



GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Second Session of the Tenth Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT

SENATE

Wednesday, 24th April, 2019

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Senate Meeting
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Attendance

PRESENT

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 Dr. Winston Garraway	- Minister of State wrf Disaster Management and Information
Senator the Honourable Kim George	- Member
Senator the Honourable Cathisha Williams	- Member
Senator the Honourable Glynis Roberts	- Member
Senator the Honourable Kerryne James	- Member
Senator the Honourable Ron Livingston Redhead	- Member
Senator the Honourable Dr. Dunstan Campbell	- Member
Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis	- Member

ABSENT

Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie	- Deputy President (Excuse tendered)
Senator the Honourable Norland Cox	- Minister for Youth Development, Sports, Culture and the Arts (Excuse tendered)

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Prayers
Moment of Silence

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

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Winston Garraway: Good morning, everybody. Members, let us pray.

(Senate Prayer was said)

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

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Mr. President: Good morning, Honourable Members. Pray be seated. Honourable Members, could we now stand for a moment of silence on the passing of a great Grenadian Scholar and Intellectual, an accomplished and outstanding Caribbean Public Servant, the late Dr. Sir Alister McIntyre.

(One moment of silence observed)

Mr. President: Thank you, Honourable Members. Pray be seated. Honourable Members, I shall direct the Clerk to convey to the surviving family, the Senate's most profound sympathy, and beseech that they find the necessary strength to survive this period of deep personal anguish at the loss of such a distinguished son of the soil and Caribbean man, who has done so much for carving and constructing our Caribbean civilization in the helè of the immediate post-Colonial period. His intellectual exploits are well known. The service, which he gave to the Caribbean people, puts him in the annals of one of our distinguished intellectual sons. Grenada mourns his loss.

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Moment of Silence
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I take the opportunity, also, to express my own personal, profound condolences to his son, Dr. Purgie McIntyre, and I call him Purgie, because that is how we knew him growing up, and to convey my own personal regards and that of my brother, Clyde, who was a very personal friend of young McIntyre. Thank you, Honourable Members.

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

Item 4 - Confirmation of Minutes.

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 Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Thursday 21st of March, 2019, be taken as read.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes taken as read.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the Senate, held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Thursday, 21st March, 2019, be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed.

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

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Announcements
Reports

Item 6 - Announcements by Mr. President.

Mr. President: Honourable Members, I have to report that I did receive a Parliamentary note from Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie, that he would be out of State, and apologises for his absence from the Sitting of today's meeting of the Senate. Please be guided accordingly. Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: If I could add to that, Mr. President. Senator Cox called me this morning. He is unwell this morning and will not be in attendance.

Mr. President: Be so advised and accepted.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 7 - Ministerial Statements.

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 be laid on the Table:

- (i). The Annual Report of the National Insurance Board (NIS) for the year ended 31st December, 2017.
- (ii). The Annual Report and report of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Grenada Food and Nutrition Council for the year ended 31st December, 2017.
- (iii). The Annual Report of the Grenada Investment Development Corporation for the year ended 31st December, 2017.

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Mr. President: Honourable Members it is ordered that the following Papers and Reports being: (i) Annual Report of the National Insurance Board (NIS) for the year ended 31st December, 2017; (ii) Annual Report and Report of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Grenada Food and Nutrition Council for the year ended 31st December, 2017; (iii) Annual Report of the Grenada Investment Development Corporation for the year ended 31st December, 2017, be so laid on the Table.

Honourable Members, I am yet to receive any Motions, requiring any debates or questions on these very important Papers. I just thought I should bring this to the attention, particularly, those on the 'Left Side' of the Chamber, whose duty it is to look over the performance of the Executive. I am yet to receive a single Motion, or any question arising from these Reports. I just thought I would make that announcement to remind those on the 'Left Side' of the Chamber that they do have that responsibility. Thank you. Yes. Senator the Honourable Glynis Roberts.

Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts: Mr. President, I just found this in our package, so I don't know if it's an error. It's not on the Order Paper, Ombudsman for 2017.

(Inaudible response by Mr. President)

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Ron Redhead.

Sen. the Hon. Ron Livingston Redhead: Yes, Mr. President. Thank you very much. I do in fact have just one comment on a few areas of concerns, not majorly. Because I must say, Mr. President, in my short review of the Report; I think it's a very comprehensive Report.

Mr. President: Which Report?

Sen. the Hon. Ron Livingston Redhead: NIS, (sorry); National Insurance Board Annual Report, 2017. It says that they are being...

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Reports

(Inaudible comments by Mr. President)

Sen. the Hon. Ron Livingston Redhead: Yes, Mr. President. So, Mr. President, I would not be able to comment on the Report at this moment?

Mr. President: Properly speaking, no; it was just laid on the Table. There should be an opportunity to raise whatever issues, but under this Item, on the Agenda, all the House doing is noting that it is in receipt of these reports and documents. The discussion of these documents now would properly take place, when a Motion to that effect, when you can fully ventilate the issue. But, this is just an advice that in accordance with; and, and since most of these Reports would come from Statutory Institutions, which within their very Acts set up by Parliament, require them to report, because if you are raising questions now, I think, in a sense, people would not be prepared. I don't know that they could be in any position to ask any questions.

However, if Notice is served that you want to debate, or raise issues and proper Notice is served, then people can come prepared, because they know that you want to discuss, or comment. But, I think, at this stage, to allow a comment where people are unprepared, having no opportunity, to... because remember these Reports are coming from Bodies that are extant to the Executive. They report to the Executive, because their Executive is responsible to them. But, the Executive is responsible to Parliament. So, the process is, they are just laid on the Table, and that act means they become a formal part of the proceeding and the formal records of the Parliament upon which an adequate opportunity for thorough discussion can be subsequently held. Thank you.

I am not shutting you down, but it is just the process. So, I await either questions you can ask coming from the Report, or if you want a more open discussion, come with a Motion to debate, and then you have full run of the debate. Okay. Thank you. Senator the Honourable André Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. André Lewis: Thank you, very much, Mr. President. Thanks for that explanation, because, I, myself wanted some guidance. Taking into account that

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these documents, and absolutely through no fault of the 'Other Side', having been received this week, Monday being a holiday, and given the procedure, I am now taking it that we can prepare questions and send to the House for future discussions.

Mr. President: Well, absolutely. I have been saying this from day one.

Sen. the Hon. André Lewis: Well, I am just seeking that clarity, and that's what you did. So, I am telling you thanks for the clarification. I myself, in receiving it, shared it around with some of my officers yesterday, so I am so grateful for that explanation.

Mr. President: Clerk Assistant, you may move forward.

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 the Honourable Simon Stiell.

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

WHEREAS debate of the Gracious Address delivered by the Governor-General on the occasion of the Ceremonial State Opening of the Second Session of the 10th Parliament, on Monday the 19th November, 2018 was further deferred to a date to be fixed;

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

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Question put.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell, may I inquire whether or not I may have a reasonable expectation, that there will actually be a debate. I am asking this, because the practice has always been, since the essence of the Address outlines the budgetary and other matters, in a sense it is a duplicitous undertaking. But, if you feel there is a reasonable expectation that there will be a debate, then, I may suggest for your respectful consideration, that the debate be, not a date to be fixed, but that the Motion be extinguished.

I don't know if you want to do this, or you want to leave it for a next occasion, but it is already a repeat. And, Senators can decide, no, they want to debate the Motion. But, from my experience, there have been very few debates on the Address for the reason that I gave; that the Address, although done by the Governor-General, is a very succinct outline of what the Executive intends to do, and more detail is given, when the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure are presented and the contextualization of that Revenue and Expenditure, as an instrument for economic stimulus and for redistribution of the Nation's wealth is undertaken, during what we commonly referred to as the Budget Debate.

