see, in fact, a better result.

Mr. President, I am prepared to give my full commitment and push forward, on every progressive agenda that I believe as a young person will benefit this country, and I want to pledge that commitment today, loud and clear, on behalf of myself and the National Democratic Congress.

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Mr. President, to all who have given me assistance and continue to help, I want to say a special thank you to them. God bless our Nation and God bless our people. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Thank you.

***(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)***

**Mr. President:** Dr. the Honourable, the floor belongs to you.

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Dunstan Campbell:** Mr. President, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to make just a short presentation and to be welcomed, I guess, to the club, to the new club.

First, I would like to thank my Constituents. I would like to thank the Farmers and the Fishers, who have elected me to be their Senator in this Honourable House. To me, this is a great privilege that is bestowed upon me and as was said earlier on in this House, with a privilege, you have responsibilities, and I have the responsibility of lifting, both the Farmers and the Fishers to new heights.

At my election, I promised the Farmers and Fishers that I will be independent; so I am here as an independent Senator. I am not representing any Political Party. I am here representing the issues of both the Farmers and the Fishers. And, in fact, I would like to take this through my tenure.

Now, Agriculture and Fisheries, it's being said, in developmental debate, as the backbone of these small Economies. Now, in the past years, the decades or so, we have not seen the realisation of that statement. In fact, the IMF report that was issued on Grenada, just recently, said that we saw progress in Tourism, in Education and in Construction, but the progress in Agriculture was not there. Now, I can argue that if Agriculture was included as a significant element or complement in economic growth,

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then I am sure that we would have grown. Grenada's economy would have been, at least, 5 or 5 ½% instead of the 4% that it has grown. But, this is up for debate.

I want to bring to bear on this, in this House, a new perspective of looking at Agriculture and Fisheries, and that perspective is to look at Agriculture and Fisheries, not as a commodity per se, but as a Community. Agriculture is not about Cocoa and Nutmeg. It is about the communities that produce that Cocoa and Nutmeg, and if we were to adapt this perspective, in dealing with those issues, there would be significant growth and development in the rural Sector and in Grenada, as a whole. So, this is something that I would like to work on, as I go through my tenure here in this Honourable House. In fact, it would affect, not only the way we do things, but the way we develop our Policies and Programmes.

Mr. President, I want again, to thank you for giving me this opportunity and I know that I would be working with the youth, the not so young and the not so old, and I guess when we put all together, we will have a wonderful Session here in this Tenth Parliament. So, I thank you very much, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Senator the Honourable Judd Cadet.

**Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise, today, to deliver my Maiden Speech in this Honourable House. I do so with a deep sense of humility and pride. I am undeniably humbled, because I believe my presence here serves as an impetus for the many young men and women with dreams and aspirations to one day reach the highest level of governance in Grenada.

I firstly give thanks to Almighty God, because through Him all blessings flow. I want to thank Prime Minister, Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell, for having appointed me to be a Member of this Honourable House. I thank him for his confidence, his trust and I promise to do all in my power to honour his decision.

Mr. President, I stand here and I am thinking about my journey. I can recall my early years at the St. Andrew Roman Catholic School, and after passing Common

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Entrance, to the Grenville Secondary School, which would have given me the opportunity and molded me into the person that I am today.

Mr. President, I was involved in Clubs like debates, the Knowledge Bowl, the Brain Bee and for those, who don't know, I was actually a star Athlete. In 2010, I would have gotten the overall Male; our school had the overall Most Outstanding Male at the Intercol Games and would have represented Grenada at the Commonwealth Youth Games in Isle of Mann. Mr. President, these are the opportunities that I took advantage of and have made me into who I am today.

After leaving GSS with ten (10) subjects, I went to TAMCC and there I would have done my Associates Degree in Natural Science: Chemistry, Mathematics, Biology, and, again, Mr. President, TAMCC contributed very well to my presence here. I can recall very well running for the President of the Student Representative Council and as a country boy, some may say, it was very difficult campaigning to get the confidence of the students there. But, in the end, Mr. President, I think I ran an extremely well campaign and I was elected the President of the Student Representative Council. In fact, Mr. Clerk, very well known, he sat on the College Board, where I would have represented the young people there.

Mr. President, I would have also represented the young people of Grenada as the CARICOM Youth Ambassador and this was an extremely humbled opportunity for me because I thought it has given me the experience and it has shaped the way and molded me, and as a result, I am standing here.

