



GRENADA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**Second Session of the Tenth Parliament**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

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**SENATE**

Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2019

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***Senate Meeting Held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George  
On Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.***

***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 Norland Cox	- Minister for Youth Development, Sports, Culture and the Arts
Senator the Honourable Dr. Winston Garraway	- Minister of State with responsibility for Disaster Management and Information
Senator the Honourable Kim George	- Member
Senator the Honourable Cathisha Williams	- Member
Senator the Honourable Kerryne James	- Member
Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie	- Deputy President
Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis	- Member

**ABSENT**

Senator the Honourable Glynis Roberts	- Member (Excuse tendered)
Senator the Honourable Ron Livingston Redhead	- Member (Excuse tendered)
Senator the Honourable Dr. Dunstan Campbell	- Member (Excuse tendered)

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**Prayers  
Minutes**

**The Sitting of the Senate began at 9:05 a.m.**

**Mr. President:** Good morning, Honourable Members. The Honourable Winston Garraway.

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

***(Senate prayer was said).***

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

***(Prayers were said).***

**Mr. President:** Honourable Members, pray be seated.

Honourable Members, the sad news has arrived that the mother of our Olympic hero, Kirani James, died, almost momentarily, I think it is sometime last night or early morning. As our mark of respect and the extension of our deepest sympathies and condolences to the family, I would ask that the House stand in a moment of silence in respect of this very sad indication.

***(One moment of silence observed).***

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Honourable Members. Pray be seated. Could the Clerk convey to Kirani and the rest of his family our most profound condolences of the House? Thank you.

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

Item 4 - Confirmation of Minutes.

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

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Sitting of the Senate held at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 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 Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2019 be confirmed.

**Mr. President:** Senator Lewis.

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**Minutes**

**Announcements by Mr. President**

**Sen. the Hon. Andre Lewis:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. I do not know if my Minutes is missing something, but I am not seeing my name as being present. So, if this is the case, I want to offer this as a correction, if that is the correct time to so do.

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, I also propose a correction or an amendments to the Minutes on page 80, the penultimate paragraph to replace the words 'Budget Address' with 'Throne Speech'.

**Mr. President:** Could you just run this through, again, please?

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** So, page 80 of the Minutes, the penultimate, second from last paragraph, the second sentence, it speaks to the 'Budget Address', and that should read 'Throne Speech'.

So, "the President solicited the opinions of Members of the Senate on wanting to further debate the Motion on the 'Budget Address' that should be on the 'Throne Speech.'

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell, you indicated that your attention was drawn to the penultimate paragraph of Page 80. In my copy, the penultimate paragraph of page 80, (**looking at his papers**) ... okay. Okay, fine, yes.

Honourable Members, the correction is that in the penultimate paragraph of the Minutes page 80, the words 'Budget Address', following Motion on the 'Budget Address' be changed to be the 'Throne Speech'.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Minutes confirmed as amended.**

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

Item 6 – Announcements by Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Honourable Members, it is my pleasure this morning to draw to your attention and to welcome Grade (5) of the Beacon Junior School headed by one Mrs. Scott, who found it necessary to have the class, which would be sitting the Common Entrance Exams next week, as part of their Civics undertaking to visit the Parliament. And, through the instrumentality of my grandson, they were able to get this done.

So, I want to take the opportunity to welcome them here and Mrs. Scott and to suggest that we could make this a standard feature of school activities for every class above a certain Grade, and I would leave that for the school to determine. But, it's a good opportunity for the youngsters to learn how we govern the country and what Parliament does. So, Honourable

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**Announcements by Mr. President**  
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Members, I take the opportunity to, on your behalf and on my own behalf, to warmly welcome them here.

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

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

**Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to give an update on some of the Ministries that I am responsible for. But, just before I do this, I would just like to commend the class from the Beacon High for being here this morning, and at least giving us some company. I trust that it is going to be a memorable day for you and your wonderful young men and women, who come to this Honourable House.

Mr. President, I am pleased to further update this House on the issue of the Court upgrade. As you know, we have been experiencing some challenges as it relates to facilities for the Courts, sitting of the Courts in Grenada. And, at the last Sitting, I did update this Honourable that we were far advanced in terms of negotiations with the Judicial Managers of the CLICO Building, and today, I am pleased to inform this Honourable House that to date we have access to the second floor of the building and work has commenced, in terms of retrofitting that second floor to accommodate two (2) Civil Courts, and, as well as the auxiliary staff of the Court. We are awaiting the keys to the third floor where we will do work to accommodate two of the Criminal Courts, and of course, facilities, docking and the likes, and so forth.

As we have said before, it is our hope to finalize all the works prior to the commencement of this, the 2019/2020 Law year, which is in September, and from the indication of the contractor, we seem to have a good shot at fulfilling this commitment that we have given to the Judicial Fraternity, as well as the people of this dear country of ours. So, work is ongoing, and I do trust at the next appointed time, when we're here to report to this Honourable House, I should give some timelines, as to when the work will be completed.

I also would like to update this Honourable House on some initiatives within the National Disaster Management Agency (NaDMA). Only last week we had the completion of the Canada/Caribbean Disaster Risks Management Fund Project. And, this project was initiated to upgrade Emergency Shelters to accommodate persons with disabilities. And, I am pleased to inform this Honourable House that some eleven (11) shelters were upgraded, as well as the installation of water storage facilities.

As you know Emergency Shelters are very useful in times of hurricanes and the likes. I do trust that this season we will not have to activate any of our Emergency Shelters, because we trust that no storms will come our way. But, should that happened, I want to say that we are happy with the Canada/Caribbean Disaster Risk Management Fund for the donation that they have given to us, some two hundred thousand EC dollars (EC\$200,000.00) to upgrade these Shelters.

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We are looking forward to the second week in July for the handover of the Shelters. At that time, we will have representatives from the Canadian Government here, as well as folks from Barbados to do the handover.

But, we are extremely happy. And, just to give you two (2) of the facilities that were upgraded, the Dover Government School in Carriacou. And, I saw the reports from the District Committee Chair over there, as well as the Community Programme Officer, and they were extremely elated with the quality of work that has been done, as well as the St. John's Christian Secondary School. They have had some wonderful works done there, and the Report that came to me, the Coordinator from the Canada Fund was extremely satisfied with the quality of work that was spearheaded in this project. I want to take this time off to commend the local Implementation Team, which was led by our Permanent Secretary, Ms. Roxy Hutchinson-Mc Leish for the outstanding work the team was able to do. I know her daughter is here this morning, so take a bow for your Mom. She did a wonderful job.

So, I want to commend them, as well as the Coordinator of Disaster Management in the country, Superintendent Sylvan Mc Intyre for what was done.

Mr. President, as we often say, we do not have all the resources here in this country, but one thing we know for certain, if we do it well, our developmental partners will come and support us. And, this is one of those examples where our developmental partners came in and supported that need that we have highlighted.

I want to move quickly into Shelter Inspection. As you know, before the start of the Atlantic Hurricane Season, we will do inspection of all the Emergency Shelters in the country to ensure that we have facilities to accommodate persons should there be the threat of a hurricane. And, the team of Engineers and Fire Inspection people and the likes would have done the work. They are now compiling the reports to provide to me, which I will take it to the Cabinet with the final list of Shelters. And, we are looking forward to having that before the commencement of this Hurricane Season, which starts from June 1.

Moving quickly into this, the start of the 2019 Atlantic Hurricane Season, June 1 to November 30; from the competent Authority, it has been said to us that this year it's going to be a near averaged forecast of some thirteen (13) named storms, five (5) of which will develop into hurricane and two (2) into a major hurricane. An average season, we will see the naming of some twelve (12) storms, six (6) of which will develop into a hurricane, and three (3) into major hurricanes. But, as you do know, it only takes one to cause us to have a bad season. So, I trust that we will continue to pray. We would not say God is a Grenadian, but that would be good, too, but we will continue to pray to ensure that the wind stay out at seas. I am not saying away from us and impact other States. As you know, in 2017, we had these multi-States impact by two (2) monstrous storms, Irma and Maria and remember our neighbour Dominica how devastated they were, as a result of this Hurricane.

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I also would like to update this Honourable House, as it relates to the National Disaster Management Agency, the week of June 1 to June 8, we will have what we call the 'Week of Awareness.' As you know the Atlantic Hurricane Season commences on 1<sup>st</sup> of June and throughout that week we will be doing a number of things to create the awareness, and to encourage our folks to continue to observe all the information that is being presented, re 'Managing Risk.'

As we do know, Hurricanes are dangerous and they cause extensive damages and even cause the loss of lives. So, we want to ensure that our people continue to observe all the practices towards keeping their surrounding clean, ensuring that the waterways are cleared, and I know at this point in time you will see quite a lot of the Environmental Wardens on the road, cleaning the drains, and that is one of the mitigating factors that has been employed to ensure that we are ready should there be a Hurricane. But, of course, we're going to have extensive rain, and if our waterways are not cleared there is a possibility it can cause enormous damage to our infrastructure. So, they are out there doing this, at this point in time.

I also want to make mention that as of today, the 9<sup>th</sup> of May is the commencement of the Annual NaDMA Disaster Awareness Quiz. Some fourteen (14) Zones are engaged. In the vicinity between thirty-eight (38) to forty-five (45) schools have confirmed their participation, and we are looking forward in this preliminary round of competition that the outstanding schools will emerge for the finals, which will be on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June. And, I look forward, as always, for the exciting rivalry among the Primary Schools, or the Grade Fives in the Primary Schools of our country.

But, we look forward, with great anticipation, for the Quiz, because it is the bedrock of creating awareness in our country. As we do know, if you want information to filter down into your homes, use your most powerful weapon, your children to get it done. And, we do believe that our youngsters have been doing this for us. And, I expect this year will be no exception. With these few words, Mr. President, I want to thank you for the moment. Thanks. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Senator Garraway. Is there another light on? Yes, Senator Cox. Senator Cox, you have the floor.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I, too want to join with my colleague to welcome our guests, the Grade 6, the Beacon School here this morning. I trust that you would have a wonderful experience here today in this Honourable House.

Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to inform this Honourable House on a little bit on what is taking place in the Ministry of Culture, and, of course, the Ministry of Youth.

I wish to first start with Spicemas Carnival, Mr. President. Last Saturday, we had a successful launch that commenced the Carnival Season. Mr. President, we want to take this opportunity, as a Ministry to thank our Stakeholders, our Patrons and most importantly our Sponsors, who continue to invest in our culture in the development of culture in Grenada.