So, if there is a sufficiency of the explanation, then we can move to strike it out. If you think that you would want to leave it there and handle it at the next occasion, it is purely a matter for you. But, all I am capable of doing is just laying some advice, which doesn't mean, if you don't accept it that you are disrespecting the Chair, it just means that you are exercising your own deliberate judgment, as the Leader of Government's Business on 'This Side' of the House.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you for that opportunity, Mr. President. Mr. President, it is customary to allow a period of time to pass. The statement that was made by the Governor-General at the Opening Ceremony outlined the intentions of this Government, which was then followed by the debate on Revenues and Expenditures, which was very, very well ventilated in this House back in November. And, it is

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customary to leave this Motion open to give, whether it is Members to receive feedback from their various Constituency groups from the General Public and an opportunity to raise any further questions, even though the full debate took place back in November with the 2019 Budget.

But, I could well take advantage of the opportunity that is being afforded now, since sufficient time has passed, matters have been well ventilated, Government is well on course, well on track, in terms of its agenda and the targets, the goals, the programmes, the projects, outlined both in the Gracious Debate (the Throne Speech) and the Budget Debate. So, I would follow your guidance, Mr. President, and move the Motion that...

Mr. President: Before you move the Motion, just let me solicit the view from the 'Other Side.' For Members on the 'Other Side', what I wish to find out is whether or not you anticipate that you would want to debate the Address, and you have a choice in the matter, whether or not there is specific issues, which you would want to raise and, again, you can do this by a Motion on any question in the Address. You can formulate questions based on the Address, in the sense that you would want to know the things, which were outlined in the Address, what has become of them, what is the state of maturity, or otherwise of those issues. You may wish to formulate questions on that.

So, before I invite the Leader of Government's Business to put the Motion that the Motion be extinguished by reasons that we have already given, I would want to get some sense of whether or not Members on the 'Other Side' may have a contrary view, because I don't want to disadvantage anyone, but the Leader of Government's Business has indicated that he is inclined to extinguish the Motion, since there seem to be no necessity for debating it. But, if I get any indication here, I could ask him to stay the Motion until the next occasion. So, you have an opportunity to advise the Chair. Senator the Honourable Ron Redhead

Sen. the Hon. Ron Livingston Redhead: Mr. President, I just want to say that I have a contrary view. I believe that it should remain, and it should remain on the basis,

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Mr. President, that at any given time, we should be allowed the opportunity to debate issues. As you said even if it was ventilated in the Budget, it's an ongoing process, in terms of Expenditure and Revenue throughout the country, and, at times, the Personnel may change, as well to, Mr. President. So, I think we should keep that open for the benefit of all who need to debate the issues, when necessary.

Mr. President: Is that the only comment on the 'Other Side', or is there concurrence with the Senator's view? Senator the Honourable André Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. André Lewis: May, I suggest, Mr. President, that the Motion remains open. Now that it has been put on the Table, about the real possibility of an extinction in the near future, we can address that, subsequently, but my preference would be to have it remain.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Well, if I could suggest, then, because it is also customary that it is extinguished at some point. We cannot leave this matter open and we are now, basically, approaching the month of May, the debate... the Gracious Address was provided back in November. So, we are looking at the best part of five (5) - six (6) month period, where it has been opened. But, I would suggest, to accommodate the comments expressed on the 'Other Side', that we leave it open for this Sitting, with the intension of closing it at the next Sitting, which will give members an opportunity to raise whatever question that they have bearing in mind that, again, this has been fully ventilated, fully debated. I would suggest we do not open up a three-day debate, as we had back in November for the debate on the Budget, which is effectively the substance of the Gracious Address by the Governor-General. So, I would simply caution how we take advantage of this opportunity. But, as I said, I think we could make an accommodation, in terms of leaving this matter open, and we can have a reasonable discussion on the matter.

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Mr. President: Okay, fine. Well, that is good with me, and this is why I am suggesting that, because a quick Mathematical calculation tells me that I may have to exercise a casting vote. So, I think there is reasonableness on Both Sides; the matter does not arise in respect on myself, because I would err, if I have to, on an open Parliament. So, could we move on Clerk Assistant? I think we've sufficiently disposed of that matter. Sorry. Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. André Lewis: I just want to expressed my thanks, because the fact that we're heading into International Workers' Day, which is next week Wednesday, some creative ideas may just flow that may allow us to have a better appreciation to follow up with questions, so I appreciate that. International Workers' Day is next Wednesday.

Mr. President: Okay. Thank you. Well, I think we have adequately disposed of this matter. So, please be advised that by the next Sitting, if nothing is done, if no questions have come, if there is no Motion on it, that a Motion would be made to strike off this Motion, because of the inflection of time and because no one seems to have an interest in doing it. Alright; so could we move on?

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 15 - Bills.

Ag. Clerk: Message from the House of Representatives.

To the President and other Members of the Senate

Mr. President, and other Members of the Senate, the House of Representatives at its Sitting on Tuesday 16th April, 2019 concurred with the following amendments made by the Senate, at its Sitting on Thursday, 21st March, 2019 to the Bill for Act shortly entitled, Grenada Citizenship by Investment (Amendment) Act, 2019.

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Clause 2

Amendment of section 2 of principal Act

In subsection (a), (c) delete the word '**fully**' before the word '**supported**'.

In subsection (b) (e) replace the words '**living with the main applicant**' with the words '**fully supported by the main applicant or his or her spouse**'.

In subsection (b) (f) delete the words '**living with**'.

Clause 5

In subsection (1) (b) (5A) replace the word '**three**' with the word '**five**'.

Clause 6

Amendment of section 11A of principal Act

In subsection (1) (a), (2) (c) delete the word '**or**'.

Mr. President, and other Members of the Senate, the House of Representatives, at its Sitting on Tuesday, 16th April, 2019 did not concur with the following amendments made by the Senate, at its Sitting on Thursday, 21st March, 2019 to the Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Grenada Citizenship by Investment (Amendment) Act, 2019.

Clause 5

Amendment of section 11 of principal Act

In subsection (2) delete the word '**not**' after '**shall**'.

Mr. President: This is the message from the House of Representatives. Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, we concur with the message that has come down from the House of Representatives, and the next presentation by the

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Clerk, I will be able to give an explanation, as to why we are proposing that this House concurs with those messages, and that could be then put before the House for the Senate's approval.

Ag. Clerk: Clause 6

Amendment of 11A of principal Act

In subsection (2) delete the word '**not**' after the word '**shall**'.

Mr. President: Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Thank you, Mr. President. So, as per the last Clause, the proposal is that this House concurs with the message that has just been presented from the House of Representatives.

Mr. President, all but these two Clauses, or proposed amendments received concurrence from the House of Representatives. The two (2) that are highlighted here, where there was non-concurrence speak to, actually, a single issue, and I would speak to that now.

These two (2) Clauses speak to the intention that the overall amendment, 2019 Bill would apply to all CBI applicants moving forward. The proposal that came out of this House at the last Sitting was that the Clauses of the 2019 Bill be applied to all applicants, retrospectively.

But, Mr. President, on further consultation, on receiving further legal advice, it was deemed that that would not be advisable, that the original intent that it applies to those applicants, who submit their request for citizenship be applied to those applying after the passing of this Bill. There is a particular component within the 2019 Bill, which speaks to extending the period that applicants are required to hold on to their assets, their investments.

In the original Bill, it states that applicants must hold on to those assets for a minimum of three (3) years. The amendment before us, in the 2019 Bill speaks to

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extending that period, from three (3) years to five (5) years. So, this is strengthening the programme, this is ensuring that the commitment that those applicants have is more significant than, as I said, the three (3) years previously stated.

So, if the House of Representatives were to concur with the recommendation that we had made, the proposal that we had made, after seeking additional legal advice, after additional consultation, it was felt that there is the potential that we would open up challenges by some of the previous applicants, who entered into an agreement whereby they had an expectation that they would have to hold on to their assets for that minimum period of three (3) years. But, by making this change retroactive, they will then be forced, legally, to hold on to that asset for five (5) years.