Mr. President, through you, I wish to publicly express my deepest appreciation to all the persons, who would have actively contributed to me standing here today. My parents, especially my Mom, as a single Mother, who has always been a strong supporter of my achievements; my Teachers, Mentors and most importantly, the Youth Arm of the New National Party. In fact, I dedicate this presentation to them. They have provided the unwavering support to me ever since assuming the position of President. I am forever grateful to them for their motivation and, by extension, to all the youth of

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Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I say to them today we will certainly keep this country moving forward and, as well, putting you the people first.

Mr. President, as young people, sometimes we get a bad connotation, they say that millennials are lazy and self-absorbed members of the me, me, I, I, Generation. However, today I reject those stereotypes and Generation myths. I have spoken to youth in all corners of this country, from Levera in the North to Calliste in the South, and even in Carriacou and Petite Martinique. And, I firmly believe that by giving young people the opportunity to display their skills and talents, the young men and women of Grenada can truly shine. Therefore, it is my intention to use my position here to work with the youth of Grenada, so we can form the Generation of 'we' and work collectively, to help share Policy decision that aid in pushing our Communities and beautiful Grenada forward into the future. **(Applause)**

Mr. President, it is well known that this Administration has always given young people the opportunity in this Honourable House. I have heard so many things, but I follow in the footsteps of Honourable Emmalin Pierre, Dwight Horsford, Nigel Stewart, Richard Mc Phail, Sheldon Scott and most recently we would have had Senator Kate Skeeter-Lewis and Devon Rachea.

Mr. President, this is no strange thing to our Administration. It may be some organisation's first to have young people here in this House, but it's not a first for the New National Party Administration. **(Applause)**

Mr. President, I am supporting a Government that will continue to give equal opportunities for all Grenadians regardless of their colour, their political affiliation, their status, their family. This country is for all Grenadians and regardless of your status, if you're qualified for a job, or scholarship, you deserve it, you shall get it.

I support this Government, or this Administration with the programmes that are lifting up young people, and there should never be any doubt or question in anyone's mind, because we hear those stories every single day. We hear those stories of the young men that are getting out the blocks and are now finding jobs; young ladies that no

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longer have to sell themselves to make a living. There are opportunities that are provided to them through this Government that they are now improving their lives.

Mr. President, I want to urge our young people that the future belongs to us, but we must not take it for granted. I strongly believe that young people need to have a seat around the Table. But, Mr. Speaker, we must not do so by trying to be so self-absorbed and ignorant or arrogant and forgetting the contributions made by our Seniors. I am an advocate for balance; the youth, the women, the Seniors, that we can come together around the Table and move this country forward. It is not only for young people, it's for all.

Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to celebrate the recent achievement of young people in Grenada. I want to congratulate all the young men and women, who recently graduated from all schools on the Island; St. George's University and all those who graduated from TAMCC last week. I want to make particular mention of Sharama Sylvester, who I had the opportunity to interact with during the Election Campaign, a story of ambition, resilience and strength, motivating not only myself, but many young people who have heard her story.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, I am saying Mr. Speaker, because I am guessing that I have some sort of immediate intentions.

***(Laughter)***

***(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)***

***(Laughter)***

**Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet:** Usually, what happens is that whenever one of our youth come through here, they usually make their way to the Lower House. Yes. But, Mr. President, in closing, I want to say, that I am willing and I am going to give my full



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commitment to this responsibility, and I am not going to give nothing less than 100%. And, I want to encourage the young people of Grenada to do not let your heart be troubled. You have a caring Leader, a caring Team, a vibrant Leader, a young Leader, and we are going to keep this country moving. We have a Leader. We do have a Leader. So, I want to say to them, we have the Leader, we have the vision, the people would not perish, and we're going to keep this country moving forward. Thank you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Senator Roberts.

**Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts:** Thank you, Mr. President. As I listened to the Maiden Speeches, is this maiden for me? I am not sure, because I've been in the House already although at the Lower level.

**Mr. President:** And, you are not a youth.

**Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts:** And, I am not a youth. So, I wondered if I should have gotten up. Nevertheless, I am so thrilled that I have been given the opportunity, by the Governor-General, to have appointed me to serve. Service for me is what I am destined to do, not only service at the Government level, but also at the Community level, having the passion for people and to see people strive. And, following my not being in active politics, I took up Netball that I was doing years before I started politics and this has given me a new thrust, in that there is so much we can do for our young people, not only academically, but through Sports. But, I want to, as we are together here in this House, urge us to respect each other, and that's the only way we can achieve together. We are here with strengths and weaknesses and what we need to do is to hold hands together to work.