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On that note, Mr. President, we also are fully aware of some concerns that the general public may have and even some that were raised in this Honourable House, Mr. President. The Ministry is listening and we, too, have our own concerns, and we are taking note and working speedily to address those, as we move forward, Mr. President.

Mr. President, as I move on to the Youth Development, we wish to inform this Honourable House that on Sunday we had our trainees, who went to Trinidad to participate in this important Safety at Sea Training. It's a training called 'Standards Training Certification and Watch-Keeping Programme'. It's an international certification, Mr. President, that is required for persons, who wish to work in the Maritime Industry. If they were to go on a Cruise Ship, that is a certification that you require to... even just to be a Deck Hand, that's an important certification, Mr. President.

Mr. President, one of the reasons why the Ministry is focusing on getting persons trained in this area is because from all reports the Maritime Industry has probably the largest vacancy for jobs for our young persons, Mr. President. So, we are trying to create an environment, so that our young persons can get an opportunity to access jobs in that area and providing that international certification is one such way, and we are moving speedily in that direction. So, we have twenty-four (24) persons successfully completing that training. It's a 9-day training in the areas of Firefighting, First Aid, and General Safety at Sea.

Mr. President, this is a very rigorous, both theoretical and practical Training Programme, and I know that persons who participate in this Programme are much, much more empowered and prepared to go out at sea. This is not a new Programme. It is a Programme that we have started sometime aback, and we continue to work to move forward with this Programme.

Mr. President, this Programme is so important that we recognize the demand for this Programme is extremely high, especially in the Parish of Carriacou and Petite Martinique where we saw over ninety (90) something to one hundred (100) persons expressing interest in participating in this Programme.

So, the Ministry of Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs, of course, and the Ministry of Youth Development continue to collaborate to see how we can continue to create more opportunities for young persons to access this very important training, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I just want to close by expressing thanks to the staff of the Ministry of Youth Development, Sports and Culture for their continued work and support, as we continue to move forward with our plans for 2019. Sometimes we work every day, not realizing the contributions of persons within your Ministry, and I just want to take that opportunity to recognize their contributions and effort in this Honourable House. Thank you very much, Mr. President.  
**(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Just let me repeat what I said on the last occasion. The time allocated, under the Standing Orders, for report on Ministerial Statements, which is essentially report on your Ministerial Portfolio, the total time allocation under the Standing Orders is one (1) hour, right.

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But, given the construct of 'This Side' of the House in which there are three (3) Senators, who have no Ministerial responsibility, it therefore means that only three (3) Senators have to report to the House. And, the Constitution requires that the Executive is responsible to the Parliament, and, therefore, Ministerial Statements are an important part of that responsibility.

So, as I indicated to you before, I will be flexible to the extent where I am not trying to rewrite the Standing Orders, but on the basis of fairness and probity that I will allow additional time, so that any Senator with a Ministerial Portfolio, who wishes to continue the Statement, will have up to twenty (20) minutes, with some discretion, in addition to that, that the President will normally allow. So I just thought I should repeat that. It's unfortunate that two (2) speakers have already spoken, but I just want to draw that to your attention. Again, I would be flexible, if you think there was something that you wanted to, but was sensitive to time, and, therefore concluded, I will allow you to make an intervention bearing in mind, of course, that the 'Other Side' will have an opportunity to question you on your Ministerial Statement, as well. So, I just thought I should repeat this on advice of the Clerk. (Members). Senator Stiell, you have the floor.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I wish to report on activities, specifically, the Ministry of Climate Resilience, Environment, Fisheries. I was going to leave the... there were some comments made in the last Sitting on the Adjournment with regard to NAWASA. I was going to leave that for the Adjournment, but, if we have a little extra time, upfront, I may bring that discussion forward.

But, I, too, wish to join my colleagues in acknowledging students from Beacon Junior. It's wonderful; one, to have an audience, it's wonderful to have some bright, young minds here in the room, and I promise we will do our very best to stay on our best behaviour to show examples for yourselves; **(chuckles)** well, there may always be an exception or two, Mr. President. I also want to single out one particular student, well I believe your grandson is in the Gallery, Mr. President? So, certainly I would like to.....

**Mr. President:** He is an old-timer.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** He is an old timer... well, you have a grandfather to certainly look up to and take a lead from the example he has set over many, many, decades. But, I would like to single out the daughter of my Permanent Secretary, Roxy Hutchison Mc Leish, her daughter Shanize Hutchison, I hope I am not embarrassing you, but your Mom was very keen to inform me that you were here and how excited you were to be here today. And, it's our privilege to be host to all of you, and we hope this is certainly not going to be the last time you're here to join us in this Chamber.

So, moving on, Mr. President, to an update on activities, a project that is seen as a very important initiative, not just within the Ministry of Climate Resilience, but for the country, as a whole, and that's the Green Climate Fund Funded Project together with New York University who are providing the technical assistance for the Climate Smart/Climate Resilience City Project. And, the objective of this project is to establish our Town of St. George, as the first Climate Smart City in the Caribbean, very, very lofty, but an achievable ambition.

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Next week, we will see the Fifth Mission from the NYU Team here in Grenada, and this is part of the pre-feasibility work that they are engaged in, to develop projects and interventions, which will address key developmental challenges that we have. In the Town of St. George's, it is expanded to other parts of the country, and I will get on to that in a minute, but this is really groundbreaking stuff.

Some of those interventions would include how we protect the Carenage, a key central part of our Town from sea level rise; the development of an Urban Development Plan for the St. George's area, addressing many areas, including traffic congestion. We know, with the increase of vehicular traffic, some of the challenges that we are now facing, in terms of traversing some of the areas here in the South. So, we would be looking at interventions to address that.

Also, vulnerabilities in that route between the Town of St. George and the Airport, that Southern Corridor; solutions, as to how we can protect Grand Anse Beach, a key natural, but important economic asset for our Tourism Industry and for the enjoyment of our people, how we can protect that against sea level rise and coastal erosion; all of these low-lying areas are highly vulnerable to sea level rise, and statistics data, already gathered, show the high level of vulnerability to these specific areas, not in the long term, but in the short to medium term.

How we can address the issue of providing sewerage facilities here in the South, looking at climate vulnerabilities to our Airport, again, a key economic asset; our runway is at sea level. There are areas of it already being undermined by coastal erosion, so how we can address that. Working with St. George's University, as to how we can make their Campus more climate resilient.

St. George's University constitutes somewhere in the Region of 20% of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP), an important engine within our Economy; so how we can work with them, ensuring, in the event of a climate event that they can recover, sustain as less damage and recover as quickly, as possible, so that economic engine can continue working.

And, then Grenville, not in the St. George's area, but an area, that Grenville Coastal Road, that's highly vulnerable, and because of the priority of that, that was included within the project, to look at what solutions, what interventions can address that.

So, the Mission that will take place, in this coming week, will engage with stakeholders, both Governmental and non-Governmental in developing the project concepts around these projects, and those projects will then be fleshed out and formally submitted, at the end of the year, the beginning of next year, to the Green Climate Fund and other Funding Agencies, to actually make these projects a reality. And, we estimate, at this early stage, the value of these projects in total, which will be carried out over many years. These are not small projects, they are valued at somewhere in the region of three hundred to three hundred and fifty million US dollars; so a significant level of investment that would be seeking to address these vulnerabilities.

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But, Mr. President, we are not waiting for this very defined process to follow through. We have already identified some quick wins, some low-hanging fruit that we have already brought to the Green Climate Fund, or about to bring to the Green Climate Fund for funding, and one such project is one that we are calling Leapfrogging to Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency. This is a project that is valued in the region of thirty-nine million US dollars (US\$39m), which will look at swapping out our energy inefficient sodium streetlights to energy efficient LED lights.

Also, looking at providing additional lighting in communities up and down the country that are currently under-served. And, we would be installing solar panels on the forty (40) public buildings, so that our energy supply to these public lights will be through renewable energy, and this would provide a significant energy cost saving to Government, millions of dollars that can be put into other areas, whether it is Education, Health Care, etcetera, and it could be invested, in terms of serving the people.

There is also a Private Sector component, so how we can facilitate the introduction of energy efficient and renewable energy technologies to our Private Sector, both here in Grenada and regionally. So, Grenada, Mr. President, would be taking a lead within the Region in this very, very innovative project; and that project is working with the Green Climate Fund, New York University, together with UN Environment and the Caribbean Development Bank.

The project will be submitted to the Green Climate Fund, the draft, this week, tomorrow. A Board decision is expected in October, and if we are successful, we have many hurdles to jump through, but, if we are successful, this would, certainly, be a transformative project within the Sector.

Another project that has been spun out of this, again, using the Marine Engineering expertise of New York University, looking at Phase II of the Sauteurs Breakwater Project. Interventions have already been made to protect the highly vulnerable Bay. Work is required to protect higher rock in the Bay, to provide the coastal area there. And, New York University would be sending an Engineering Team to do the technical studies, as to what is required to provide protection for that Bay.

Moving on, Mr. President, to our Marine Protected Areas, our MPAs, we are currently working with stakeholders on an action plan to push forward some of the interventions that are required to protect our coastline.

Currently, we have three (3) MPAs that are in operation. We have Molliniere and Beausejour, Woburn Clarks Court, here in Grenada, and we have Sandy Island, an Oyster Bed in Carriacou. Those are already in active operation. We have challenges with those, but I will come on to that. But, there are also plans to bring Grand Anse into operation, shortly, together with five (5) other Marine Protected Areas including Gouyave, Levera, Conference Bay, Islaroon and Southern Carriacou Islands. And, this is part of a target, part of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative that Grenada is part of. Through the initiative, it is to put 20% of our near shore coastal areas under protection. Grenada has pushed that boundary further. We have set a target of

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25% of our coastline by 2020. And, why we are doing this, the importance of our MPAs is to protect the Marine resources within that, our reefs, our sea grass beds, etcetera, which are the nurseries for our Fisheries.

So, by protecting these areas, we are allowing our fish stocks to rebuild, which would provide benefits outside of the Marine Protected Areas for our fisher folk, but it also provides opportunities for Tourism, for tours of those Marine Protected Areas, some phenomenal underwater phenomena, our reefs, the Sculpture Park, etcetera; so providing alternate revenue sources and livelihoods for our people.