Now, that may be okay for some, but it may open up a challenge from others and that is what the rationale behind the non-concurrence on the proposal made by this House. And, the intent of all that we have done, with regard to the CBI Programme is ensuring that it is as robust as possible, the quality of the Programme is as high as possible. Grenada's CBI Programme is considered to be the gold standard within the Region. And, by us opening up this particular area, could be a cause for concern for some.

So, it is for these reasons, Mr. President, it is the recommendation that is being put forward, that the Senate concurs with the message received from the House of Representatives on these two particular matters.

Mr. President: The question proposed is that the House do now concur with the message from the 'Other Place'. There seems to be no issues from the 'Other Side' because the debate is about to be wound up. Senator the Honourable André Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. André Lewis: Thank you, Mr. President. I was absent during that discussion, and, therefore, permit me just to ask, if I may. The rationale for not accepting the five (5) years and reverting to the three (3) seemed to be hinged on the concern that there may be legal challenges. Has consideration been given to the possibility of those legal challenges, strength of the argument versus the importance of

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moving from three (3) to five (5)? My assumption would be the fact that we have debated it in the House here and felt very strongly, my feeling is to move from three (3) to five (5), sometimes if it is that important as the Senate would have felt, if the advice is that, I mean, anyone can raise any legal challenge, but how strong is our position, legally, from our Government Side and the Nation's side, that is what I would like to be guided by.

Mr. President, I am not saying that this is what the Senator or the Leader of Government's Business is saying, but I would prefer to know that the fact that the Senate, who I have a lot of respect for, or concerns for, what we are doing, especially in relation to the CBI, that the fact that the Senate would have recommended, strongly, five (5) years, the thought that would have gone into that must be something deep. I am not too comfortable with just the response, which says that it may open legal challenges. Anything we do, anything we do, can open challenges.

Mr. President: Yes. Just let me see if I could capture succinctly, the consideration here. The amendment isn't reverting '*in toto*' to three (3) years. There is always a problem of retrospective legislation, and Courts don't normally go along with retrospective legislation. The problem here is simply this. Under the original and originating legislation, a three-year period was required for someone coming into the Programme to hold whatever investments or assets, and, in a sense, a covenant arises. And, when that someone entered the Programme, they entered the Programme with that conditionality defined.

Now, Parliament is sovereign and can change the conditionality, but it would be manifestly unfair, and Courts do not make and accept those changes, retrospectively, to the disadvantage of people, or participants, who, otherwise, came in genuinely with the knowledge that the limit, the outer limit was free. So, the proposal is, not to revert, '*in toto*' to three (3), but to maintain for those who would have joined the Programme, when it was three (3), to maintain three (3), but any future applicants, now, would have a condition of five (5). And, the Law on this is really very clear, because, as I said

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before, you would be unilaterally breaching a covenant, which creates an unfairness for the persons involved in the issue, and Courts don't normally take kindly.

And, there is a course of action that anybody can bring, because, when I joined the Programme... suppose the assets that I invested, I borrowed those assets to invest, knowing that within thirty-six (36) months I would have the right to either dispose of those assets or to retire the loan, somehow, that I took, and, in midstream, you are now telling me five (5); you see the problem of inequity and fairness here. Those who are now entering the Programme will do so with a clear understanding that you are coming into this Programme now and you have to hold those assets by a minimum of five (5) years, and that is the explanation. Senator Stiell, is there a sufficiency in that explanation, or you just want to repeat? Did I miss anything?

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, I think you summed it up extremely well.

Mr. President: Okay. If that be the case, then, Senator Lewis, are you satisfied with the explanation?

Sen. the Hon. André Lewis: Mr. President, yes, and that makes sense, to me. But, as a negotiator, there is one further issue I would like to look at. Is it possible that those that are pending, because we are in the midst of discussion, how possible is it to have that as part of going forward? In other words, because it is so important, I am getting from the Senate to move from three (3) to five (5). Any window that presents an opportunity for us to move to five (5), should be moved into, and, therefore, rather than looking futuristic, is it possible that, and I will be guided by this and I am not making an issue, but I am asking, as to whether or not the fact that there may be ongoing discussions, (I am not aware, there may be ongoing discussions), could it be applicable to where there is ongoing discussions, taking into account that there has not yet been agreement? I just thought I should ask that.

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Mr. President: Senator Stiell, you may have a shout out on that.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: We are operating in a competitive environment, and I believe the cleanest, absolute cleanest way of doing it is from the passing of the Legislation. To go back and to renegotiate for that pending list, I think will provide more confusion than anything else, and the market is very sensitive to these sorts of things. So the proposal is, from the passing of this Legislation, and those applicants, who are interested, come into this with the full knowledge of the legal requirements, moving forward, and it is a far cleaner, far simpler discussion to have, and I think we still achieve what we are trying to achieve, which is ensuring our competitiveness, but also ensuring, as we go through the Programme that it is serving the Grenadian interest, as best as possible, and we believe that this approach achieves precisely that.

Mr. President: Senator Williams, you are probably more endowed (well not probably, you certainly are more endowed) with those principles of retrospective Legislation. You may wish to add your voice or your voices to the operative principle here, which may help to clarify. Senator George.

Sen. the Hon. Kim George: Thank you, Mr. President. I have to confess to having a bit of a handicap, not being here at the last debate. Certainly, in terms of the principles, as you expressed them, that is, as far as I understand it, that is, generally, the Courts' view. The Court is generally reluctant to accept retrospective application except if it confers a benefit on the subject. And, I think your explanation was sufficient to address the concerns raised by my Honourable Colleague, Senator Lewis. As to, as I said, the context, in light of the previous debate, I would stay away from making comments on that, not having had the benefit of the debate and understanding what it is.

Mr. President: I am not inquiring about the debate, but just that principle in Law and the fact that it would open up the Programme to a lot of litigation. And, I think the

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point that Senator Stiell is making here, which is an extension of the point of Senator Lewis, because Senator Lewis's concern are two (2) things, as I understand it; one, the source of capital, which comes from this business and that is important; but, Senator Stiell's comments are, you don't want to have a very untidy situation where you have a lot of litigation and that what goes out there is that, look, this whole thing isn't safe in Grenada, because everybody having to end up in Court and blah, blah, blah, blah. This is why I think it is termed that we want a clean operation. So, it is not that I was inviting a comment on the debate; the debate has gone and it is gone, but just on that specific principle, if I may. Okay, Honourable Members.

So, the question is that the Message coming from the House of Representatives, in respect of the amendments to the 2019 Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Grenada Citizenship by Investment (Amendment) Act, 2019 that the House concurs with that Message. The question is, therefore, that the House concurs.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate concurred with the Message from the House of Representatives.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Item 16 - Public Business.

Item 17 – Adjournment.

Mr. President: Senator Ron Redhead, you have the floor

Sen. the Hon. Ron Livingston Redhead: Yes, Mr. President. Thank you very much. I don't think I would need your assistance understanding this process. It is one of my more interesting processes.

Now, Mr. President, I would just like to raise three simple issues this morning, in this Honourable Senate. The first issue, I have here, Mr. President, some liquid, in a bottle. **(Holding up a bottle of water)** Now, I want to assure you it is not alcohol. I

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would not bring the Honourable House to that level. But, this, Mr. President, in fact, is water from the Mt. Rich Dam, in St. Patrick.

Now, a few of its residents have asked me to raise this as a concern. I believe that it should form, as our basis, as we go forward the issue, Mr. President, of access to clean drinking water, that sort of thing. Now, they have reported to me that the water has a very unpleasant scent and taste, and, in fact, Mr. President, after consuming it, repeatedly, they have been getting cases of constipation, diarrhea, allegedly so, and, Mr. President, they are feeling nauseous. Now, this is a grave concern.

I believe, Mr. President, that the Ministry of Health and the Line Ministry, in conjunction, certainly, with NAWASA should look into this. And, I want to raise this, as a big issue, because I think, Mr. President, access to clean drinking water in our communities must be a right. And rural communities, Mr. President, as you know, have issues with sanitation, that sort of thing and we must all try and play our part in ensuring, Mr. President, that they have access to clean drinking water. So, I just thought I would have raised that issue.