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I know, sometimes, we are enthusiastic in our youthfulness, and we forget, as Senator George said, the foundation that was laid before for us. We are all different and with that difference we are meant to shape this Nation, and critically we have to look at what is keeping us back. We have to go back to helping families be families to the kids.

Just last night, I was in the Barber Shop, and again, it's sad that at a Carnival event, we will lose a young twenty-one (21) year old by stabbing. And, you ask the question, if you're going to have fun, where the weapon came in? But, it goes to something deeper that because our society has become lax in a lot of ways, that a lot of our families are not hinged on love and that love of, you know, just genuine love, because we have stopped saying to Kerryne, "Don't do that". We are now in our own zone, in the 'I' zone that Senator Cadet just spoke about.

So, on this Maiden Speech, I want to say we, in this Parliament, we have a Women Parliamentary Caucus, and we would pick up causes that, although we are women, we expect the men to hold our hands, hand-in-hand. When we have things, don't just toss us aside, because you feel you're too busy. But, we are here, gender balanced, to work together, Mr. President, through you. And, I also want to thank you for your holding of my hands, because when I started in the Lower House, believe it or not, Senator Humphrey was the one that was always there with me, saying this is the way you do this, this is the way you do that.

So, when I started my Political career, Kerryne and Kim, I had paper reading, but I don't read anymore, I talk. So, I am just saying that it's a revolution we're going through and together we can all do this. So, thank you very much for your camaraderie.

**(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Senator Cox.

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**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Mr. President, I just want to take this opportunity just to congratulate our new appointees, although I did do that in person, but I just feel comfortable...

***(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)***

***(Laughter)***

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Not really, Mr. President. It has not left as yet, not my Ferry. I just wanted to extend congratulations, that is all. I do so, and just on the lighter side, I thought when Senator Lewis was speaking about young, I thought he might have mentioned my name somewhere, in between, but he didn't. I'll let him off the hook now. But, just to say one thing, we are here to represent people, and we must be mindful of that, and people have their own way of assessing us in whatever we do. We just must keep that foremost in our minds. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

***(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)***

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** No, no, no, no, no, no, not tonight, not tonight. Mr. President, I just wanted to say a couple of words, and today is the first working Sitting of this new Parliament, new Members, new building. We have had many records broken, whether it's the youngest appointed Senator; whether it is some of the bills that we passed today. I think the flavour, the atmosphere and the dynamics that we have seen in this Chamber tell me that this is going to be a very, very, interesting and I hope productive and constructive Session of Parliament. And, just from the contributions that have been made today, I can already see that there is vast talent, there is certainly energy, there is genuine commitment, genuine love for country and that is what has to

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be put before all politics. And, if that is applied and aids in your objectivity, as we all assess the Bills that are put before us, we are part of the Law-making process. Politics has its place, but so does diligence, so does the contributions, personal contributions that each of us is able to bring to the debate, to the Legislative process.

But, as I stand here today, at the end of a very long day, I have a real sense that this will be very, very different to the previous Parliament, the Ninth Parliament, it's going to be very, very different. I am encouraged by that, and I certainly look forward to engaged debates, and all that each and every one of us has to bring to this Table, because I think if each of us gives our best, it would be the people, it would be Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique that would benefit the most. And, I think if there is one goal I think each of us should carry close at heart it is to achieve that. Thank you, Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Senators, I just want to make a few brief remarks. I don't intend to keep you here longer, I'll be very short, but just to say, with particular reference to all of the Maiden Contributions, there is one thing I heard; although we are here from different sides of the political divide, as it were, there is one thing I heard, Project Grenada. I don't care how you describe it, but what the contributions of everyone spoke, essentially to, Project Grenada, that we are here to serve this Nation. We belong to different political parties, we may have differences, but at the end of the day we want to contribute to making our country a better place and that is really heartening.

Just a few points of concern to me. First of all, the Pensions Restoration, \$7.2 m to be paid out in full to fifty-six (56) workers, who joined the service between any date from the 4<sup>th</sup> of April to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February, who have now retired, are entitled to receive retrospective Pensions contributions, amounting to \$7.2 m, on straightline Arithmetic that works out to be approximately, on average, one hundred and thirty thousand dollars (\$130,000.00) per person. But, let's be clear, public, it doesn't mean that every individual will get that amount, because you would be at different salaries, you would

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have had different sort of lengths of times in the Service. But, if you do simple straightline arithmetic, that \$7.2 m, divided by fifty-six (56) gives you that figure.