But, since bringing in those three (3) MPAs, the first one came into operation in 2010, there have been many challenges in the sustainable management of these MPAs. So, we have engaged our stakeholders, whether it is the Dive Association, Marine and Yachting Association, the Hotel and Tourism Association, Community Groups, together with Fisheries, together with Government, as to what are the interventions that are needed to provide sustainable management and address the issues within our MPAs.

We have had two (2) stakeholder sessions, very, very well received, Government and the Private Sector Communities working hand-in-hand, and an action is being developed. It will be presented to Cabinet shortly, the recommendations, which will, in turn, be fed back to the stakeholders for their endorsement, so that we can address some of those key issues.

Moving on to the Sargassum Seaweed, a major environmental challenge; not just for us here in Grenada, but for islands throughout the Region and the Southern tip of the United States. The volume of the Sargassum Seaweed, the influx, continues to increase and the duration of that influx has also increased. So, the Sargassum Seaweed season is starting earlier and ending later, and it will continue to worsen. This is not something, Mr. President, that is going to go away. So, the challenge that we face, together, with all of our neighbours is not the prevention of this phenomenon, but how we best manage, how we aptly manage this.

Last year alone, Mr. President, Government spent, in excess of one million dollars (\$1 m), just clearing the Sargassum in key areas, whether there was a threat to our fisher folk, whether there was a threat to our Tourism Sector, whether to the health of our communities, and we continue to spend.

But, this year, Mr. President, we are taking a more strategic approach, recognizing that we need to have long term strategies for managing this, and the first step is the contracting of a dedicated Manager, to oversee the coordination of all of the actions and interventions that are required. So, whether it is coordinating with the Environmental Wardens, they are going to be at the frontline of clearing our beaches, the manual clearance, which is environmentally friendly, very, very light touches for the removal of the Sargassum, together with working with Community groups, Community hats, it is not just for Government, but Community groups also have to be mobilized.

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Also, we have received grant support for the acquisition of, and it has arrived in Grenada, an Environmental Work Boat, which has equipment, a specially designed piece of marine equipment that will be able to collect the Sargassum offshore, as part of that management process. So, how we operationalize that, how we bring that into effective operation is currently in play, and the value of that Work Boat, Mr. President, is one hundred and five thousand Euros. We may well require additional equipment, and, again, the Manager would be looking at what other technologies, what other methods we need to bring into play to manage that, and then how we institutionalize all of the systems that we are putting in place for the long term management of the Sargassum within Government.

Mr. President, I will now move on to some of the comments regarding NAWASA that were made by Senator Redhead on the Adjournment of our last Sitting. At that Sitting, there were some very theatricals, what may well turn out to be exaggerated comments about issues with water quality, for water supplied by NAWASA, to communities in the Mt. Rich, in the St. Patrick area. It spoke to foul-smelling water, bad tasting water, water that was causing everything, from constipation through to diarrhea, how you can have those two extremes, I am no Medical Expert, but that kind of seems a little extraordinary, to me; but the sickness that was being inflicted on those Communities.

We also had the theatrics of Senator Redhead bringing a bottle of water, water that was pretty clear and clean, to me, Mr. President, but the theatrics of presenting a water bottle and lecturing us on the fact that access to clean drinking water is a human right, as if this Government, this Administration was failing its people in supplying clean, safe drinking water to its people; and that we were failing to do what we had to do.

So, Mr. President, in challenging, on the Adjournment, Senator Redhead, we asked very basic questions. Did the Senator, if his intention is the representation of people within that community and his intention is to try and find solutions for this, potentially serious problem, he was asked the question, has he investigated? Has he contacted NAWASA? Has he contacted the Ministry of Health? Has he reached out to persons within the Community? Has he tried to take any action to raise the attention, not here on the floor of Parliament, Mr. President, but if he is genuinely interested in resolving this problem, there were other avenues he can take, and the answer was no, no. So, on leaving the Session, as promised, I contacted NAWASA, the General Manager, and thorough investigation was initiated. So, Engineers', teams was sent out to the region, looked at all of the equipment and nearest Pumping Stations, the water supply to those communities, a thorough investigation was carried out, water qualities were tested throughout the area, equipment were checked, and there was no evidence, Mr. President, no evidence of any form of contamination to that water.

They went further. They went into the Communities. They went to households. They interviewed persons, spoke to local residents, tested the water on residents' properties, and, again, Mr. President, no evidence, not even any complaints in their investigations.

I also saw, in the Media, GBN, did a report on this. They, too, went into the Community. They interviewed local residents and there were no complaints, Mr. President. In fact, some of the

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persons interviewed commended NAWASA for the service that they were provided; so no evidence, Mr. President.

So, Mr. President, what NAWASA has done, they have written directly to Senator Redhead, to ask him to provide the names of the persons, who claim to have a combination of diarrhea and constipation to identify those persons, so that we can investigate further.

The only possibility that's currently outstanding and Senator Redhead has that responsibility, is to identify those persons, is that there could be contamination on those residents' property, not through the fault of NAWASA, in terms of where the water is fed to the property, but whether there is something peculiar, whether water storage, whether there is something on the premises, within the homes of these individuals that could have caused this problem. And, if that is the case, that is not the fault of NAWASA. So, that is the last outstanding piece. And, it is a shame that Senator Redhead is not here, but his co-operation is required, so that we can conclude this, because if there is a problem, it must be taken seriously. But, all efforts have shown there is no evidence.

And, if it turns out, Mr. President, that these claims are actually unfounded, or unrelated, then I would wish to caution, through you, Mr. President, the Senator, for the recklessness of those statements, the immaturity of those statements, not taking into account the true welfare of the people, trying to create some mass hysteria; for what, for what, Mr. President, for politics, for politics sake? You are going to stand on the floor of the Parliament of the people to make unfounded, wild allegations that does not only speak to the people of Grenada, but it also speaks to; these statements... what we say in this House is broadcast internationally. What impact does that have on our tourists, visitors to our island, their confidence in the Public Services that are provided, the economic considerations? Mr. President, these statements are wild and unfounded, and through you, the Senator needs to be cautioned. He cannot use this Parliament, this Senate, this Chamber, as a platform for fake news and for cheap, cheap politics.

So, Mr. President, when the investigation is concluded, and I said there was just one outstanding issue, and Senator Redhead will be responsible. The onus is on him to provide us with those names, so we can draw a line under this. NAWASA will write a public statement, because we need to have confidence in our Public Services. We take these allegations very, very seriously, Mr. President. So, on that note, I would like to end my statement. I thank you.

**Applause**

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Senator Stiell. Yes, Senator De Allie.

**Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie:** Mr. President, thank you. I have a quick question for the Senator. Two (2) questions quite frankly. Senator Stiell informed the House that Government is embarking on putting PV panels on Government buildings, as well as changing out the lights on the poles. My question on that issue is, do we have, throughout your Ministry, an Energy Policy, with some targeted deadlines, as to when we could become, what percentage efficient in

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alternative energy sources? And, if so, I know we are doing a 2030 Plan, is there any consideration within that for such a consideration, in terms of our energy consumption and how we do it?

And, the second question is, on the presumption that we do have commercial quantities of natural gas within our waters, which it would appear, is there any consideration being given to generation of electricity with the use of natural gas versus diesel, as we do now, under any consideration within your Ministry, as it relates to our change of our energy profile? Thank you.

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Thank you, Mr. President. In addressing the questions from the Senator on the 'Other Side', the targets that Grenada has, as part of our nationally determining contributions, which is our commitment to reducing greenhouse gases; well it's a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2025. And, there are three (3) or four (4) key drivers to bring that down; one is energy and a movement away from fossil fuels to renewable energies and instruction of energy efficient solutions, such as the one with the project that we are working with. The other is transportation, what we can do with our cars/vehicles, and that is part of the New York University Project, in terms of addressing congestion. What we see is the cars clogging up the roads, our journey times increasing and all of the inefficiencies and frustrations that are associated with that. But, the driver, the climate rationale for addressing congestion is the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the gasses from our vehicles. The other is waste management and the other is through Forestry.

So, linking that to your second question, which is, the use of LNG or Natural Gas for electricity supply. The ideal; even natural gas, even if we have that as a resource in our waters, it is still a contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. It is more environmentally friendly than burning diesel oil, but it still produces emissions.

The strategy has to be a combined; well, the options, and I think that energy mix is something that is being looked at, in terms of the move to renewable energy, which is the most environmentally friendly path, and what is the mix there, from solar to wind, to tidal, to geothermal. But, the introduction of natural gas and having access to that offers an opportunity, and the Ministry of Energy would be looking at that, within the overall mix, as to what is in our best interest, both economically and environmentally.

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

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Mr. President, I want to thank you for offering me an opportunity to report on a few more matters that I really wanted to touch on.

In the area of Culture, Mr. President, just to quickly inform this Honourable House that we had a successful hosting of Carriacou Maroon...Carriacou String Band Music Festival. Mr. President, this is an important Festival for Carriacou. This Festival embodies all the cultural assets that are present in Carriacou, and this is an opportunity, every year, for Carriacouans to share with the



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world and visitors, of course, what true Carriacou Culture is about, and we want to congratulate the Maroon Committee for hosting a successful Festival, this year, 2019, and, of course, the Ministry of Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs.

Mr. President, also, we want to recognize the River Sallee Saraca. They had a wonderful Saraca this year. A lot of people attended this year, in comparison to last year, much more food. They had an opportunity, also, to share with visitors, and, of course, the entire world, their traditions of the Saraca in River Sallee.

Mr. President, St. Mark, as well, had their week of activities, which culminated on the same weekend, as the Carriacou Maroon Festival. They had their Street Parade and all their artifacts and persons lining the streets selling, doing their vending and also they had their live music and cultural performances on the final night.

Mr. President, all these celebrations within our various Parishes are very critical towards sustaining our cultural heritage. It is important, as a Ministry, that we continue to sustain those, year after year, so that we do not lose who we are, we continue to define and redefine ourselves, so that our young ones, who are here, can continue in those traditions, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I want to move over to a very important announcement to this Honourable House, and we want to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Ministry of Labour to congratulate our Union Colleagues, our President here of the TUC, on hosting a successful May Day celebrations. I had an opportunity to be there to partake in the celebrations. I think it is very important for us to recognize that.

One of the things, Mr. President, I want to... It was pleasing to hear the comments from the various respective Unions, and one of the things that was a good takeaway, for me, was it seemed that both the Union and Government, of course, share and have one common goal, which is the betterment of workers, and I think that is one of the things that really came out from the celebrations on that day, Mr. President.