Mr. President, the second issue...

Mr. President: Senator Redhead, just before you go on, has NAWASA been contacted on this matter?

Sen. the Hon. Ron Redhead: No. And, Mr. President, let me say this that I reserve that right to the residents. I did not want to get involved in it. They only asked me to look into the matter and seek to bring the information to the relevant authorities. And, the reason why I am raising it at the level of Parliament, Mr. President, is that they have said to me that it has been going on for over a year now or more. So, I believe that...

Mr. President: And, they have raised the matter with NAWASA.

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Sen. the Hon. Ron Redhead: I cannot confirm if any official correspondence was sent to NAWASA, but, Mr. President, I believe that it is an issue; not trying to embarrass NAWASA, because I think NAWASA is doing a reasonable job, in relation to training. But, the issue should be raised, at the highest level, I believe to be dealt with swiftly and appropriately. So, it was in that context I am raising it, because they have complained, Mr. President. I don't know to whom, but they have said that they have complained. I don't want to call any names, but just to say that the relevant people should look into the matter.

Mr. President, the second issue I want to speak a little about, I think it's an issue that must concern the entire Nation and that is, Mr. President, child sexual abuse. Now, in recent weeks, we would have seen, or did not see, some of us, a mother going to Social Media and venting her concerns over an issue, which occurred, I won't speak about the detail, as you know. And, Mr. President, she expressed certain things on Social Media. Now, to an extent, this was taken up by the Minister for Social Development. I have respect for the Minister for Social Development, but, Mr. President, I believe that we, as Parliamentarians must be sensitive, deeply, to the concerns. One of the reasons why the mother raised the concern is based on her understanding, the ineffectiveness of what exists today, in relation to Laws, in relation to programmes, that sort of thing, which deal with, essentially, the prevention of Child Sexual Abuse. And, it is true, because I want to give this House a report. From since last year, I had to give that, Mr. President, in the Budget Presentation, and I was unable to give that.

Now, myself and a young man by the name of Earl Maitland, Mr. President, we engaged the Constantine Methodist Primary School, and you will be amazed, Mr. President, of the amount of suggestions which came from the school. And, the reason why we engaged the school, Mr. President, was to see what we could do at the level of the community, at the level of the schools for this issue, taking into consideration the case with young Ariel Bola, and how that transpired, coming from school, we thought it important to start there.

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Mr. President, we met with the Principal and staff there, separately, and then we met, Mr. President, with the wider assembly body of students. One of the suggestions, which came out from that was, Mr. President, a Programme called **SEE-MISS**. That is, Mr. President, where you have one teacher, or a counselor spearheading the initiative to coordinate sensitive matters amongst students. And, Mr. President, that teacher, it was suggested would work along with Prefects, would work along with other students, who exhibit leadership qualities in the classroom, to help to bring students, who may be struggling with that issue, towards where they ought to be. Of course, Mr. President, taking into consideration that the programmes that exist now from the Ministry's standpoint, are not sufficient to really deal with the matter, because we are seeing, Mr. President, a total increase in the amount of cases, either being reported, or occurring, and this is a grave concern.

Mr. President, we also looked, particularly, at the role that the schools should play in fighting this, in that, Mr. President, they should be engaged, as occasionally as possible, to get their buy-in, to get their understanding. The Special Victims Unit must be engaging the schools, that sort of thing.

And, Mr. President, we had that very successful meet on two (2) occasions. You know we reached out to the Royal Grenada Police Force (RGPF); a letter was sent to the (RGPF) Headquarters and, personally, it was dropped in. We reached out, Mr. President, to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Social Development, and in both areas, Mr. President, we could not understand, Mr. President, why a genuine response was not given. We did not get a response from them, Mr. President, and we were a bit disappointed, because we see, Mr. President, the initiative to fight sexual abuse, as something that the Nation must take its role in, and not just the Ministry, not just the (RGPF) Special Victims Unit, but the entire country; we must be on board with this.

And, Mr. President, on that note, I want to raise some concerns. The Special Victims Unit has been set up, at least, a year now, or just a little under that, and as far as I am aware I have not heard any information, in terms of whether it is effective or not. I have not heard, Mr. President, what is the next critical step in dealing with the matter.

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Mr. President, people in the Community are calling for stiffer penalties and legislations to deal with perpetrators practicing this act, especially against children. And, Mr. President, newly the issue that the mother raised surrounded the issue with children with special needs.

Now, this is a big topic. We cannot handle this in one day. But, I believe that for the record, we must begin to play our role as Parliamentarians, as Lawmakers, that sort of thing, Mr. President, and get involved in working with the Community to make this very effective, and once and for all stamp out on it. And, I will say lastly that I do not take kindly to the statements that were made in relation to Facebook, or Social Media activists. And, Mr. President, one of the issues that they have asked me to raise is that those activists groups, they do not have access to information. They cannot determine, Mr. President, in which community is Child Sexual Abuse prevalent, and at what age range is it prevalent, so that they can know how to tailor their message.

We are calling on the Ministry of Social Development not to seek to chastise them, but to engage them. As I said, Mr. President, I firmly believe that a national response is needed, to deal with this issue, and I think that I should raise this, again, at the highest level.

Mr. President, lastly the issue of oil and gas. Now, this is very interesting. Mr. President, some people engaged me and said to me that I should not attack Russians and Russian Mafia, that sort of thing. But, Mr. President, I want to make it absolutely clear. I am not anybody's enemy. I am not looking to attack anybody in the questioning of our natural resources. I am not seeking to engage in any sort of mischief against the State.

I believe firmly, that the people of Russia can be hailed for their many creativities in Science and Technology and all the wonderful things that they are doing in the world. But, Mr. President, in our Hemisphere, in our Region, we as nationals of our country, we must know what is going on with our resources and we must know that, Mr. President, in a manner not to push away, but, Mr. President, to engage.

I firmly believe in dialogue, and, Mr. President, the reasons why we ask these questions are not to attack people, or not to seek to create enemies with foreign

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Powers. But, Mr. President, we must know and the Government, Mr. President, of the day must understand that they must account to the people. That's just principally what it is, and we ought not to go down the road, Mr. President, in any way, and I am not accusing, of intimidation and scare tactics, because I wouldn't take lightly to it, Mr. President, and I just think that we must go the course of getting access to these information, Mr. President, for every citizen, so that they can have, they can know what is going on for their benefit. Thank you very much.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Glynis Roberts.

Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts: Thank you, Mr. President. I want to use this opportunity, as well, to speak on a few matters of concern. But, as my colleague was speaking about sexual harassment, I would start with that first, and to say, Ron, that within the Parliament, we have a Women's Parliamentary Caucus and a couple weeks ago, former Senator Brenda Hood and myself met with UN Women, and that's one of the things we are working on, is to bring the Bill to Parliament. So, soon, it should be here for the first reading, and not only for the first reading and going through all stages...

(Inaudible comments by the President)

Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts: Sexual Harassment, generally. And, we also would want to lay it in the House, for first reading and do lots of consultation around the Island, on it, rather than going through all stages. So, that is in process, from the Woman's Parliamentary Caucus standpoint.

I also want to look, Mr. President, as we approach Carnival. I know it is going to be launched on May 4. I want to, again, this year, speak to the persons involved in Culture and the Arts, to ensure that the songs that are being played on our Airways are not derogatory, especially to women, and I also want to speak to women, to say that

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you can stand up and not dance and chip to these sort of songs that are degrading us. It is always about a woman this and a woman that.

I also want to speak to the Calypsonians. I think we need to be more creative. You can look at a lot of different topics you can use with melody, and also the costumes. I don't know, if it is too late for us to set up a Committee to look at these costumes; but they're not creative, and I may be sounding as they say 'old school', but I want to speak to young women out there, you need to keep your bodies intact. I mean, enjoying yourself is not about being naked, and if you look at the costumes for the men, they are always fully clad, so I don't know why we are selling ourselves. And, as a mother, a grandmother, I want to appeal to us during this Carnival and all those who are in authority, to ensure that step-by-step, we curb that. I am longing for the days when I was growing up and you went to Carnival and you saw Sailor Mas and you saw people creating butterflies and bees. But, now it is all about this... **(inaudible comments)**... (whatever it is). So, that I wanted to talk about, because Carnival is approaching.