Now, I am, particularly very proud and Senator Lewis would understand that, because in 1986, I begun the struggle to have Pension Restoration, and I am happy that this is taking place. I am profoundly moved. And, again, what is so moving to me is the fact that under the whole concept of Project Grenada, those who administer the State now, gave a commitment, and they gave that commitment in August of 2012, at the Headquarters, on a Saturday, at the Technical and Allied Workers Union Office, in a demand put forward by TAWU that Pensions matters should be addressed and that State employees, who cannot survive on NIS should have Pensions restored. There and then the promise was made. There and then the promise was kept, because we could have been involved in a long drawn out battle all the way to London, on this matter. But, the current Prime Minister gave a commitment. And, I know it is politics, but let me just say this. I was convinced that this was a deep philosophical commitment that the Prime Minister had, because he said to me in a private conversation, "a lot of those people who go home are my supporters and I feel it for them". And, he said to me, "Ches, this is something I want to do, before I leave the governing of this country, I want to do that". And, as I said, I had the opportunity to discuss this, and I am really, really moved because I see a deep dream which seeks to satisfy a genuine human need of social equity being realised today and that sometime towards the end of the month, fifty-six (56) workers will go home with \$7.2 m, altogether, and that, to me, is a significant achievement, not just because the Government is doing it, but because the Trade Unions, in this country, kept their responsibilities to the workers that they represented and ensured that this was done. So, I think hats off to all.

Now, I have some brief concerns, and I just want to deal with them, very briefly, violent crime, particularly murder and rape. I am deeply concerned. Yes, we have the lowest crime rate, but let not that fact send us to sleep. From the reports I have, on the last count, we are in month seven (7) of the year and there are already eight (8)

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murders. I am concerned of the falling standards. I am concerned of the wanton disregards for human life, the quick fit to temper, to wound.

Only a few yards away from my home, a young Bank employee, making better use of his downtime, went to the playing field a Sunday morning, or whatever time it was to play Football. And, sitting on the bleacher, looking at the youngster play that Football game, throughout the entire period there was another youngster hidden with a cutlass and he sat there, and this is a Bank employee, diligent worker, youngster, productive engagement, another youngster sat there, waited patiently until the sporting activity was finished. And the youngster who was playing the football, unaware of the imminent danger, raised his hand to save his life, when the youngster who calculatedly sat there, inflicted a blow that was intended to kill. Our Court System is seriously challenged, because I am very concerned about how the issues of crime and punishment is being addressed in our Courts.

On the question of rape, there seemed to be an unending cycle in this crisis and one would believe when you hear the cases... Only last year, it was, or probably earlier this year, there was a murder of a, well not even a teenager, I think the child might have been seven (7) or eight (8), a rape and murder. Yet, when you pick up the newspapers, every headline back and front of the newspaper these days is someone going before the Court on a rape charge.

What disturbs me is the lightness of the sentences which are given by the Courts, and as Lawmakers, we have a duty to protect society. We have a duty to protect the dignity of our women, whether they be Aunts; whether they be babies; whether they be children; whether they be teenagers, and I believe that a more severe strain of punishment...

I have always looked at what happened under Colonial times. Under the Colonial State, justice was certain, it was swift and it was exact. You were committed of rape, you were cat-o-nined, that was clear. You were committed of murder, you were hung. All of this has disappeared to a liberalism in which now there is total disregard for

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human life. So, I could sit at a Football match, look at my victim for over ninety (90) minutes, calculated now, to inflict serious harm on that individual. Why? Because what will happen to me, I will be sentenced, leniently, with time served. In fact, one who is now charged for murder, I understand still has a charge of wounding and is on bail. So, something... Law-makers, we have to do something to protect our society, and, therefore, I urge you to take that into consideration.

We're at the Carnival Season and I can't understand why it is the State aids and abet in the objectivisation of our women. I mean, you listen to the lyrics, and, to me, it's worst, in the form, which is referred to as Soca. And, all of the Radio Stations, including those who claim to be the leading national. And, the contradiction is, some of those who have been on the crusade against rape, are themselves playing the music that promote women strictly, as sex objects. The women themselves have come to believe that is the way to behave. The State then goes, takes taxpayers money and award those who create Mass Bands of indecency. I would like to see, in the immediate future, that it be demerit points. If the State must spend tax dollars to promote this culture, the State must ensure that the culture that we promote is progressive, that the culture that we promote does not promote lewdness and decadence, and, therefore, there should be demerit points. I have seen Carnival bands, I mean, take Keens-Douglas, he brings bands that are decent, could hardly or often times never win. But, the lewdness and the fact that people have lost all restraint, and the State takes my tax dollars and award them, so something has got to be done in regard to that, this desecration.