Mr. President, also, the Minister for Labour, in his announcements, as well, indicated a very important development, not just for Grenada, but also for our Union colleagues, and I know that we are currently into an impasse with our teachers and both sides are committed towards resolving this in an amicable way, which we should and we are very encouraged by that, Mr. President. And, the Minister for Labour did announce that Government will pay Pensions for persons commencing from February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1984, based on the MOU that was signed between our Union colleagues on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February, 2018, so that commitment was given on May Day.

So, I think that is something that is worth noting and I think each and every one of us, both our Union colleagues and Government must be commended for the strides and effort that we have been making in resolving this complex issue.

I think we must recognize that even the successes that our country is experiencing; I mean, I heard some of the Union colleagues speaking to those, announcing that the economy is doing

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well, and so, they, too, should speak loudly about those achievements, because they are, in part, strongly responsible for those successes, Mr. President. So, I want to commend everybody, all negotiating partners, in this regard, to continue to work, continue to dialogue. We believe it is only through dialogue that we can have some resolve on this important matter and bring it to rest.

But, one thing that is quite certain, Mr. President, we are closer to the end today than where we were, probably, ten (10) years ago, and I think that is something that we must pay attention to. Sometimes we forget the things that we have already achieved. Sometimes we forget the things that are working for us, sometimes, which is much more than what is not working, and so I just want to encourage us not to spend so much time quarrelling about the little things that have not been working as yet and some of the things that we need to tweak, but for us to recognize how much that we have achieved, together, as both Union and Government in addressing this very complex and important issue, Mr. President.

So, with this I want to thank you for giving me an opportunity and also to congratulate our dear colleague, Senator André Lewis, on being reelected as the President of the TUC. I want to congratulate you on that. **(Chuckles)** So, I see that you are pretty observant; your good friend is looking after you. Mr. President, I thank you very much. **(Laughter/Applause)**.

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Senator Cox. Senator Garraway.

**Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. I, too, want to thank you for the opportunity to take a second bat, and to inform this Honourable House. And, I stand here with a little bit of emotion, as it relates to the comments, which were made at our last Sitting here. And, I want to say to the Leader of Government's Business, that you handled it well. It was reckless, to say the least, to come in this Honourable House, yes, you have immunity, but to try to destroy the reputation of one of our premiere institutions, or stakeholder bodies within the country was just not right. And, I am speaking here of the comments that was made by the Senator on the 'Other Side', who is not here this morning, and I wish he was here to really respond to those comments, Senator Ron Redhead, as it relates to water quality.

But, I want to say that NAWASA was the recipient of two hundred and twenty thousand dollars (\$220,000.00) through a project of NaDMA and CDEMA to upgrade some seventeen (17) schools with water storage. Some eighteen (18) tanks, one thousand (1000) gallon tanks were delivered to those schools, but the important thing here, recognizing the important contribution NAWASA has been making to the development of this country, and noting the difficulties some schools have during times of adverse dry periods, as we have seen this year, they were given that support to ensure that they can develop these water storage. And, I am, indeed, happy that, that in itself, indicated that NAWASA's work was recognized as being quality.

Also, the GCF, the (Green Climate Fund) came on board with a pledge, a donation of one hundred and twenty-five million EC dollars (EC\$125 m) towards building resilience within the Water Sector, and helping NAWASA to build more reservoirs and to ensure that we are able to respond adequately to the threat of Climate Change. To be given such high commendation by

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not just local, but international organization and to have such reckless statements being made of this institution, it's really unfortunate. And, I do trust that he will be man enough to retract those statements and, **(comments by a Member)** of course, apologize; retract and apologize to the Nation. We travel quite a lot, around the world in Climate Change Foras and, to listen to the International Community commending Grenada for all the services that we are providing, and to have someone trying to hurt our face, cut our noses, for what, politics? We have to mature and grow beyond this. We have a country, a nation to build, and every time we hit those low jabs, to try to score political points, it hurts us. We have to do better. We must do better.

Mr. President, I also want to speak to this. Last week we had the visit of the NYPD Sporting Team, as well as Promo Caribbean, and they had this Goodwill visit to the country, not only to play Sports, but to make a contribution to the development of this country. They would have visited the Telescope Primary School, the Happy Hill Secondary School, the Boca Secondary, Westerhall Secondary and the Grand Bacolet Juvenile Centre.

I was told that the meeting in the Grand Bacolet Juvenile Centre, as they communicated and spoke with the residents there, I was told that some of the residents were in tears, because what was communicated to them touched them to the point of saying, yes, you have made a mistake, yes, you have been caught or placed in this Center for rehabilitation and so forth, but, said, that is not the end of it. You can clean yourself and move on. And, I think the tears were an indication that they accepted the second chance. And, I want us as a nation, and this Parliament, to recognize those young men and women; yes, they have made a mistake, but they are making an effort to correct themselves and to move forward.

So, every opportunity we get to inspire that change in them is important, very important. The NYPD Team, as well, donated to some twenty-five (25) Sporting Clubs around the country with equipment and sporting gears, as it relates to Football. We do know that Football is one vehicle that can be used to transform lives. And, I want to take this opportunity here to commend the NYPD for what they have done and Mr. Nimrod Ollivierre, who has been championing this move and from the Government of Grenada I want to say a special thank you.

Also, Mr. President, we have spoken quite a lot about it, as it relates to preparation and ensuring we build capacity within the country to respond adequately to the disasters and the likes. And, I must, indeed, say that just over a week and a half ago, we were able to return to the **US Sellingcom**<sup>[c1]</sup>, the RFP, that they would have sent to us, as it relates to the construction of the New Emergency Operation Centre and Warehouse for the Sister Isle of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. They would have pledged some one million US dollars (US\$1 m) for the construction of these facilities. The RFP was sent and we were able to satisfy their request and send it back, so we are closer today toward seeing boots on the ground for the construction of these facilities. As you know, this is in addition to the pledge of support for the construction on Mainland, of an EOC and Warehouse, and the site for this facility is the Morne Jaloux area where we had the old TV Station; so that place will be transformed and fitted with a state-of-the-art facility.

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And, we look forward to seeing boots on the ground probably later this year, but it is all in the hands of the **US Sellingcom** [c2] now, they will do the necessary awarding of the contracts and we look forward to this. But, it speaks to what we have been saying to this nation. When we continue to protect our nation, when we continue to promote good governance, promote the development of this country, our international, our developmental partners will come and support our initiatives. And, this is an indication again; over five million US dollars (US\$5 m) will be spent by **US Sellingcom** [c3] for the construction of this Facility. So, we have to be grateful, but most importantly, we have to be fair and honest with our country. Thank you very much, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Thank you, the Honourable Senator Winston Garraway.

**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 be laid on the Table:

1. 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, 2017.
2. Report of the Director of Audit Grenada on the Financial Statements of the Office of the Ombudsman for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2017.

**Mr. President:** Honourable Members, these Papers are to be laid on the Table: the 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, 2017 and the second, Report of the Director of Audit Grenada on the Financial Statements of the Office of the Ombudsman for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2017. Honourable Members, these Papers are hereby laid on the Table.

**President knocks gavel.**

Again, I draw to Members on the 'Other Side' attention, the need to pay attention to these Papers, the need to debate these Papers, the need to generate questions from these Papers, because it is part of your responsibility of holding the Government accountable.

Since March, a latter part of March, a year ago, a year and some now, that the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament, (is it Clerk, I'm right?) **(Clerk indicated to President)** and from March to now, I am yet to receive either by way of a Motion, or by way of a question, in respect of any of the Papers laid before you. One year has gone, so I just thought I would refresh your minds on this and to get you to take up your responsibilities, because the Executive is responsible to the Parliament of

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Grenada, so says the Constitution. One year now and nothing has happened, so I make a further appeal. Thank you. Clerk's Assistant.

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

Item 10 – Government Notices.

Item 11 – Unofficial Notices.

Item 12 – Questions.

Item 13 – Personal Explanations.

**Mr. President:** Honourable Members, I wish to bring to your attention the following matters. The Clerk did receive written advice from the following Senators of their absences: Senator the Honourable Dr. Dunstan Campbell, he is unable to attend this Sitting, because he is out of State in Barbados, actually, on Parliament's business, attending a meeting on Skills to Access the Green Economy, so I wish to bring that to your attention.

We received absent notices from Senator Ron Redhead, who, from his advice, is sitting his final exams at SGU, so he is unable to be here. I did receive a notice of lateness from Senator the Honourable Glynis Roberts, who is hoping to be here later on in the Session, as she had some earlier commitments that she was not able to reassign.

Honourable Members, I wish to bring to your attention also a special event, which will take place here at Parliament House, Mt. Wheldale on Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> commencing at 5:30 p.m. Our Parliamentary site has become quite, not only a site of attraction, but we will be housing a special Exhibition, put on by the University of Leiden, I hope I am getting the pronunciation right, in Holland, and that exhibition is entitled: 'Connected Peoples - Then and Now.' And, it has to do with an exhibition of indigenous culture and other current multi-ethnic communities, pottery and different archeological findings in Grenada, and closer Territories, having to deal with our indigenous forefathers, the Kalinago and other such groups who predated Columbus. So, could Members of the Senate take note, and for the visitors here take note as well that this Exhibition begins on the 15<sup>th</sup> May, at 5:30; it is being launched. Clerk, I think the Exhibition will be a week, is it?

**Ag. Clerk:** Yes.

**Mr. President:** The Exhibition will remain a week, so that our Parliament facility is becoming quite a noteworthy place. Earlier, we had an earlier Exhibition of Russian Art, some time ago, and that was of really deep interest. So, I just wish to bring that to your attention. So much little is known about our indigenous forefathers. In fact, quite frankly, a significant amount of, and I want to choose my language here particularly carefully, but what I consider to be rubbish, peddled as fact, about our de-just forefathers.

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In order to justify the extermination, they were painted, as if they were Cannibals; man eating, flesh eating. Nothing is further from the truth. The greatest fallacy is that they committed mass suicide by jumping over the cliff of what is now Leapers' Hill. To the contrary, they were exterminated, and that is a fact of life. There is little historical record of entire societies committing mass suicide; that was not the case. They made their last stand in a battle in St. Patrick and they were annihilated, as had been suffered by several indigenous peoples in North America and other parts of the world. I just thought I should bring that to your attention.