Also, in area I live, in Clarkes Court Bay, two weeks ago we discovered that a Waste Company that is pumping sewerage is actually coming into the Mangrove and dumping that waste in the Mangrove, and then when everybody is passing in Woodlands they are saying it has a scent. Now, the Police was called, Parliamentary Representative... I want to please... Ministry of the Environment, please look into that.

Also, the old vehicles...

Mr. President: Senator Roberts, do you know whose Waste Company it is?

Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts: Yes. We did take pictures.

Mr. President: Anybody has photos?

Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts: Yes, the pictures were sent out.

Mr. President: Then the Law is there.

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Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts: Okay. So, we will work with that.

Mr. President: It is not the Parliament now. Your job is to ensure that the Law is enforced with the Police.

Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts: Great. I think all of that was done.

Mr. President: I am glad that you made point.

Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts: Yes. Thank you. And, additionally, I have been living there for twenty-seven (27) years, and the old vehicles are a nuisance, and additionally I know people have their property and they want to do their garages, but, please, there are too many garages on the road. It is a hindrance to traffic. Going through Mont Toute/Grand Anse Valley, everybody has a garage alongside the road. You can hardly get by. Traffic is a problem in the area, because we are having more vehicles. There are lots of people on the Island. I am not against progress or development, but I think we need to find a way to, at least, have a Warden or two, not only by Sugar Mill, but Grand Anse Valley Main Road.

Last couple weeks ago, when the container fell by Silver Sands, you couldn't get through. If we had an emergency, nothing would have happened, because the road stood still. You took an hour or two hours to get to where you had to go, because all the traffic had to be diverted that way, either way. And, then I think we need to be proactive, to ensure that there is no parking now, because you have to get the traffic to flow, because we are looking at emergencies. So, I want to just lay these issues out. Thank you.

Mr. President: Senator the Honourable Kim George, I saw your light.

Sen. the Hon. Kim George: Yes, Mr. President. I wanted to... **(Inaudible comments by the President)** Beg your pardon? **(Inaudible comments by the**

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President) I see. I wanted to make some comments, informed by the comments made by my colleagues on the 'Other Side'. Firstly, to commend them both, I think the issues that they have raised, certainly the issue of sexual harassment, in so far as it affects women's rights, I think they are very relevant and I think they are critical for this House to, not only pay attention to, but to debate, as it is necessary.

On the question of the behaviour at Carnival time, as Senator Roberts correctly said, it is an issue. I am not sure that we will ever be able to return to the good old days, when everybody was fully clothed in flowing pants and long sleeves, but, certainly, it troubles me as a younger woman that we don't seem to have the restraint that we need to have; that we don't, as revelers, and I play Carnival and I will play, this year, God's willing, but we don't seem to have the restraints that we need to have, as women to introspect and to ask ourselves certain questions, and to remind ourselves that there is life after Carnival Monday and Carnival Tuesday.

And, it is important to bear in mind, as well, and not just for the revelers, but for the persons in authority that there are rules and regulations, in place, which govern behaviour at Carnival time, and I think if those rules are enforced, certainly, if revelers and stakeholders have knowledge of the rules and if the Authorities insist on compliance with those Laws, I think we would go a long way towards solving those issues; and so that's my contribution, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you. Senator the Honourable Dunstan Campbell, you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Dunstan Campbell: Thank you, very much, Mr. President. I would like to take this opportunity to bring to the House a situation, which I think is troubling to the fisher folks of our beautiful country.

Over the past few months, we have been having several reports of encounters with foreign vessels out in our waters. In fact, this is not new to the Fishing Industry. About a year and a half ago I remember a fisher folk at Gouyave, was robbed, at sea, by another vessel. We were told that the people on that vessel were speaking Spanish,

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which means they were from a Spanish country. We are now having the situation on the Eastern side of the Island where the fisher folks are encountering, or allegedly encountering, I am saying 'allegedly', because of what is being said, but, at that particular point where a FAD, a Fish Aggregating Device is located. Now, this situation is causing... the concern is that fishermen are fearful of going out to that area to fish, an area, which is dedicated for our fisher folks to harvest the natural resources of our country.

Now, Senator Redhead, earlier said that the natural resources of our country belong to us. It is our sovereign right, and, as such, we should be protected in the harvesting of those resources. We have had the Media, from both sides. Some people are saying that it is not real. Others are saying that it is life-threatening. But, I think we should have a level head in addressing this situation. The fisher folks, they've got the rights. They are the right holders for those resources. We have the duty bearers, the Policemen, the members from the Fisheries Department, who are supposed to protect our Fisher folks. Now, we have had reports; I have seen reports of Ministry people reporting that these incidents were taking place, and action should have been taken, but they were not taken. So, we have the situation now where it seems to be a crisis and some people are saying that it is a hoax, so it is creating a problem.

My advice is that at this critical moment, we must bring together the main players, put in place an action plan, so that we can address this situation. In fact, I spoke to a Senior member in the Fisheries Unit, and this guy said that he was asked to go out in the middle of the night to locate the vessel, with a small rubber boat, so we know the Coast Guard boat, and he was scared for his life, in that little boat, and they were supposed to be going after a boat about ten times the size of this little boat. So, it is like the elephant and the ant. Now, we should not endanger the lives of our Security Forces, so they, too, have the right to be protected.

So, I am saying that we should get down on the table, bring all the facts together and develop an Action Plan, to address this very serious situation. In fact, people were looking for reasons to get out of the situation. In fact, during that same upsurge in complaints, there was little fish on the market, or it was very difficult to get fish, so we

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said, okay, you are not having fish in the market, because of this foreign fishing vessel, but in that argument, Mr. President, a very important point was lost. The point is that, yes, we can say this is the situation for the fisher folk in Grenville, but in Gouyave they were not catching fish also. So, in this particular case, two (2) situations were happening at the same time, and it gives me the occasion to bring them up here. The bait situation, if you don't have baits, the boats would not go out to fish. So, the boats in Gouyave, the boats in St. George's, lining up along the Carenage were not going out to fish, because they don't have bait. So, while we are dealing with the situation of foreign intervention, legal or illegal, we also have in the Fisheries Sector the very serious concern of bait. So, whether or not you are not catching fish because foreigners are taking the fish, you also have the situation where you are not catching, because you do not have bait. So, while we should put together a Task Force to address the problem of illegal fishing, we should also take into consideration the situation of bait, Mr. President.

So, I am advising the Leader of Government's Business to bring it to his colleagues to address the situation, to address these two (2) situations, the situation of illegal fishing and, yes, it is happening. I would err, because right now there is a side which says, no, it is not happening. But, I would err with the fisher folks and say that it is happening. In fact, one guy has promised some photos of the boat, a red and green boat; there is no yellow. **(Laughter)** I am allowed to do that, Mr. President. But, to bring together this team to address this very seriously.

The Fisheries Sector contributed sixteen million dollars to our Economy in 2017. It is an important Sector that we should not play around with. So, I am asking, again, the Leader of Government's Business to speak to his colleagues to take some action on this matter. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: If I may say, Senator Campbell, I mean that there are limitations in the Coast Guard, but there is drone technology. I know quite a number of Grenadians, who have drones. I am certain that a coordinated investigation, done by the Police, could bring together drones. I am certain that the cost of a good drone in narcotics fighting could also, and these are things that can be easily acquired. I mean,

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drones now are a fact of life. So, I don't know what difficulty... I saw it, in fact, on the news, and there were contending claims. Some people were saying it was a hoax, some saying it is not. I mean, in today's technology that could easily be determined, and I can't understand why, for our own national security, because in the same way we could have illegal fishing outside there, I mean, don't ask me about my expertise on certain questions, but, certainly, it is an issue that people can resolve. I don't see that's an unresolvable challenge to make this kind of determination.