I want to move to the consistent desecration of our cemeteries. I attended a funeral service the other day and was shocked at the state of the cemetery, filled with derelict vehicles, squatters have taken over sections of it. And, not only are they displacing the dead, I was shocked to learn that those squatters had access to electricity. I mean, it's really, something has got to be done, and I appeal again to Members of the Executive. I mean, semeteries are supposed to be sacred places. I

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mean, you go to certain Cemeteries, in certain countries... the cemetery after which my name's sake, Arlington Cemetery, in the United States, you go to the Cemeteries in London, which I have visited, just to look at Karl Marx, and you see how immaculate and well-kept these cemeteries are. And, you turn to the cemeteries in Grenada and it's just a crying shame. In other words, it's just another expression of the social deterioration, which is afflicting our society, and something has got to be done about it. So, I urge Members of... because the initiative must come from you, Members of the Executive, to stop this desecration of our cemeteries.

I want to touch on another problem that afflicts us and that is, I can't understand how Liquor Licences are issued. Liquor Licences seemed to be issued without any restraint or regard to where their licencing operations occur. So, you have arising in residential communities, liquor operations and these people feel that they have an unfettered right to create a nuisance of noise, so they open up in the heart of residential areas, they trade liquor and sometimes these liquor operations are next to schools. And, I have seen it myself. I have seen youngsters walk a couple yards away from the school, go into these liquor operating businesses, I don't understand how these Licences are issued. I do not understand how you can licence a facility that sells alcohol, that's appended to a school. Given all the different social problems that we have in problems of substance abuse, I don't understand it. And again, I am appealing to Members of the Executive to address this issue.

And, I use this opportunity to appeal to the Police, to be more discriminating when they issue these Licences for entertainment, especially when these things are done near to residential areas, because, I tell you, I am a victim of it. I am a victim of this. And, I want to use this opportunity, not only to address it myself, but strange enough, I was at the Scotia Bank the other day and a gentleman from Monte Tout came to me to complain that he had gone to the Police, to complain about a neighbour that set up a business inside of his house and was playing loud music, all into the wee hours



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of the morning and all throughout the day. And, no matter how he complained to the Police, nothing was done to abate that situation.

Honourable Members, these are my concerns. I wish they can be addressed and I urge you, really, as Lawmakers we have a responsibility to address these matters. I really want to see an overhaul of the Criminal Code. I would really like to see more severe punishment meted out to people, who commit murder and rape. We cannot continue like this in our society. We cannot continue like this in our society, and I think the time has come now. The pendulum has swung too far in the realm of the liberalist and the time has come now for us to tighten the reigns and bring back social order and discipline in this country. And, the Courts have an important role to play. I am not attacking the Judiciary, but I believe there is a culture of leniency in which the rights of the accused seemed to be gaining more importance than the rights of the victim. And, if we are not careful, what will eventually happen, is that people will start taking the Law in their own hands, because they do not believe that the Courts is dispensing justice.

On those few words, Members, I believe that this might be the last Sitting before the Carnival, so I want to take the opportunity to wish everyone in the Nation, a happy Carnival. I appeal for public decency, and I thought that Senator George's appeal as a woman and the point she made... interestingly, the men who play Mass and enjoy themselves to the full, are all well dressed, they are not naked, and to appeal to our women folk. I know things are changing culturally, and standards are falling, but there must be some Sentries guarding the gate, and this is our responsibility, to guard the gate, to make sure that our society does not deteriorate, to the extent that it has in some of our community countries in the Caribbean.

Senators, I thank you for your indulgence. I want to thank the staff, the Clerk and your staff, Sergeant-at-Arms, etcetera, the Police Officers who have stood here, quite diligently, and notice, they themselves are youth, so we old people are surrounded by, well, I don't look old, somebody tell me I look like thirty-six (36), and I feel that way. But, again, I want to thank them and for the first time in a long time, we had many visitors to

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the day's Session and that's a good sign. So, once again, Senators, I want to thank you, most profusely, for your participation. I look forward to good things, and I wish everyone a safe, peaceful and enjoyable Carnival. I thank you. **(Applause)**

**Question put and agreed.**

**Senate adjourned sine die at 7:00 p.m.**

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