So, it is important for us to use every opportunity for objective knowledge on what happened to our people, the level of civilization they achieved, and to safeguard whatever archeological findings there are, which rightly belong to the Grenadian people, and should be exhibited and treated with respect. So, I want to use this opportunity to invite you all to attend.

And, then, finally, I want to take the opportunity to welcome members of the Public Service, from various Departments who are here. They are here under the auspices of the Department of Public Administration, and they are here visiting us this morning. I was not aware of the visit, but we began while you were here, so I want to take the opportunity to welcome you. Parliament is a very important part in the governing structure of our country, and I am happy to know that people are finding the time to come to Parliament.

This is your business. This is where Laws are made for the good governance and good order of our country. And, finding the time to be part of us and to visit us, I want to take the opportunity on behalf of all of the Senators to welcome you most warmly, and to urge that this be not your last attendance of Parliament. I know now the technology allows you to relax in the confines of your home and to look at the proceedings of Parliament. But any movie goer will tell you there is a difference in looking at a movie on the television and being in the movie house. So, I want to take the opportunity, once again, to thank you for coming. **(Applause)**

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 14 – Motions.

**Mr. President:** Senator Stiell.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Thank you, Mr. President. 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 second Session of the Tenth Parliament on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

**Question proposed.**

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

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**Sen. the Hon. Andre Lewis:** Thank you, Mr. President. And, may I just join in welcoming the students and the comrades and colleagues from the DPA. On this Motion, Mr. President, through you, would I be able to be permitted to ask a few questions? **(President commented).** Yes, I know, but it is just my broughtupcy, even if I know, it is my right to still ask. Through you, it would have been my preference to have written in before, but as have been indicated, for the last few weeks, as my colleague, on the 'Other Side' through you, Mr. President, said, we were the focus, the spotlight was on us, and according to the commendations, we would have delivered and delivered soundly. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

Mr. President, in going through the Address delivered by the Governor-General, on the opening of the Second Session of the Tenth Parliament, on Monday 19<sup>th</sup>, November 2018, I just want to find out the following: it was noted that there would be assistance from the IMF to conduct a Climate Change Policy Assessment. We would just like to know what is the status of that?

**Mr. President:** Okay. Maybe you should then introduce the question and then he will come back. Okay? Senator Lewis, he only introduced the Motion. He did not take the opportunity to actually present it, alright? So, we sort of went ahead of ourselves.

**Sen. the Hon. André Lewis:** Oh, sorry.

**Mr. President:** Let Senator Stiell have the floor, and then we will come back to that.

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Thank you, Mr. President. We had discussed, in our last Sitting, to keep this open, so that we could have this discussion, and we had agreed to it. On reflection, we will have an opportunity, Mr. President, not probably the next Sitting, but within the next couple of Sittings, we will have the introduction of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, which is kind of like a mid-term review on the Budget of which is founded on the Throne Speech.

And, my suggestion... I would take the Senator's comment and I would provide an answer to that, but I would suggest for neatness, that what we do, we continue to defer the closing of this Motion until, and it would just be a couple Sittings from now, when the Supplementary Appropriation is presented. And, I think the presentation of that bill will give us an opportunity to reflect on what we had promised; what was outlined in the Throne Speech, what was presented over the three (3) days of extensive debate on the Budget; where we are at this given time, within the context of those additional resources, those additional activities will be brought into the Budget, at that Supplemental. And, I think that will be an ideal opportunity for us to have a more extensive discourse.

So, my suggestion, I will respond happily to the request by the Senator on the 'Other Side', but then I will ask that the Resolution that is being presented, or what is being resolved, that we defer the debate to that fixed date.

**Mr. President:** Senator Lewis.

**Sen. the Hon. André Lewis:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. I see no harm in the Senator's preference. And, therefore, I will still ask the questions, so that even when the more

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detailed, or up to date of report comes, just in the event that something may have been left out, something you may look into.

So, I just want to repeat the assistance from the IMF to conduct the Climate Change, what is the status? The Government focused on the three (3) main areas, June 2019 to 2021, namely: Building Resilience, Advancing Social Development and Transforming the Economy. It would be good to get a Phase Report, as to what has been done, so far.

The building of two (2) new Skill Centres in 2019, this is this year, by the Ministry of Education, what progress has been made in this regard?

Of crucial importance to us, in the Labour Movement, and I daresay the Nation, as a whole, because it is interrelated, the aspect of the regularization of staff in the Health Sector. Because this, we are convinced, is also directly related to the mass migration of nurses, because when people are not regularized, we all know that their job function and their status, their tenure is in question. And, therefore, we would like to know what has been done so far there.

The implementation of the Human Resource Health Policy and Plan Schedule to begin in 2019, we would also like to know the progress. Given the importance of health, and, I know that we are all in agreement on this matter. We are all in agreement with this matter, and we will like to know the progress that there is.

Public Sector Reform, which has come up again, and, as a matter of fact, in our recent discussion with the visiting team from the IMF and the World Bank, etcetera and colleagues from the Ministry of Finance, that was a very pertinent issue, and we all know that, probably for the past fifteen (15) or twenty (20) years, as a matter of fact, there have been billboards at the entrance to the Ministerial Complex, over the years, highlighting these issues. But, we would like to know what has been done in this concretely.

And the issue of the expansion of the Labour Force by five thousand (5,000), which would be important; I knew it was a projection, your plans, but if we can be told where are we with the different Sectors, what progress has been made in the different Sectors relevant to the provision of the expansion of the Labour Force, the creation of jobs. These are some of the matters that we would like to get some feedback on, coming out of this. Thank you very much.

**Mr. President:** Senator Lewis, could you commit those questions to writing? It makes it much tidier. It limits misinterpretation of what is being sought. So, if there is something in writing it would be more specific.

**Sen. the Hon. André Lewis:** Mr. President, I give that commitment, but I just wanted to ensure, because I know today there may have been a possibility of this matter being taken off, I needed to ensure that I got these questions in. But, I am in total agreement that the most prudent thing to do, is to put in writing and I so give that commitment.

**Mr. President:** Yes, because the Leader of Government's Business has said that... if you noticed the Motion, the Motion is to defer it, the Motion is not to extinguish it and he explained



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that he is hoping to engage with the Debate in and around the same Sitting, where the Supplemental Appropriation Bill will be brought. So, the earlier the questions could come in, the more thorough the research and the answers could be done and then it gives you more time for preparing supplemental questions, which you should figure out in your head prior, to even receiving the answers.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Gracious Address deferred to a date to be fixed.**

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 15 - Bills.

**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, Annual Stamp Tax (Amendment), 2019.

**Ag. Clerk:** An Act to amend the Annual Stamp Tax Act (Cap. 16A) shortly entitled, Annual Stamp Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Mr. President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. Mr. President, as this is a Money Bill, I can confirm that we have the Speaker's Seal to proceed.

Mr. President, this Bill, the Annual Stamp Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2019 seeks to address two (2) very specific things.

The first is the repeal of Section 15 (a) of the principal Act, which speaks to penalties for failure to register for Stamp Tax. And, this repeal, Mr. President, is necessary, as it addresses a conflict that exists with Section 77 of the Tax Administration Act, which also sets out penalties for nonconformance.

The second issue that is being addressed in this amendment and the more substantive amendment is to Section 19 of the principal Act, which exempts licensed Petrol Service Stations from paying Annual Stamp Tax on the petrol and diesel component of their sales, and it is this more substantive issue, Mr. President, I'll speak to first.

So, Mr. President, Annual Stamp Tax is applied to all Companies, and is based on gross sales receipt; that's sales value before any deductions are made, and with that with the Annual Stamp

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Tax, there are two (2) bands for payment. The first is for gross sales below three hundred thousand (\$300,000.00) and an Annual Stamp Tax rate of .5% is applied to those gross sales. And, then the second band, the upper band is for gross sales above three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000.00), and an Annual Stamp Tax rate of .7% is applied to that. And, then within that, Mr. President, there is an exemption for the first thirty-six thousand dollars (\$36,000.00).

It's important to note, Mr. President, that the rates of Stamp Tax that we are talking about have already been reduced. In coming into Office, there have been a number of reductions, that upper band started in 2013 at 1%... in 2015, (sorry) there was a reduction to 1%. In 2016, a reduction to .75%, and in 2017, the current rate, as it stands of .7%.

Mr. President, this may not sound like a significant reduction, but in real terms, it has actually brought significant relief to our business communities. But, Mr. President, there have been further calls from a specific Business Sector, the Petrol / Diesel Retailers for further relief, with regards to... they require further relief, because they're struggling to make the required capital investments in their Petrol Stations, because of the particular structure, pricing structure that is applied to petrol retailers, which is they work on a fixed margin in terms of the structure for petrol and diesel sales.

So, as Gazetted, the profit margin for both, whether it is the Petrol Companies, the importers of petrol and diesel or the retailers combined, that profit margin is fixed at two dollars (\$2.00) of which the companies receive one dollar and twenty-five cents (\$1.25) out of that two dollars (\$2.00) and the remaining seventy-five cents (0.75¢) is what is given, seventy-five cents (0.75¢) per gallon, per imperial gallon of diesel or petrol is what is afforded to the petrol resellers.

And, because of this fixed margin that they have to work with, that seventy-five cents (0.75¢) they are not able to accumulate sufficient capital reserves from their profits to make some of the necessary investments that is required in the maintenance, the upkeep, the upgrading of their Petrol Stations. And, specifically looking at a very, very costly items such as the fuel storage tanks, other critical equipment that has to meet international standards, ISO standards with regards to safety and function.

So, Mr. President, those fuel retailers approached Government with their request for relief and the initial area that they looked at was whether there was a possibility of increasing that fixed margin to improve the financial standing.

However, after consultation, after careful analysis within the Ministry of Finance, it was felt and it is proposed and that is what is before us, a more viable option is this modality of exempting them from payment of the Annual Stamp Tax on their revenues, on their petrol and diesel revenues. So, if you look at the nature of Petrol Gas Station today, they sell more than just fuel, they sell other products, whether it's other accessories for vehicles, whether it is groceries; many of them now are mini supermarkets. So, the proposal that is put before us is to bracket the revenues, gross revenues generated from petrol and diesel sales providing the exemption of Stamp Tax on that component. However, they remain eligible to pay Stamp Tax on all other sales receipts generated from their business.

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Mr. President, this amendment, the proposal is to apply this retroactively, so from the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2019. So, they will receive the full benefit of that Stamp Tax Exemption for the period of 2019 when they file their financials in 2020.