The other thing is this; the source of bait would be things like what? Because if it is a bait shortage, you are saying it may not be as a result of the Trawler trawling. Is it a climatic issue? Periodically, I know you have species, sometimes. As a little boy, growing up, people tell you this year Jacks run ashore. And, you have years when Jacks were as scarce as gold. So, I mean... I know in the old days most fishermen used Flying Fish. Flying Fish, then, was looked down upon, as a 'not too good' fish. And, quite often, when you go to buy fish, a Fisherman would give you two pounds of Flying Fish on top of what you buy. You know the old practice of you buy a pound of potatoes and you put one on it. As a little boy, growing up, people seldom bought Flying Fish, so that matter would need to be investigated. Anyway, I just thought I would add my two pence on that. Any other Member wishes to say anything on the Adjournment? If not, we could; yes, Senator Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. André Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I want to use this opportunity to bring to the Nation's attention, again, and to the Government; and let me just indicate that it is a matter that I have had some preliminary discussions with the Leader of Government's Business, because I am seeking for a way of even the possibility of bringing a bill to the Senate, but understanding this politics here is not Party politics, but understanding the politics of how these things work and one recognises that one would need the support of the Government Side, and, therefore, I have engaged in preliminary discussions and also put on the table that I have since written to the Prime Minister on the matter, so I am just giving the preliminary.

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It has to do with a serious matter that most of us may be aware of, that disadvantages Financial Services workers. It is a matter that has been outstanding, and there are two (2) elements. The most recent one is more pressing, but that matter has been outstanding since about 2016, thereabouts. I am aware that a number of correspondences have been exchanged with the Government, even at the highest level. Discussions have been held and that has to do with when a Financial Institution goes into insolvency, the workers in that institution would be number seven and number eight, in terms of any benefits that are due to that worker.

In the case of the Grenada Labour Code, the worker has the first call, so this is discriminatory, in our view, as we have raised it in the past; so, I have been seeking the intervention of Government on this matter. But, the most pressing one, right now, has to do with a new development and that development came about, as a result of the ongoing discussions between Republic Bank and Bank of Nova Scotia; the question of successor employer.

Under the Grenada Labour Code, the workers employed in the Institution that is being gotten rid of through sale, change of name, etcetera, etcetera, has the option to go over to the successor employer, or opt not to go, and get termination allowance. However, the Bank is relying on a Section of the Banking Act and we, in the Labour Movement, do not share that view; let me make that point. We do not share that view that the Section that the Bank is relying on, has merit. But, Scotia is relying on this part of the Banking Act to indicate that the workers in the Financial Institution do not have the option of seeking termination, which is discriminatory, relative to the other Workforce. And, it is in this context I have written to the Prime Minister and I have been engaged in discussion, as I said, with the Leader of Government's Business.

What did Antigua do? I want to use Antigua, as an example, because it is a regional issue that we have been trying to address through different forms. In order to strengthen the workers' argument in Antigua, it is not that the Antigua Government, or the Antigua Labour Movement agrees with the Bank, but Antigua has made sure, as of two weeks ago, through their discussions, they made doubly sure, by deleting that Section of the Banking Act. I am not addressing the aspect that deals with insolvency,

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because although this is important, but it is not of critical importance right now, because it is not something that is confronting the worker. What is confronting the workers in Scotia is the issue of the successor employer.

So, Antigua has found a way of making doubly sure, and that is what I have raised, and we would like it to be addressed. I have written, as I have indicated, to the Prime Minister, because all other workers in Grenada, all other workers in Grenada, under the Labour Code, under Section 45 (ii) of the Employment Act, under Successor Employer, has that right. In other words, a worker cannot be sold. If I apply to Firm 'A' because I am interested in having a career with Firm 'A' in this case, Scotia, I never choose to apply to Republic, for whatever reason, and it turns out that the owners of Republic and Scotia decided to go into an arrangement where Republic has bought out Scotia, the argument advanced by Scotia is that they can sell that worker, and that is the philosophy now. The central difference between a freeman and slave is to determine I do not want to be sold.

The Bank is saying, however, that you have the right. You can say you are not coming over, but you will not be entitled to any benefit. So, I, who have given twenty-five (25) years of service to Scotia through no fault of mine, the owners have decided, Mr. President, to go into that Financial Arrangement. And, if I want to exercise my option of not going over, as contained under the Labour Code, the Bank is arguing, and we do not share that view; the Bank is arguing that the Banking Act does not permit us. As I said, in the case of Antigua, Antigua found the way, they did not agree, our colleagues in Antigua can tell you that, Comrade Chester Hughes and David Mosiah and others can tell you, that they did not share that view. But, to make doubly sure, to cut off the argument of Scotia, just to stop that argument, this is what they have done, and this is why I have engaged the Leader of Government's Business.

So, I look forward to Government's concurrence in bringing that amendment urgently, to secure the workers of Bank of Nova Scotia, who has no intention or who wants to exercise that option of not being sold over to Republic Bank. And, this is of critical importance to us. So, Senator Simon Stiell, I look forward to our ongoing discussion and, urgently, I am addressing the matters. This is of crucial concern. And,

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why it must be of concern also, although it confronts Scotia today, but the same would apply for any Financial Institution; so be it a Credit Union, be it a Bank, any Financial Institution, where the ownership changes, the workers of the workplace, or the business that is being sold, or a change of name, or Lease, or so, will be disadvantaged, relative to Section (45) (ii) of the Employment Act.

So, I wanted to bring this to the attention of the Senate and to the Nation. We are scheduled to meet with Scotia on Friday, to continue negotiations for a new Collective Agreement, and that matter is a central one. We have given the assurance to Scotia that we will not accept this lying down, so we are trying on the Legal front and through the Government's intervention to see what can be done, because the actions that the Technical and Allied Workers Union shall be engaged in, will have consequences for the Financial Institution, because we shall not limit it to just the Bank of Nova Scotia, because all Financial Institutions will be subjected to this. And, therefore, we have started engagement with the other Unions that have workers in other Financial Institutions. So, it is of critical importance for us to address this matter, frontally. As I have said, Antigua has found a way to avoid industrial unrest, because our comrades in Antigua, the Antigua and Barbuda Workers' Union, would not have accepted this approach.

The other matter that I want to bring to the attention... a golden opportunity has presented itself for returning to a state of normalcy on a particular matter that arose coming out of the struggle for Pensions and Gratuity...

(Time Bell Rings)

Sen. the Hon. André Lewis: ...where the Grenada Union of Teachers, at its 58th Annual Convention, took a decision to extend an Olive Branch on the question of 'Work to Rule', coming out of a request made by the Minister for Education, and I was present there. The atmosphere was very well, in my opinion, and, therefore, I want to call on all parties concerned to grab that opportunity and resolve that matter of the docking of teachers' pay, which can bring a state a normalcy and to encourage all

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workers to attend May Day, on May 1st, in the Parish of St. David. We will be gathering at Belle Vue and the main activity would be held at La Sagesse Playing Field and the different Unions would be going to their respective locations to socialize.

And, to finally end by associating ourselves, the Labour Movement, with the concerns raised by the population and the Senators inside here on the question of sexual abuse, especially of children, but all sexual abuse and domestic abuse. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Lewis. Just let me say that the current Banking Act nullifies Section (45) (ii) of the Industrial Relations Act. On the news this morning, I am not sure whether or not Parliament met, but in Antigua there was an extraordinary meeting of the Parliament and they took certain measures to ensure that the principle of the abolition of 1834 is contained in the modern Industrial Relations Act.