So, Mr. President, this relief is to provide them with that fiscal space, that they are able to make the necessary investment, the necessary upgrades, to their operations. Mr. President, it's Clause 3, that provides for this amendment to Section 19 of the principal Act, which outlines this Stamp Tax exemption.

Moving on to the first amendment that I had spoken to; Clause 2 provides for the repeal of Section 15 (a) of the principal Act, which currently states: **"Where a person fails to register in the manner required by Section 3 (a), or furnished the Comptroller with information under the registration process in breach of Section 3 (a), he or she is liable to a penalty of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00)."**

The repeal of this specific Section, Mr. President, is necessary, as it is in conflict with Section 77 of the Tax Administration Act of 2016, which also speaks to penalties for the same offence. But, that amount is a higher amount, it is two thousand, five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00) for the same offence. And, since the Tax Administration Act is effectively the umbrella Act for all tax matters, it is the Tax Administration Act, what is within the Tax Administration Act that takes precedence. But, to remove any conflict, any potential ambiguity conflict that will exist, what is being proposed is that we remove that offending Clause, if you like, that Section 3 (a) of the principal Act.

So, Mr. President, it is for those reasons that this Bill is commended to the House for its second reading. I thank you.

**Question proposed.**

**Mr. President:** Senator Kerryne James.

**Sen. the Hon. Kerryne James:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, before I begin to make my contribution on this Bill being laid to us this morning, I want to first start off by stating that, as a family, as a community, moreover, as a nation, we have lost the mother of one of our national heroes, Miss Pamela James, Kirani James' mother. And, so, Mr. President, I wish to extend condolences to Kirani in this time of grief and to the rest of the family.

Mr. President, though citizens welcome tax exemption, however, when these exemptions are benefiting only a handful of individuals or businesses, to me, it raises some concerns, right. And, therefore, Mr. President, I am, indeed, baffled as to why Service Stations.

Mr. President, in my hand, I hold a rough estimation, so to speak, of revenue generated from the Annual Stamp Tax on petrol components, namely diesel and gasoline. At a rate of .7%, the Government stands to lose just under five million dollars (\$5 m) annually.

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And, so, through you, Mr. President, I want to ask the Leader of Government's Business a few questions. The first one being, has an assessment been done to quantify the revenues that will be lost from this exemption? What is the plan to recover from the shortfalls of the revenues lost, as a result of these exemptions?

And, I believe, Mr. President, rather than an exemption, we know our fiscal space doesn't allow for certain things to occur. Why not consider lowering the Stamp Tax rate again, so that, not only some relief will be given to the Service Stations, but Government would be able to collect some revenue, since there is no clear indications, to me, as to how Government would account for these losses.

Moreover, Mr. President, I believe that we should think about also reducing the Petrol Tax, so that the ordinary citizens, as well, can benefit at the pumps. So, these are some of the questions and concerns that have stood out, to me, after analyzing the Bill, and so, if the Leader of Government's Business could provide me with some feedback, or responses, I would be grateful for that. Thank you.

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

**Sen. the Hon. André Lewis:** Thank you, Mr. President. And, I would just want to make a brief comment on the proposed amendment and to find out, I know it is designed, based on the arguments put forward by the Leader of Government's Business, it is clearly designed to give a welcome relief to the Dealers. And, it is specifically designed, according to the explanation given, to assist in upgrades, capital upgrades, investments, etcetera. So, I have two (2) questions and/or comments:

1. That, whether or not, there can be a possibility, which will dovetail the concern raised by my colleague Senator on the side here on a possible reduction at the pumps, and two (2), and I will come back to the first point;
2. Whether or not the Government will have a mechanism in place to ensure that the Stations, the Dealers, who have benefited from this actually reinvest or do the investments in their upgrades.

Because, one of the driving forces is that that they are not able to do the capital upgrades that they would want to do because remember you are increasing the profit margin. This is designed to increase the profit margin, and, therefore, put more return earnings into the hands of the Dealers, and because it is designed to allow them to do upgrades question would be, how do we monitor this? And, this is linked to the issue of whether or not, because there is no doubt, we all know that the price at the pumps are high.

We know that this is important, because we have not yet brought to the surface Oil and Gas, and, therefore, whatever we do, we will want to ensure that if it is possible that others, apart from the Dealers can benefit from this, and to ensure that the reason advanced by the Dealers is actually put in place for this. Because we will hate, we will hate to pass by a Gas Station, colloquially speaking, five (5) years from now or ten (10) years from now and you continue to

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see the deterioration of their premises. So, these are just some of the concerns and observations that I would want to bring from this idea. Thank you very much.

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

**Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to support the amendment and to make some comments and to say that where we sit in the Private Sector, we will like Stamp Tax to go. We have said so. We understand that. Get rid of Stamp Tax. It's a regressive tax, because you take tax on sales, sometimes that's not even materialized, as yet, because you have credit sales and you have cash sales, and then you take it at the top, and if am making a loss, I still have to pay this Tax, apart, because if I make a loss, I don't have to pay Corporate Tax and so on. So, we see that as a regressive tax.

But, that being said, we understand that Government has to raise revenue and we understand that the Leader of Government's Business has also said that there have been many reductions and changes to the Stamp Tax regime. I mean, they have even given you back a thirty-six thousand dollars (\$36,000.00) allowance that wasn't there, which helps with every situation, every dollar that comes back.

Mr. President, the reason I support this for the Dealers, because I know over the years, the Dealers have complained, significantly, about the tightness of the margins. And, quite frankly, Dealers, who really make any money in gas, are those who have high volumes, and it's a volumes business. And, if you can't generate the volumes, you're suffering, because when you have to pay all your overhead costs, it makes it really not a business to get into. And, we have seen Gas Stations open and close, and it's only the few that could maintain volumes that have been able to provide the services that we need.

But, that being said even though the Leader of Government's moved the Bill on the fact that they will like to see more Capital Investments, I mean we are a Private Sector business. When you give us a relief, and we pump monies back into our margins, it is not only for capital, it is also to ensure survivability of the business and increasing cost of overheads and how you deal with that. Yes, we would like to see Capital Investments make, and I am responding to the question raised by my colleague in monitoring.

I don't know if that is fair, I mean what we want to see is Gas Stations be around and be safe to operate. And, I think that is the biggest area of concern, the safety aspect, the changing out of tanks underground, the improvement or accuracy on the pumps and all of that and move into a digital system verses the old analogue system that we had. And that is where the investment comes with these guys, that we have to ensure and protect that they have the necessary things to do and give to the public the service that is required.

So, Mr. President, from where I sit and where we sit, we're happy that Government has made this move, because we know that this will help significantly in bringing back some margins to the Gas Station Dealers, because I hear my Senator colleague about transferring some price savings to the buyers of petrol and customers. I think that is a different discussion that we need to engage with, with Government. I don't think it could fit into this particular arrangement, but

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that is a different discussion that we have to have to see how the prices of petrol move up and down. And, you know, Mr. President, when we had all the drama happening with PETROTRIN in Trinidad, recently, that changed the whole regime. Trinidad is now boasting that they were bringing in petrol out of the US cheaper than PETROTRIN could have manufactured at, and distilled at.

So, you know, it's interesting how these dynamics are working and it's something that the 'Other Side' needs to look at, as well, because it seems, as though you know, processing in these parts, granted it create jobs is not as efficient as we would like it.

And, lastly, just to say to the Senator, I think that when we give this little relief to the Dealers, it ensures that people keep their jobs, my brother in Labour, and I am certain that he supports it from that angle, as well. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

**Sen. the. Hon. Winston Garraway:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise to give my full support to the second reading of this very important Bill before this Honourable House. And, this is in keeping with Government's pledge to the nation and we all would remember, at the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Program, we said, if this is successful, we obviously would ensure that we spread the gains to the various sectors.

We have seen before, the Stamp Tax would have moved from .75 to .7 on the upper band, and today we are passing in this Honourable House to bring relief to the Service Centers. And, as the Leader of Government's Business has rightly said, their margin is gazetted, seventy-five cents (0.75¢) on every imperial gallon sold is their margin.

Yes, we are seeing capital investments and upgrade. I mean, I pulled into the Westerhall Service Center two (2) nights ago, massive facility. But, what is very striking, Mr. President, is the number of employees and female young ladies. Females are always ladies (come on) **(Laughter)**. I am hitting at something, because females supposed to be always ladies, but the way this world is going these days, Mr. President, we have to probably take some closer looks to really sure if the female is really a lady.

**(Laughter).**

**(Inaudible Comments were made by Mr. President).**

**(Laughter).**

**Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway:** That begs another; anyhow, let me leave that there. **(Laughter)**. But, the point is, Mr. President, yes, when we move around into the various Service Centers, quite a lot of the staff are young ladies. And, the Senator in this House championing Business said it right, the relief is important. Yes, the capital investment is one thing, but if they are not able to meet the overheads, the first line of cutting is staff. You don't want that. And, as a Government, as we said, we will provide relief. This is one part of it. But, it

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is important for us to recognize, as well, so you provide the relief, the young ladies and the young men maintain their job, probably you hire some more, because they are improving on the facilities.

Those persons, who will be employed are obviously going to spend and you have a Consumption Tax, which is V.A.T. So, it's a move around of the monies. So, Government gives it in one area, service is being provided in the other area, and we all will be happy. That's the objective, to ensure that people receive help, people maintain their jobs, they are able to take care of their families and who is going to sit at the top to make ensure this happens is the Government, and we have to be mindful of this. This was carefully thought out to ensure that, yes, you help them to increase the profit margin. But, if we don't do it, the alternative is what we don't want.

And, I am going to say here, Mr. President, we do know, the mere fact that we are seeing this mass increase, and we only last Sunday saw the, as we say, the car boat been driving out or moving out of the Port. We've seen them coming here quite often, and every time they show up at our shores, it's a lot of vehicles on the road. So, it means the opportunity for more to come into the Service Stations, because more vehicles are driving on the road; albeit, I do not support the speeding and the accidents that we are seeing happening, because that's another story.

But, the point is, yes, we are seeing quite more vehicles on the road, and, as a result of this, the Leader of Government's Business spoke about it earlier, the studies being done by New York University, as it relates to St. George's being the Climate Resilient City, the first in the Region. And, one component of this is to ensure that we ease the congestion on the roads. That work is being done.

So, what we are saying holistically, the development of this country, as a Government we want to bring all the Sectors together, and everyone working in harmony to ensure that we all benefit from the resources of this country. And, for these few words, Mr. President, I want to give my support to the second reading of this Bill. Thank you.