45 (ii) of our Act protects the worker and that's clear, but the Banking Act, which was passed in 2015 or '16, I am not sure, discriminates against workers in the Financial Sector. All other workers, the principle of 1834, in which a worker is not treated, as property, is contained in our Laws. I just thought I would just make a broad statement on that and that the Antiguan have taken measures today on that. It was the dominant part of the Regional News today, in terms of what is regarded in this particular field, so it is good. But, I guess, discussions would take place. But, this is just to clarify that the Banking Act of 2016 extinguishes the protection that is contained in the principle of the abolition. I just thought I would rest that statement there. Thank you. Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, if there are no more comments from the 'Other Side', I'll just like to make a few comments of my own with response to some of the issues raised, starting with Senator Redhead and the water issue in Mt. Rich, in St. Patrick.

I think it's important, Mr. President, notwithstanding, the concerns of the local community, but I would suggest before bringing a matter such as this to Parliament, it is your right to do so, that some basic fundamental checks, as to whether this has actually

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been raised with NAWASA, who is the responsible Entity, I think would be prudent in dealing with the matter.

But, I will take this on, Mr. President, and I will speak straight after this Session to NAWASA to get further information, because what we do not want to do is prolong this. I mean it is... if we are genuine in our desire to resolve a matter that is negatively impacting a Community, our first priority should be to go to the source of the alleged problem and try and address it there. And, that is what I would seek to do, Mr. President, on leaving here. But, the statements, in terms of access to clean water, etcetera is absolutely fundamental. And, we would have seen, in recent years, unprecedented levels of investment within the Water Authority, within the Water Network ensuring that there is access to every citizen. It is a fundamental right to clean drinking water.

We have seen... this Administration has sought funding; again, unprecedented levels, one hundred and twenty-five million dollars (\$125 m) will be invested, through support from the Green Climate Fund and the Government of Germany, specifically, in our Water Sector, building resilience in that Water Sector, ensuring that we are able to capture, store and distribute water with the negative impacts of Climate Change to every citizen, and to increase the services. But, I take the point from the Member on the 'Other Side' and I will certainly be raising this with my colleagues and with NAWASA, if there is a particular issue on how we address that.

The matter of Child Sexual Abuse; Mr. President, this is a national issue. It goes beyond just the actions of Government. It is a matter that needs to engage every citizen, every man, woman and child within this country. And, it is a matter that this Government has and is taking very seriously. Again, we have seen unprecedented levels of interventions in the area of trying to address the issue of sexual abuse, child and adult and the issues of harassment.

So, this Administration, Mr. President, has established a Special Victims Unit, which, there are statistics. The Minister for Social Development has spoken publicly on the national response to the establishment of this Unit. The significant level of reported incidents, interventions by Counsellors, trained persons, to not only investigate, but

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provide support for victims and seeking recourse through the Legal System where those matters exist.

The establishment of a Sex Offenders' Register, again, I move towards putting informal structures in place to address this issue. The establishment of a dedicated Task Force Multi-Sectorial Entity, Government/Non-Governmental persons, again, looking at reviewing our legislation, looking at all of the action that Government is taking, should be taking, where the gaps are, where it needs to be strengthened; a very active Task Force, looking at how we can close down the number of incidents in this area.

Community outreach; community engagements, again, on unprecedented levels, in our schools, again, working with Counsellors with the Police Force. This is a matter, Mr. President, that this Administration, this Government takes very, very seriously. But, it's clear that with all of the work that we are doing, it is very evident we still have a very long way to go, a long way to go. We are scratching the surface of this scourge that we must stamp out.

And, the recent case that the member on the 'Other Side' raised is an extremely unfortunate case. It has been well publicized in Social Media. And, I would suggest, Mr. President, Social Media has its place. It should be part of us, but that isn't the space for some of the comments that have been made, and there needs to be sensitivity to the victim and persons involved in this.

But, what this particular case has highlighted are deficiencies in the Judicial System, how this matter was handled with a minor and the need for us to review and that review has already started. These discussions have been taking place, at the highest levels, Mr. President. So, whether it is how do we establish more child-friendly procedures in evidence collecting, in dealing with these matters; whether it is the use, the legal corroboration and use of unsworn evidence, evidence produced by a minor and how that could be more sensitively, more accurately be collected; the use of DNA and how that could be entered as evidence. And, the whole issue of sentencing, Mr. President; how some very clear messages can be sent through the appropriate sentencing of offenders. And, all of these things, Mr. President, are being reviewed and

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will be strengthened in due course. So, the concerns raised on the 'Other Side' are well taken. The action is being taken, more can be done. And, again, it's not a political debate. This is one that requires the involvement of all actors in this.

Now, moving on to Senator Campbell's comments; there has been a debate with illegal fishing. There is the debate, is this a hoax, or is this real? There is certainly a threat, Mr. President, always has been, and will continue to be so, notwithstanding the comments about the lack of bait within our waters, and the challenges we face there. In relative terms, Grenada's fishing waters are rich compared to those of neighboring territories. So, we pose or present ourselves, as a very attractive target for illegal fishing and that has always been the case and that will continue. But, we need to speak to facts here. The matter has been taken seriously by the Ministry of Fisheries and discussions have been taking place, again, at very senior levels.

The Coastguard, Mr. President, has been engaged beyond the small rubber dinghy that was mentioned, a thorough investigation has taken place. The Coastguard, with its sea worthy vessels has been out patrolling, Mr. President, and are increasing their patrols. But the feedback that we have received, thus far, that's not saying there isn't a problem, but the report, thus far, from the Coastguards who are the most qualified formal means of assessing the situation, have said they are yet to find evidence of what the Senator on the 'Other Side' has spoken of. However, we are receiving reports from fishermen who are there at sea and seeing firsthand. So, the suggestion from the Member that there be the establishment of this Task Force, which must include the Coastguard, must include our fishermen, must include Government, must include our Fishing Communities, I think it's an excellent suggestion and one that, again, we will put forward, because this threat is real. Whether it is being exaggerated, or whether it is being underplayed, we have to get to the heart of it. It is a threat and it needs to be addressed, Mr. President.

Moving on to the comments from Senator Lewis regarding the take over from Republic Bank/Scotia Bank, this is a commercial arrangement and negotiations are ongoing. And, we hope that, as with any industrial dispute, an amicable agreement can be reached between employer and employee, and those discussions, however, tense

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they may be are taking place and both parties are at the Negotiating Table; so that is a very, very good start.

But, Government is sensitive to the welfare of the workers within the Sector here in Grenada. And, if, and when the time is right, if and when the time is right for Government to make statements, or intervene, we will certainly do so to protect what is in the best interests of workers and employer. It's a fair settlement that is required by both parties.

And, the statements about the Grenada Union of Teachers, extending an Olive Branch, that is always welcomed, Senator Lewis, through you, Mr. President, always welcomed. And, any olive branch that is offered, that is in the best interest of our children, our children are at the heart of this, Mr. President; so any olive branch that best serves our children will be welcomed; any olive branch that is in our national interest will be well received, Mr. President, and any olive branch, which speaks to a final solution that is affordable, that is sustainable, that falls within the fiscal rules that we must work within, to ensure the sustainability of this program will be welcomed. So, I look forward to the olive branch and the continuation of our discussions.

So, Mr. President, I think that covers most of the key points that were raised here. And, in closing, Mr. President, I welcome the level of engagement from the 'Other Side', and the raising of matters that are of national importance. I'll just say in going back to my opening comment, it is important that the matters that we do bring before this Parliament, there are avenues that we can seek, if we are genuine in solving problems that impact our communities; that there are more efficient ways if our genuine intent is to resolve those matters than raising it here in Parliament first, before seeking basic information as to where that problem lies; is that problem real? Is it a problem or not. But, as I said, Mr. President, I welcome the level of engagement and the comments raised on the 'Other Side', and if there are no more comments or contributions from 'Our Side', I beg to move for the adjournment, Mr. President.

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Mr. President: Thank you, Senator Stiell. I would be very brief, Honourable Members. But, I want to make a few comments on matters which were raised by Members of the House under the Adjournment.

First of all, it is an understatement to say, that we are not experiencing an epidemic of sexual crimes in this country. I turned aged sixty-seven (67) on Saturday the 13th of April (**applause**) and never, ever, in my sixty-seven years (67); and let me tell you something, Senators, my life experience is equivalent to three (3) lifetimes or more; I have never witnessed anything equal to what's happening here now.