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Senator Garraway. Senator Stiell. Oh, we have Senator Williams.

**Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams:** Thank you. Mr. President. I'll be brief. I think the important points have already been highlighted by my colleagues. I want to express my support for the bill that is before us, and I just want to say that it shows the responsiveness of the Government. The Government made a commitment that once the Economy improves, the tax burden would slowly be relieved on the Grenadian people, and this is just an example of the manifestation of that.

We recall in the Prime Minister's Budget Presentation last year, he highlighted that there is also a 2% reduction of the Personal Income Tax and the Corporate Tax. So, that is in addition to the reduction on the percentage of the Stamp Tax that we have seen from 2015. So, the Government is keeping its promises, and it is responding to the needs of its people. This particular need was that of a specific type of business entity. They made a specific appeal to Government, and although the relief that is being provided is not in the form that they would

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have initially requested, it is a relief. So, the Government is trying to find avenues to provide that relief to our people, and that is something that should be commended.

Now, we cannot say, okay, you are providing this relief to one set of persons, why not provide it to all. That is not how economics work, that's not how finances work, because we do realize that in providing that relief, Government is giving up a substantial amount of revenue. But, as the Prime Minister would have stated in his Budget Address, by sacrificing that revenue, we are also allowing for more disposable income in the hands of people, which can be reinvested into the Economy and which can provide growth for the Economy. So, it's not a loss, it is just providing an opportunity for greater investment and greater economic activity.

Despite my, should I say, socialist inclinations, I was a bit surprised to hear from my Senator Colleague, Lewis, on the 'Other Side', I was surprised to hear of his suggestion of a sort of monitoring of private entities. I do not think that is something that would be welcomed by the Private Sector, as Honourable Senator De Allie would have pointed out, because we do have some free market principles in this mixed Economy that we would like to maintain. And, as was pointed out, the monies that would be saved, as a result of this relief, (well not saved), will not only be invested, would not only be directed towards capital investments, but in meeting other expenses. So, I don't think that these Service Stations would welcome another level of monitoring, which could be seen as Government wielding a strong arm (that's the phrase?) yes. So, I was a bit surprised to hear that from the Leader of our Labour Union; maybe times are changing. **(Laughter)**.

But, with that being said... with that being said, Mr. President, I welcome the amendment to this bill. I think it is one that not only the Service Stations would welcome, but the people of Grenada would welcome and it is just a further example of the Government's commitment to the people of Grenada, post Structural Adjustment. Thank you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

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

**Sen. the Hon. Kim George:** Thank you, Mr. President. I rise, as well, Mr. President, to give my support to the bill, presently laid, before us. Before I speak, substantially, I want to join with my colleagues, as they have welcomed the Grade 6 students of the Beacon school. I am always encouraged and heartened to see young people take an interest in the democratic process that we are so lucky to enjoy in this part of the world. I wish them the very best in their upcoming examinations, CPEA.

I have a son, who embarked on that exercise three (3) short years ago, and I can just imagine how anxious they might be. But, I want to say to them, it is an opportunity. I want to encourage them to give their very best and to remember that your best is always enough. And, so thank you and I hope the proceedings are useful and beneficial.

So, Mr. President, there, really, is not much that is left to be said, in relation to the bill. I think my Colleagues on 'This Side' of the House have ably spoken in support of it. I think the comments from the 'Other Side' are welcomed, considered, as well.



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I wanted to say in support, Mr. President, that the bill, coming as it does, confirms the correctness of taking a measured approach to tax reform. I did hear the comments raised by my sister James on the 'Other Side', suggesting that there should be a broader approach to amending the Tax Legislation. But, I want to caution against that approach, and I want to say that I believe that the better approach is as the Government has done to make the amendments and relieve the burdens, as the need arises. And, after consideration, it is useful to remember that there has been a recent reduction in the Income Tax for persons in the three thousand to five thousand dollar category, and above the five thousand dollar category, as well.

I wanted to say, as well, Mr. President, that it is important to our overall development that, at times, we focus on the benefits that are before us, that we see them for what they are, we acknowledge the gains for what they give, and we don't always distract ourselves by taking a narrow view, or a strictly political view, but to see this amendment, in particular, for what it is, which is a reduction on the tax obligations of citizens just like us, in the Private Sector, who are doing what everyone else in the Private Sector is doing, which is to make a contribution to the Economy, while trying to maximize their profits and returns. And, so, as I said, Mr. President, I rise to give the bill my full support. Thank you. **(Applause)**

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

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I would like to start by thanking my colleagues on 'Both Sides' for their valuable contributions with regard to the proposed amendments to this bill. So, addressing some of the specific points and some of them has been covered already, but, Senator James, your question, as to the financial analysis, in terms of the revenue shortfalls that would be the result of this. The Ministry of Finance is obliged, under the Fiscal Responsibility Laws that we now have in place to do the necessary financial analysis on amendments, such as these. So, that work would have been carried out by the Ministry of Finance, and it is always a case of basing those revenue losses, those shortfalls, either in trying to address a broader issue, and this particular tax intervention is addressing a very specific issue, but it is considered in that analysis; and the suggestion that a potential solution, or alternative to this, is to reduce the overall Petrol Tax, that would not address the issue. The issue that we are trying to fix here is dealing with that fixed margin that exist, or whether petrol or diesel is at ten dollars (\$10.00) a gallon, fifteen dollars (\$15.00) a gallon, twenty dollars (\$20.00) a gallon, the amount the Retailers receive is still that seventy-five cents (75¢) on every gallon. So, altering the Petrol Sales Tax would not provide them with the relief that they required. So, although it's an option, it is not a valid option in this particular case.

And, as I said this amendment is addressing a very, very specific issue from a specific Sector of the Business Community, which relates to the need for the Dealers to provide them with additional fiscal space, with the very narrow margins that they receive, to enable them to maintain and upgrade their Establishments, with safety, safety at the forefront, and that is of a major concern.

But, the point that Senator De Allie raised, that it goes beyond that, and I totally agree, it's also about the survivability of those businesses. Margins thin. the only way they can make a reasonable return is through high volumes of sales, and we have already seen a number of our

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Gas Stations go out of business, because they are not generating those necessary volumes. So, this and part of the calculation that the Ministry of Finance would have made would also speak to the need for jobs and ensuring job security within that Sector, or even potentially job creation within that Sector.

The request for further tax relief, or a broader approach to this... Mr. President, we have to be responsible, at the end of the day. We all know the paying of our taxes is a necessity. It is a necessity, that is how Government is able to generate revenues to be able to invest in all of the essential services, all of the public services, be it Education, Healthcare, helping our vulnerable, our roads, our infrastructure, etcetera. We cannot do all of those things without a viable tax mechanism in place, so we have to be responsible.

And, coming out of the Structural Adjustment Programme, where we had an opportunity, as difficult, as it was, to take a systematic review of Government revenues of the Tax System, where relief can be given, where it cannot be given, it would be irresponsible for us to say, trying to address a specific requirement, for a specific Sector to open up those floodgates and give tax relief all round. It just would not be the responsible thing to do. And, what we do not want, at the end of the day, Mr. President, is to return to those dark and dismal days prior to 2013, where this country was on the brink of bankruptcy. We do not, Mr. President, want to return there, so responsibility in our actions is important.

But, Mr. President, that is balance against this Government's pledge that with shared sacrifice comes shared gains. And, when opportunities do arise to provide relief such as in this example, and when it is balanced against the necessary financial analysis is done, we will honour that pledge, and we have seen that, since coming out of the Structural Adjustment Pro we have seen reductions in Income Tax, we have seen reductions in Corporate Tax, reductions in Stamp Tax. We have seen the exemptions of Income Tax on Pensions, on Retrenchment. So, this Government is trying to deal with this, with a very balanced, very fair hand, Mr. President. So, I believe that addresses the comments that were raised.

So, just concluding on the bill before us, Mr. President, this bill, this amendment is to address two (2) specific things; one, is the conflict in the two (2) Acts; the second is addressing the calls for the need for relief for petrol Dealers to enable them to do the necessary things, to keep their businesses viable, to make the necessary investments. And, Mr. President, it is for those reasons that I commend this bill for its second reading.

**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 the third reading of the bill. Since it is a Money Bill, we do not have to go to the Committee Stage.

**Question**

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**Bills  
Adjournment**

**Question put and agreed to.**

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

**Ag. Clerk Assistant:** Item 16 - Public Business.

Item 17 - Adjournment.

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

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

**Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie:** I wanted to make one...

**Mr. President:** Senator De Allie.

**Sen. the Hon. Christopher De Allie:** Sorry, Mr. President, I just wanted to make one quick intervention on Public Business, and to deal with the issue of this kite flying situation. And, I am a little bit sensitive to it, because of where I live in Fort Jeudy and the fact that over the period we have been trying to control this.

Recently, I have been informed that we had an incident that interfered with an aircraft that was flying in a particular area, where the kite got entangled with the engine, and it could have been disastrous. And, I raised this point to say, Mr. President, that we are a reactive people, and I fear the day, that for the sake of wanting to fly kite and enjoy kite flying, we may take down an aircraft.

And, we don't listen when the Authorities say it is not permitted within certain zones, and we believe that they are just making nonsense and they are trying to be difficult and to impede the enjoyment of kite flying, but it could have disastrous effects. So, I raise that on two (2) fronts, for the public to understand that there is a safety issue, and when the Airport Authority declare certain zones, as 'No-Fly' zones for kite flying, it is for a particular reason, and the reason is that we can extend those kites to a distance that can interfere with the fly path of an aircraft coming in, and that could take down a total aircraft and cause disaster and then we would say, "if we knew." So, I raise that from that perspective.

And, the second perspective, of course, is that I think we all understand that kite flying is a great enjoyment. When we were young, all of us flew kite and we know what it is about and what to do. But, you know, Mr. President, we have the added issue of people putting up their kites and leaving them up in the sky for days and some people cannot sleep, because of the noise, and I think we need to be more considerate in this aspect and I appeal to the public that it is not only an issue of your enjoyment, your enjoyment must not be at the sacrifice of somebody else's own and the other person is being annoyed by your enjoyment. And, then there is the added issue of the safety now of fly path.

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So, I say that, Mr. President, and I beg that the Police get involved, as well, that when we declare for the period certain zones are 'No Fly' zones, we need stronger enforcement. And, I know the public would be annoyed, but it is for the greater safety of us and everyone around us, and we need to be considerate. And I raise that, as a point that concerns me, because I live in a particular area where this thing would have occurred, and it really is worrying that we are not paying attention to the warnings that are issued. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

**Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, like my colleagues, I want to welcome the Grade 6 students of the Beacon Primary School. I want to wish them all the best in their CPEA exams. I trust this experience here, this morning, was a great experience for them. I believe if I was in their position, I would be extremely excited, and most likely have the thought of becoming a Politician one day. So, I hope your grandson, Mr. President, would, definitely, follow in your footsteps and ....

***(Laughter)***

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

**Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet:** No, we need many more 'Ches'. Mr. President, I want to speak, as a youth, to what occurred at the last Sitting, as it relates to one of my colleagues, a youth, himself, having this theoretical presentation with a bottle of clean water and making these damaging claims.

I believe, as young persons, Mr. President, we need to be extremely responsible; and when we are given such a platform, as Representatives, to sit in the Senate, we must see this as an opportunity to have really meaningful debates and not to use the old type of politics, as we normally would say in our circles. We always talk about young people being different and young people being Agents of Change. This should be in our actions, in our words, and how we carry about ourselves.

So, one has to understand, as well, that we live in a different age. Before, Mr. President, I would assume, I would believe that you can come in the Senate, or in Parliament and give a presentation and when you leave very few people would know what is debated, unless you would have to wait, maybe, weekly, on the newspaper, or maybe via radio. But, today, we gave revolutionary means of communications; we have Social Media. I was looking at Facebook and I saw that Senator Stiell was giving his presentation, while I was sitting here. So, people are always tuned in, and not only locally, but internationally, and we have to understand that one of our valuable products of our Economy, our Tourism; what we say, what we do, can influence this Industry.

And we have to also look at the fact that Tourism, which contributes and which employs significant amounts of young persons, as youths, if we are making these claims and they were not properly investigated, no basic enquiries, didn't talk to the residents. I mean, just looking at

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the news and people were able to say, that's not true. I mean, if I was a resident of Mt. Rich that would make me feel very angry, that someone could walk into the House of Parliament, and come in the House of Parliament as a Parliamentarian, and make these claims without even getting any level of discussion. So, I think we need to be responsible.

I believe we need to be responsible, as youths. Don't let the perception out there that we are youths and the immaturity, because this strengthens those sorts of claims; because some people believe that young people are not totally ready for those sorts of discussions. So, when you act like that, it strengthens those claims, this perception.

So, Mr. President, I think this needs to be done, and I hope the Senator, at his next Sitting, I regret that he is not here, would apologize or retract those statements, because it was not healthy, at all. And, I hope that we look at this, in a broader aspect, and all of us here, if we have to make certain claims, if we want to advocate for something, let us do the proper research, let us go through proper means, to ensure that we represent well, and at the end, the country benefits, because one of the sole aims here, for us, is to ensure that the country benefits. It is not really politics. I mean, there is a time and a place for that, but when we come here it is to debate on bills, to debate on things that would benefit the country, not to make the country look bad.

So, Mr. President, I just thought I would raise that and I hope that at the next Sitting that my Honourable friend, colleague Senator, will, definitely, apologize for those statements that he made. Thank you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Senator Cathisha Williams.

**Sen. the Hon. Cathisha Williams:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, after my presentation, I kicked myself below the table, because I forgot to address the most important persons here today, our young members in the Gallery. So, I just want to take this opportunity to welcome you and thank you for coming to today's Sitting, since we are almost at the end.

Our Gallery is usually empty, so it was nice, for a change, to have some persons there for the entirety of our Sitting, and to have some nice, bright, promising, shiny faces. So, thank you for coming. I hope that you found it interesting, and maybe you will be inspired, one day, to be sitting down here, some day and succeed us. So, thank you, again; and, of course, to the Teachers accompanying them. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

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

**Sen. the Hon. André Lewis:** Thank you, Mr. President, and for a moment, when my Socialist Comrade; sorry, Senator Cathisha Williams, got up and said she forgot something, I thought she was about to reverse and say that she understands the importance of Government monitoring certain businesses, when certain concessions have been made, in terms of accountability.

I want to, on the Adjournment, raise two (2) matters. First of all, I want to commend the workers of Grenada and the others, who turned out on May Day, 2019, in the Parish of St. David, for a

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wonderful and militant May Day. It was one of our better May Days. As a matter of fact, it was one of the first times in a very long time, that I cannot recall seeing anyone getting up and leave and go before all the speeches and all the official activities were completed.

And, therefore, I want to compliment the workers of Grenada for keeping alive, the flames of our Founding Fathers, in ensuring that, that which they have started and that which has been continued by many would not be left to wither away. Once again I want to compliment the workers and the Leaders of the various Unions and the committees of the various Unions and the workers that went beyond the call of duties to ensure that May Day was a resounding success.

Linked to this, in terms of workers and the Nation, on a whole, I would want to join in making a call, in addressing the issue of the St. Andrew Methodist School; that must be of concern to all of us and I know it's being addressed, but because I know that it is a matter that has impacted upon the students. I know that there would have been a discussion, I think, yesterday, between the relevant people, I think, the PTA and the Minister for Education, and I know some assurances were given that the work would be done over this weekend, and, therefore, I want to give my support to this, and to join in the call for making sure that this happens.

And, for the students of the St. Andrew Methodist School, who are preparing for their CPEA, I want to urge upon them and all of us, teachers, parents and the community in trying to ensure that whatever has happened, or is happening, does not impact upon them, in any negative way. So, I just wanted to end by lending my voice and lending my support to the Ministry and to everyone else who are going out of their way to ensure that this matter is being addressed and addressed speedily. Thank you very much, Mr. President. **(Applause)**

**Mr. President:** Alright, Honourable Members, I think we... there's one more speaker? Senator Garraway.

**Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway:** Yes, Mr. President, just by way of an update, and I want to thank my Senate Colleague on the 'Other Side' for raising the issue. I thought of it during the presentation of Ministerial Statements, but for some reason I didn't say it. Yes, we had this unfortunate incident within the St. Andrew Methodist School where the housing for a water tank would have collapsed, and, as a result, school was suspended, it didn't start on Monday, as would have been the case of other schools. However, they were able to conduct a week of classes for the Grade Sixers, because, you know, they are preparing for the CPEA.

But, I want to commend the Minister, along with her CEO and the others within the Ministry, who, aggressively addressed this issue. They had the technical team, the Engineers and the likes to move into the compound and to do the relevant surveys, to assure the nation and to assure us, as Government, that the facility is safe and sound to house students. And, yesterday, the Engineers gave that report and I know they are doing the finalizing.

So, Monday, of next week, school would resume at its house, the St. Andrew Methodist School compound. So, I want to thank the Ministry for working assiduously, to ensure that this happened. Again, it also speaks to what we have been saying, as it relates to ensuring that and

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from a Disaster Management prospective, that we have safe surroundings, safe facilities. And, you do know that the Government has been investing millions of dollars in the upgrade of facilities around the country, school facilities, and that is one of those facilities that we will ensure that is maintained. But, see what it is, it was an accident, it is now remedied, we are going to move forward with ensuring that the school environment continues to be safe. Thank you, Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Thank you, Honourable Senator. Just out of my own interest, I have a capacity for facetiousness, and in an earlier period, the old folks used to describe me as being haunted. I wouldn't venture down that road, but I can tell you that I am suppressing quite a chuckle.

But, my question really is, could no one have determined that the structure upon which the water catchment was placed was compromised, to an extent, that something would have happened? Isn't there some sort of expecorate that goes around the schools? What about the people employed there? I mean, was there a localized earthquake or something? I mean, nobody could have determined that this thing needs maintenance?

I am not an Engineer, but I have sufficient engineering friends that, quite often, there are signs of these things that you can see, either there are cracks in the concrete; the steel is being attacked by corrosion. Could nobody, including the people who work there and teach these students, could have brought to the attention of the relevant Authorities that this structure looks as if it is compromised? So, we have to wait until it collapses? Just a rhetorical question.

Finally, I want to end on this note. At the last Sitting we spoke about the deteriorating public order in respect to the issue of public decency. It is an endemic problem, and Senators spoke at length on it. Lo and behold, a few days later, in fact, it would have been either earlier this week, or late last week, I was shocked, when I turned on to the News, and in a broadcast, brought on Channel Six, and I would use the opportunity to name the Corporate Body, FLOW, they displayed a degree of vulgarization of what has now come to be called Culture. I had to be looking around to see whether or not... where my grandson was; in a musical tidbit in an interlude, coming into my Living Room.

I intend to write the General Manager of FLOW, who is my very good friend. But, I appeal to the conscience of the Corporate Community, everything must not be interpreted for its profit returns; that there are values in our Culture, which we ought to preserve, and it is highly irresponsible in the context of the epidemic of sexual assault that we see in this country, and I am speaking about it, publicly, because it was rather disgusting. I will write to the General Manager, I committed to do so. But I think this is a golden forum, within which to raise this issue again, and I say no more on the question at this point-in-time.

I still await the actions of our Women's Organizations. There are many within Political Parties, within different religious groupings, to address what occurred in our Courts a week or two ago with the sexual assault on an infant, and the almost award-winning; well, I have to call it an award, because it seems to me that, that behaviour... Our Courts failed to send the necessary message.

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Only two (2) days ago, I received a biography on Justice Redhead and his concepts of the Law and Justice. I am trying to share it with as many Judicial Officers, as I can, because I think he had it right; he had it right. I still await to see the necessary action of abhorrence expressed by our female Organizations and male too.

I want to thank the TUC, because in its pre May Day Press Conference, I noticed that the issue was raised by the President of the TUC and by the President of the Public Workers Union, and that is a commendable start. I want to see more of that.

And, I appeal to the Lawmakers, it is time to bring new Legislation. If the Judges are not minded to do it, Parliament must do it. We must set the correct level of punishment for certain kinds of offences, so that we send the message outside there that this sort of behaviour is not accepted in Grenadian society, no matter what may be happening around us and the deterioration that is taking place, but we will be the last Sentries at the gate, protecting the dignity and the integrity of our womenfolk.

This is the charge I want to leave with Members of Parliament, particularly on 'This Side', but there is nothing preventing Members, on 'This Side', from coming with a Private Members Bill to address this scourge that is sweeping through our communities. Honourable Members, I thank you.

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

**Senate adjourned sine die at 11:46 a.m.**



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