Parliament has a responsibility to the citizens and to the Constitution. The role of Parliament is the pass Laws for the good governance, for the safety and well-being of its citizens. When that eight (8) year old was murdered, oh boy, that had play, and rightly so. And, then the entire community, including Parliamentarians took a hibernation until the most recent incident. Where is the mass indignation? Where are the hundreds of mothers picketing? Where are Parliamentarians? Senator Stiell, you made a point, and let me be cautious here, because this is not an attack on the Judiciary. I am still investigating this matter, as to whether or not there were objective limitations to fit the offense in respect of the punishment; the pendulum has swung too far in favour of the criminals. There is more sympathy for the criminal in our society today.

An individual was just released from an American Prison. He was caught in their system with cocaine, and I was shocked to hear the news this week, that the person arrived in Trinidad for some cultural activity and the Police, on the basis of probable cause, executed a Search Warrant. What worries me is that, that individual is being peddled as a hero and the Police Commissioner now issues an apology for the Police executing its function on the principle of probable cause. What is happening to Caribbean Civilization? And, I can guarantee you that we would go through another cycle of hibernation until, and it will happen, you know, a two (2) year old is assaulted.

I have been investigating this matter to find out whether or not the Judicial Officer, who heard that case, whether or not that individual was constrained in any way, by existing legislation. From the young eight (8) year old to now, why have we not done

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anything? I mean, I understand this talk about we are consulting and so on, but, from the murder of the eight (8) years old to now.

And, to my Learned Attorneys, justice has not been served. Could you all, please, take a pro bono case and sue the individual? Where are the Women's Organizations, as arms of the Political Parties in this matter? Where is the protest? And, I am really disturbed, and I am really, really, really, profoundly disturbed by what's unfolding here; a five (5) year old? And, the problem is not Counsellors, you know. It is not an insufficiency of Counsellors and so on; the problem is more complex than this.

We have enabling Institutions at work in this country, that enable this kind of behaviour. The State spends, I don't know where the last spend is; it's a pity, Senator Cox is not here, but we take State funds and give it to something called a Mass Band that violates all our Public Decency Laws. And, we award them by Band of the Year with taxpayers' money to be indecent. We allow to be played on our radio, all our Radio Stations are licensed, there are no Decency Legislation enforced or any Body enforced. You can go to the most primary and infant Sport activity and it takes place right in my neighborhood. Every sporting activity now is a Festival of vulgarity, listen to the music, listen to the music, and again, Senator Cox, isn't here, so I don't know if you are familiar with the 'Let Go Beast' period. Well, Senator Stiell is here, because you know in the Dry Season, in Carriacou, 'Let Go Beast' period mean all animals are untethered, because of the dryness of the place. But, listen to the lyrics. Listen to the lyrics, and I don't want to focus on any particular genre of music, but, listen to the lyrics. They promote the sexual objectivisation of women. The lyrics are essentially an instruct in sexual anatomy and it's played openly.

I have an Announcer, who is a very good friend of mine. She is on one of the Radio Stations every morning. I can call her name, Ms. Brenda Baptiste, and she rails against the rising sexual crimes, and maybe it is because I listen to that Station most. But, one of the primary offenders in the promotion and playing of lyrics that objectify women, sexually, and prepare young men to see women for only one thing is that Radio Station. And, I was shocked one day listening to the Station and the song which followed immediately her programme was finished. Now, I can't say she was the

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person, who was spinning the music. But, the point I am making is this, you can walk into any public place, any shop and the producers of alcohol are the ones who target, because they say sex sells. Alright. You look at the television, and in America there are ratings. Here, you hear thirteen (13) plus, seventeen (17), fourteen (14) year olds, there is no rating here, none.

The most adult content are played when children are home, unsupervised, after school. I have tired complained about the level of this activity. So, there is little wonder that we have this explosion of sexual crime, because people are conditioned. And, I am saying you can go to the youngsters' sports event. They have Kindergarten Sports, and when you hear the music that adults play in a Kindergarten Sporting Activity you're shocked. Well, I don't know if people can be shocked anymore, because they have become desensitised.

So, Senator Roberts, I want to commend the Women's Caucus. The last meeting that I attended, which we held, it's a matter that I raised. You would know that the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Grenada Branch, which met recently took certain decisions, and I am happy to see that it's being executed in that the Sexual Harassment Bill would not be taken through all its stages, and we are trying to move more and more in that direction, where Bills are read for the first time, the public is alerted and where Parliament can reach people to be engaged. And, as I indicated before, at that meeting, the Union which I led has been in the forefront of fighting against sexual harassment at the workplace.

We picketed a particular workplace. We fought fiercely for the women who were abused. The Union was successful in getting them restored to their jobs and be compensated, because they were terminated simply because they complained about sexual harassment. So, that this Bill, I feel justly proud is, as a result of the work of the Technical and Allied Workers Union and this is an opportunity now for the Union to discuss, because what we want to do is to have some joint public sessions on the Bill. The Bill would be circulated to all sectors of the society including Trade Unions, other NGOs, Organizations that deal with the women question and so on, and this is an

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important development. So, Senator, thanks for informing us what the Women's Parliamentary Caucus is going to do, and we look forward to a very active thing.

I appeal, Senator Stiell, the time has come, when State funds; in other words, there must be a Demerit Point System. The more vulgar your Carnival Band the demerit points come out. So, that we don't reward people for public vulgarity, and that's essentially what we do. And, then we are shocked, when a five (5) year old becomes the object of sexual assault, when we indirectly contribute by our failure, as Parliamentarians, because we have to take this responsibility. We have not been amending the Laws. We have not been sending the proper signals to the Judiciary, which, in my mind, has been too lenient, when it comes to punishment for sexual crimes. And, something has got to be done and done with haste. Let us not wait for the next glaring assault to occur before things are put in place. Law is always a progression, you know. So, you can pass the Bills now, later you can strengthen it. But, how does a forty something year old man takes advantage of a five-year-old and walked away without a custodial sentence, or without a flogging. I am just dumb fumbled by this whole situation, and, quite frankly, I am kind of tired of the talk, because there are real victims outside there. There are real victims outside there.

Honourable Members, finally, I am coming back to the wayside Garage operations, and, again, I appeal that something ought to be done. The Minister for the Environment, again, I appeal, for the wanton destruction of our trees. We are transitioning now into the Rainy Season and the Debushers are cleaning all the banks, clean, not a single plant left; so the first rains we are going to have multiple small slides, all over the place, and something has got to be done. The Debushers have got to be supervised. Those people, who employ them in Contracts need to be pulled together and to be given a training course, in first of all, the importance of trees, the importance of trees to prevent erosion, the importance of trees that lend itself to the ambiance, that this is a peaceful Paradise of greenery and health, so that we can attract more visitors, rather than, okay, I got that job, so... people need to be trained in whatever job they are going to do. I am not blaming the Debushers. I am blaming the lack of supervision by the Line Ministry that has this responsibility; and I come back to the wanton destruction

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of our Bamboo Groves, because that is adding costs by the collapse of our roadside, and the unsightliness that occurs, when these things happen.

So, I close with this, and I conjoin, again, with the appeal of Senator Roberts and ask for the relevant authorities to let us stop the talk and do something. Let us amend the Laws. There are separate Branches, but I am deeply concerned. To my mind, there is only one Judicial Officer. I am not at liberty to name, but there is only one Judicial Officer, who, to my mind, prescribes adequate punishment for some of the crimes I hear, and I thank her, I shall not call the name of the individual. The Pendulum has gone too far. There is literally a celebration of criminals, as I pointed to earlier, an individual, who is now a hero and to whom the Commissioner of Police, or Minister, a Police Commissioner, I can't remember which, found it necessary to issue an apology, when the Police, with probable cause, executed its duty to protect us. Honourable Members, I thank you.

This Senate now stands adjourned **sine die**.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned sine die @ 11:06 a.m.

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